

Guidance Notes

NIHR School for Primary Care Research Post-doctoral Fellowships October 2024

The NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) Post-Doctoral Fellowships provide an opportunity for early career academics to further develop their career in primary care research. The aim of these fellowships is to allow the fellow to have an independent research project, publish their research and prepare grant applications to secure future funding (e.g., an NIHR advanced fellowship). Successful applicants are expected to start their Fellowship in October 2024.

Applicants must have experience of research in primary care or a closely related field of medicine and have a strong academic record. The fellowship is for early career post-doctoral positions and as such applicants will usually have been awarded their doctorate within the last 3 years. However, applications will be considered from researchers who have transitioned into applied health research from a different disciplinary background or who have re-established a research career following a significant career break.

Applicants do not need to have completed their PhD when applying, however, they must have passed their viva and, if required made adjustments to their thesis, before the Fellowship starts in October. Applicants should consider delaying their application until the next competition if they do not have a viva date and are unsure of meeting these timelines.

Fellowships are full time for 24 months but they may be taken part time (minimum 60%), particularly if the applicant wishes to maintain professional/clinical duties.

Applicants do not have to be employed by a SPCR member at the time of applying for the fellowship. For more information about the research programme at each university see the School's website: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/funding/faq-fellowships/members-information>

The SPCR would particularly welcome applications from allied health professionals. Distinctive to the current SPCR programme is the aim to work more broadly with the primary care research sector.

Successful applicants will conduct their fellowship in one of the nine members of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research: Bristol, Exeter, Keele, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Queen Mary University of London, Southampton and University College London. They will become part of the SPCR Trainees network and have access to various opportunities provided by the School. More information about the community is on the SPCR website: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/spcr-trainees>. A contract of employment will be required with the host institution for the duration of the award.

The award is capped at £160k. This will cover a salary of approximately £40kpa, Employers National Insurance and Pension contributions and an overhead that the SPCR will provide to your employer for items such as HR, IT and other centrally provided services. The award amount will also be expected to cover training and development costs, though it will likely not be sufficient to fund all research costs involved. It is assumed that successful applicants will have sufficient funding to support their research activities, either via a different SPCR funding

competition or from other funders. It will not be possible to undertake the fellowship part-time to compensate for a higher salary.

Applications do not require any costings at submission stage, but applicants are encouraged to consider what their training and development and patient and public involvement costs might be and how they are planning to attract additional research funds. Applicants are advised to discuss the fellowship funding with the proposed host institution Research Manager or costing team before applying.

All applicants must ensure that their proposed research project is compatible with the NIHR remit: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/academy-nihr-remit-for-personal-awards/21380>

The fellowship award can be based around a specified single project or involve attachment to a research group involved in a programme of research. The awards are open to all disciplines relevant to primary care research, clinical non-medical and non-clinical, although the individual universities vary in the disciplinary opportunities they offer.

Support

Each SPCR member has support in place to help early-career researchers in preparing their Fellowship application. Each member has dedicated training leads in place who can support you or signpost you. An overview of the training leads can be found at the bottom of this document.

As with all research funded by the NIHR, SPCR Fellows are expected to include patient and public involvement (PPI) in their application and research. Each member has a PPI lead in place who can support you with developing your plans. Their contact details can be found on the SPCR website: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/PPI/get-involved/ppi-contacts>. The [Research Design Service](#) has local support in place to support researchers in developing their application. They might have funding available to support involvement activities before funding is allocated.

An overview of FAQs can be found on the SPCR website: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/funding#faq-fellowships>

Any questions on the application procedure, please contact the SPCR team via applications.spcr@keele.ac.uk

Selection process

All applications received are reviewed using these selection criteria. Scoring is undertaken by SPCR training leads and public contributors. Invitations to interview will be extended to the top scoring applicants.

PERSON
Interest in pursuing academic primary care research in the UK
Excellent academic track record with evidence of interest in teaching or research
Excellent written communication skills, demonstrated by a track record in publications, reports, a dissertation, or other written material
Ability and motivation to pursue an independent research project
Evidence of ability to work as part of a team
Ambition to collaborate and be part of the SPCR community

PROJECT
Relevance of proposed project to primary care and SPCR
Clarity of aims
PPI - involvement of patients/service users, carers and/or the public in developing this proposal and active involvement throughout the proposed project
Appropriate methodology
Feasibility and likelihood of completion in available time
Fit between proposed project and proposed supervisory team interests and expertise
Likelihood of being able to secure a further personal award or research funding at end of this fellowship

During the interview you will be interviewed by a panel of up to 6 members (academics and public contributors). The interviews will take place online via MS Teams. Applicants are first asked to provide a short presentation of their work, followed by a series of questions by the interview panel.

How to apply

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the relevant university to discuss hosting their planned research. Contact details for each university (and in some cases for each subject area offered) can be found here:

<https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/funding/faq-fellowships/members-information>

Complete a standard application form, which can be downloaded from the SPCR website, and email it to the SPCR team at applications.spcr@keele.ac.uk.

Only information included in the standard application form will be considered.

- Please state **PDF Application October 2024** as the subject of the email
- Please name the file using the following convention: **Surname_PDF-October -2024**
- Application forms should be submitted as a Word document and not as a PDF.
- No other documents should be submitted as part of the application

Applications will be stored securely within Keele University for 6 months after the submission deadline. After 6 months, unsuccessful applications will be anonymised and only information relevant for reporting will be stored.

Timelines

Submission deadline	1pm 14 March 2024
Interview invitations issued and unsuccessful applicants notified	w/c 15 April 2024
Interviews held (online)	Planned for 1 May 2024
Awards start	1 October 2024

Training leads at SPCR members

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