

## UCL SPCR internship projects 2025

**Name & email supervisor(s):**

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**Length and dates of internship:**

4 weeks full-time or happy to take someone part-time over more weeks if possible/preferable. It could take place from June 2025 to October 2025.

**Host department:**

Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health, University College London

**How will the internship be conducted:**

- In person at the university
- Virtual/ from home
- Both are possible, depending on preference of student

**Title internship project:**

Supporting diagnostic decision making for mental health conditions in primary care: Scoping the development of a virtual patient tool for current and future primary care clinicians

**Summary of the internship project:** *(max 250 words, can include hyperlinks to further information)*

Mental health problems have been increasing in the UK, especially among young people, leading to more people seeking help from primary care. However, the presentation of mental health symptoms can be complex, posing diagnostic challenges for health professionals. Timely identification and support can prevent problems from escalating.

Historically, research and training resources have been targeted towards primary care doctors. Now, primary care includes a range of clinicians such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and physician associates, all involved in diagnosing and supporting mental health concerns. There is a gap in training resources for these groups.

This project aims to explore the diagnostic challenges faced by primary care clinicians in identifying and managing mental health problems. This will help us to develop a virtual patient training tool to support clinical reasoning and improve diagnostic accuracy. Depending on the student's interests, the project could involve a scoping or literature review on diagnostic challenges in mental health within primary care settings. Alternatively, the student could conduct qualitative interviews with primary care clinicians, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and physician associates, to gather insights into their diagnostic processes, challenges, and training needs; this would be subject to obtaining ethics approval. This project will also explore variations in challenges experienced by different professional groups and the role of multiprofessional training in addressing such challenges. The intern will receive training

and support in conducting literature reviews, qualitative interviews, and thematic analysis. Regular supervision and guidance will be provided by the project team.

**Learning objectives:**

1. To explore the diagnostic challenges faced by primary care clinicians in identifying and managing mental health problems, and to understand their training needs.
2. To undertake a literature review or conduct qualitative interviews with primary care clinicians to gather insights into their diagnostic processes and challenges.

**Any further information:**