

Academic Clinical Fellow Handbook

This handbook contains general information about The University of Manchester's ACF programme as well as the schedule for assisting and monitoring academic progress.



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Welcome to the Academic Clinical Fellows Programme

Welcome to the [NIHR Integrated Academic Training \(IAT\) Programme](#) at [the University of Manchester](#) (UoM). We are delighted that you have chosen our programme for the next phase of your clinical and academic research training. As an ACF you are employed by NHS England. Clinical placements, rotations and clinical progress are managed by [NHSE](#), and the University will support you to develop your research skills, ideas and careers. The two organisations work very closely together to deliver individualised high-quality education.

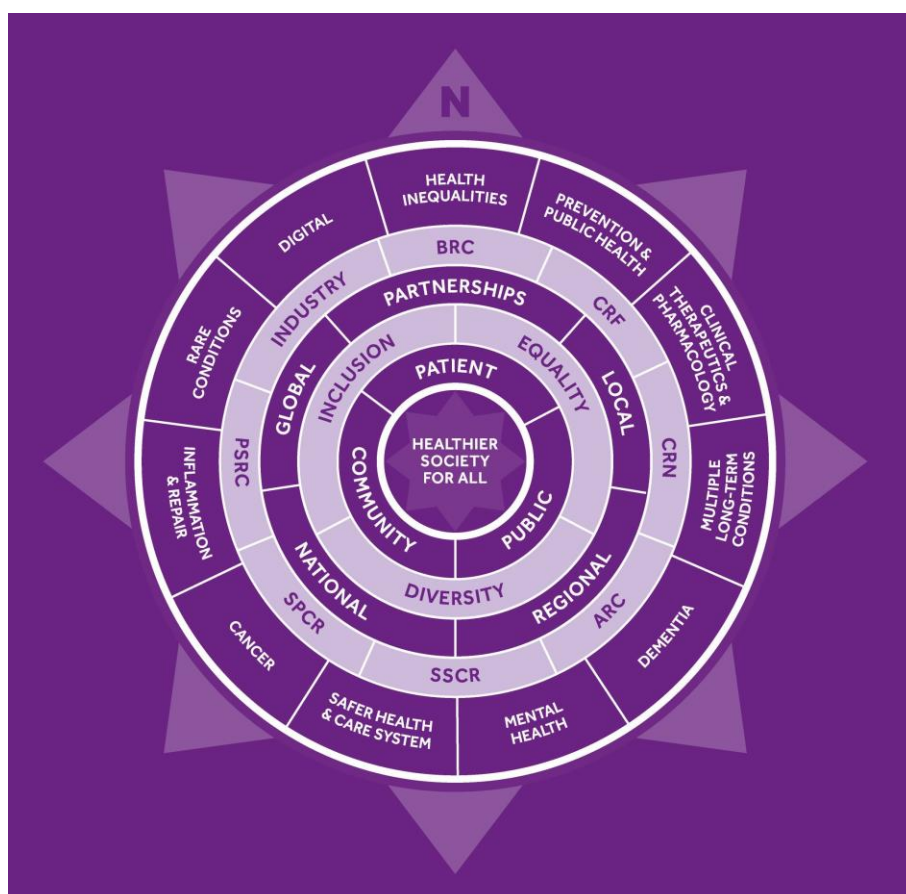
The [Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, at the University of Manchester](#), hosts one of the largest ACF programmes in the UK, with over 300 ACFs recruited since 1997. The Faculty has an international reputation for high quality impactful medical research, and the overall scale and diversity of our research at this University is unrivalled in the UK.

The IAT team is here to make sure you make the most of this opportunity, and we are here to help and to advise. Further information can also be found on our webpages:

<http://sites.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/icat>

We are keen that you succeed and realise your potential. We want to help you build your research and academic skills, develop your profile and work towards successful Fellowship applications in order to undertake a cutting-edge PhD in your chosen field of study. To that end, you will also interact closely with wider support opportunities including the [FBMH Doctoral Academy](#), the [FBMH Fellowship Academy](#) and [University Researcher Development](#) from the outset.

We hope that you enjoy your time in Manchester... as an ACF and beyond!



Key contacts

University of Manchester

Name	Position	Email
Natalie Cook & Adam Reid	ACF Programme Co-Leads	natalie.cook17@nhs.net / adam.reid@manchester.ac.uk
Jenny Myers & Tom Blakeman	IAT Co-Leads	jenny.myers@manchester.ac.uk / t.m.blakeman@manchester.ac.uk
Sharon Muskett	IAT Coordinator	icatadmin@manchester.ac.uk
Samuel Rack Andi Stanescu	ACF Trainee Reps	sam.rack@nhs.net andi.stanescu@gmail.com

External

Name	Position	Email
NIHR Academy	General Enquiries	IAT@NIHR.ac.uk
Mumtaz Patel	NHS England North West Postgraduate Associate Dean	mumtaz.patel2@nhs.net
Lindsey Robinson	Programme Support Co-ordinator	lindsey.robinson9@nhs.net

Academic support roles

Academic programme lead (APL)	Each GMC specialty has a clinical-academic lead who will help you identify an appropriate supervisor and advisor. (contact details on our IAT webpage)
Academic supervisor	Your academic supervisor will guide you to develop research ideas, understand expected standards and help identify appropriate training.
Advisor	Your advisor will support you to reflect on your academic progress and ambitions, support you in meeting challenges, encourage you to develop yourself and your skills, and help you to articulate your achievements.

Introduction

NIHR ACFs are part of the [Integrated Clinical Academic Training \(IAT\) Pathway in England](#), established to promote academic medicine and dentistry, and to provide a clear route for doctors and dentists interested in an academic research career. An NIHR ACF post is intended to support medical and dental trainees who are at the early stages of specialty training and who wish to develop an academic research career alongside their clinical training. Posts have 25% protected academic time for trainees to develop their academic research skills and prepare an application for a Fellowship award to undertake a higher research degree.

The duration of an ACF is for a maximum of 3 years (4 years for GPs). During this time, alongside clinical training, ACFs will develop their academic skills and be supported in preparing an application for a Research Training Fellowship (to undertake a higher research degree), or for those already with a PhD, an application for an Advanced Fellowship. Success in these applications is a measured outcome of the ACF programme.

Occupational Health

ACFs will receive health screening as routinely performed for clinical roles by the lead employer ([NHSE](#)). There may also be a requirement for UoM Occupational Health screening; for example for laboratory work or those working towards a Home Office personal licence for carrying out procedures on animals in the Biological Service Facility.

UoM Honorary Contracts

Honorary contracts with UoM will usually be required and the approval forms should be completed on Induction Day. Please have an up-to-date copy of your CV and the IAT team will help in processing your paperwork. **Please allow up to 3-months for this to be processed.**

ORCID

All ACFs should register with [ORCID](#) to create a free and unique identifier that stores automatic links to all your research, and links all your research with you. By allowing trusted organisations to add your research information to your ORCID record, you can spend more time conducting your research and less time managing it.

Organising your Academic/Clinical time split

Academic training time must fit in with clinical rotas as well as the academic department where you are based.

ACFs can organise their 25% academic time in various ways, including:

- One day per week (+extra days to achieve 25%)
- One week in four
- One month blocks
- Three month block per year
- Six month block in second year
- One nine month block

With the exception of GP ACFs (see Page 15), most ACFs have found that blocks of time are far more productive than day release, especially if in busy clinical posts. For lab-based work, blocks are almost certainly necessary. This should be a discussion between the academic programme lead (APL) for the specialty, training programme director (TPD), academic supervisor and ACF to ensure productive time whilst aligning clinical responsibilities and training progression.

NIHR £1,000 Bursary

The NIHR bursary provides all ACF trainees with a source of funding to enable attendance and/or present their research findings at external research meetings and conferences that are relevant to their academic training. The University of Manchester's IAT team manages the bursary fund of £1,000 per financial year (August to July) per trainee and is responsible for approving expenditure against the bursaries. We recommend you keep a log of expenditure and time spent on study leave too.

Each financial year any unclaimed bursary funds remain with the IAT team for use on activities that benefit the academic development or training of the NIHR ACF trainees, unless you submit a written request to the IAT Team (at icatadmin@manchester.ac.uk) for remaining funds to be rolled over to the following year.

To make a claim for use of the bursary fund please email the IAT team in the first instance. Once we have given approval, **after the event**, you need to complete a PR7 expenses claim form. Please ensure the form is signed (original signatures only accepted) and return it along with all the receipts to: icatadmin@manchester.ac.uk

The following expenses are eligible for bursary use:

- A maximum of £1,000 for expenses that have been incurred during that trainee year. Expenses are only incurred on the date the event occurs, for example, a train ticket booked in advance can only be reimbursed once it has been used for travel
- A trainee year is each 12-month period that follows a trainee's start date. For example, if a trainee starts on 1 August, then their trainee year will run from 1 August to 31 July
- 10% of the bursary is recommended to be used towards Patient Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE).

The bursary does **not** cover claims for clinical courses, including revision courses, consumables, kit, laptops, books, etc. Only academic courses and conferences, with associated travel, accommodation and subsistence costs

For more information please visit the IAT intranet:

[IAT | ACFs: NIHR Bursary – how to claim - IAT \(manchester.ac.uk\)](#)

Research Training Programme

All NIHR ACFs must attend the Research Training Programme (RTP) provided by the University of Manchester. The aim of the RTP is to provide ACFs with generic research training. NIHR stipulates that the RTP covers at least the following areas, although not all will be equally relevant to all ACFs:

- statistics
- clinical trial design
- epidemiology
- ethical aspects of clinical research
- project design, planning, costing and management
- research governance and the regulatory framework for research
- good clinical practice (GCP)
- patient and public involvement in research
- refereeing of papers and grant applications
- diversity and equal opportunities in research, and cultural competence
- time management and personal effectiveness
- leadership: practitioner, partner and leader roles
- genomics
- bioinformatics

Our new ACFs will also have access to the Faculty Academic Development Programme (formerly New Academics and Fellows Programme) from September 2024. This open programme aims to support the FBMH academic community with the skills they need to carry out high quality research, teaching and learning and social responsibility (the three core goals of the University of Manchester). This programme provides valuable networking opportunities with peers and experienced academics. ACFs with evidence of teaching, learning and work that enhances the student experience (including research supervision and support) will also be supported to gain professional recognition (internationally recognised [Advance HE Fellowship](#)).

For further information and to register on the programme email acadresdev@manchester.ac.uk

Other modules and opportunities

ACFs can use up to £4,500 over the 3 years of their posts towards course fees for an NIHR approved qualification, or against appropriate research modules and units available within the University. Please contact the IAT Team to enquire whether any proposed courses can be funded via the Research Training Programme fund prior to applying or registering for any internal or external courses. Information on current research masters programmes can be found [here](#):

There is a wealth of modules and units on other programmes to which registration can be arranged to fit individual training needs. These include:

[Masters in Public Health](#)

[MSc Health Data Science](#)

[MRes Primary Care](#)

The [Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research](#) offers a number of short courses focused on quantitative social science which must be booked directly in advance. The [University College for Interdisciplinary Learning](#) focusses in online learning on a broad scope of subject matters including '[Leadership in Action](#)'.

These lists are not exhaustive, and if you identify other courses of interest within the University that are consistent **with the remit of the Research Training Programme**, please contact the IAT Team.

ACF Training Sessions

Facilitated by **Professor Rachel Cowen**

A series of ACF specific training workshops are available each year focusing on essential research skills. Planned dates can be found [here](#).

- Ethical Aspects of Clinical Research
- Patient and Public Involvement in Research
- Refereeing of Papers and Grant Applications
- Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Research, and Cultural Competence
- Time Management and Personal Effectiveness
- Leadership: Practitioner, Partner and Leader Roles
- Qualitative Research Skills (NEW SESSION)

It is compulsory that each of the subjects in these sessions is covered during your training as they form part of the specified NIHR academic training programme. You should be able to attend during both research and clinical attachments.

Based on the published dates, you should request professional leave to attend and we recommend you keep a log of these study leave requests. You and your training programme director or academic programme lead may, on discussion, decide that you do not need to attend a specific session, if that subject objective has been met elsewhere and this can be logged in your portfolio. The sessions run on a two-yearly rotation and so if you do miss any sessions in your first year, there should be the opportunity to attend in the third year.

Dr Mumtaz Patel, Deputy Dean, has stated that if you cannot attend due to ward commitments, despite giving adequate notice for study leave request and having sufficient study leave remaining, it is reasonable for an educational exception report to be submitted to the Guardian of Safe Working (GOSW).

Following each workshop, you will be provided with a Certificate of Attendance for your portfolio.

Mentoring support

ACFs can access further training and career development support via the UoM mentoring service, provided by [Manchester Gold](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/od/learning-pathways/coaching-mentoring-and-cop/mentoring/manchester-gold/): <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/od/learning-pathways/coaching-mentoring-and-cop/mentoring/manchester-gold/>

Specialised Foundation Mentoring Scheme

ACFs, who wish to can sign up to a mentoring scheme for specialised foundation trainees to provide near-peer support for F1s and F2s in the Northwest Deanery.

This hugely rewarding role provides ACFs with an opportunity for development of the important skill of mentoring. Mentors are able to attend an optional training session on mentorship and sign up to the mentoring register. The expectation is to meet mentees 2-3 times per year over a two year period of foundation training. This will hopefully be in the same specialty, but this may not always be possible. A certificate to recognise participation in this scheme will be provided.

To register your interest or discuss further please contact the SFP lead for the scheme at: easwari.kothandaraman@mft.nhs.uk.

Role of the ACF Advisor

In addition to support from your Academic Programme Lead and Academic Supervisor, having an academic advisor can provide further support with your training and career development.

An ACF would normally retain the same Advisor throughout their training but it should be recognised that some flexibility might be beneficial or indeed necessary. ACFs are able to request a change of Advisor at any time. However, in order to establish a meaningful relationship between advisor and advisee, it would seem appropriate that ACF Advisors would be assigned for a minimum of one academic year.

The ACF advisor will be expected to meet with their advisees according to the meeting times outlined on the meeting schedule below. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that:

- An appropriate project and supervisor have been identified early
- To advise and encourage a process *from the outset* leading to the ACF being ready to submit a PhD Fellowship application
- To help the ACF overcome any difficulties that arise
- To identify the most appropriate aspects of the ACF training programme to enable each ACF to achieve their necessary competencies;
 - This may be by undertaking a Masters degree (e.g. MRes) or standalone CPD modules that deliver the ACFs personal training needs mapped onto the NIHR curriculum
 - Or by setting annualised learning and training objectives
- To facilitate the ACFs active engagement in wider training opportunities

ACF Programme Leads, Natalie Cook and Adam Reid will act as point of reference to advisors and to clinical specialty leads, disseminate good practice, liaise with the Integrated Academic Steering Group and the Postgraduate Deanery, and oversee any relevant quality assurance issues.

IAT administration will support the role of the ACF Advisor by providing relevant information in a timely fashion (e.g. monitoring attendance/performance).

Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Open and Responsible Research

The IAT programme and its partner organisations are committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and open, responsible research. Without diversity of thought, perspective and background, and a responsible and inclusive culture and approach to research and academic clinical career development we are restricting ideas, standards, the quality of our research and the range of evidence-based solutions and health and social care challenges we can address.

We are working towards 3 EDI priorities to ensure an **inclusive environment and culture**, training and support to enable diverse ACFs careers and inclusive research to thrive; **diversity and equity across our community** through our inclusive policies, practice and guidance in recruitment and training; and **inclusive practice** by monitoring the impact of the programme and meaningfully listening to the experiences of our diverse ACF community.

All ACFs should have read and understood the code of good research conduct, undertake University of Manchester [mandatory EDI training](#) and [research integrity training](#) and will be supported through the IAT programme to embed EDI and an open and responsible approach to their research.

We have a zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and discrimination re-enforced through the University of Manchester Dignity@Work and Study Policy. All ACFs should read and understand the policy. If you or someone you know has experienced or witnessed any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, gender-based violence, hate or micro-aggressions, or have a safeguarding concern, you can report it anonymously or get support from a trained advisor through our confidential report and support system. [Report + Support - University of Manchester](#)

Links to essential information/training

[Training | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)

[Good Research Conduct | Research and Business Engagement | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)

[Research Integrity Training | Research and Business Engagement | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)

Other useful University EDI & open and responsible research related information

[University research and business engagement \(including governance, ethics and integrity\)](#)

[University EDI strategy](#)

[University EDI Team](#)

[Diversity Training and resources](#)

[Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment of you Research](#)

[Diversity Calendar of Events and Celebrations](#)

[Staff Networks](#)

[ALLOUT Ally Network](#)

NIHR and external EDI related links

[EDI Toolkit \(rdsresources.org.uk\)](#)

[Research Inclusion Strategy 2022 - 2027](#)

[Inclusive Research Course](#)

Peer Support

There are 2 appointed ACF trainee representatives who attend the IAT operational meetings with the leadership team to feedback trainee questions and queries. **There is also a trainee WhatsApp group for further peer support. To be added to this, please contact one of the ACF reps with your mobile number:**

- Samuel Rack sam.rack@nhs.net
- Andi Stanescu andi.stanescu@gmail.com

IAT Trainee Representative Role Description

ACF and ACL Trainee Representatives are defined as current trainees on the Integrated Academic Training (IAT) Programme who act as a conduit between the trainees and the UoM IAT Leadership Team, ensuring issues/feedback/updates are communicated in every direction. IAT Reps have a vital role in supporting the development of a culture that fully supports the clinical academic community. They help to raise awareness of relevant issues and opportunities and act as champions for researcher careers and skills development, reward and recognition.

The expected time required to be allocated to the role will, in general consist of 9 hours of scheduled meetings per academic year plus planning and attending the trainee annual symposium. The time devoted to general responsibilities is estimated to be no more than 1 hour per week.

General responsibilities of this role are to:

Regularly communicate with trainees to learn about issues that affect them

- Attend and contribute to the agenda of the bi-monthly IAT Operations Group Meetings in which the IAT Leadership Team, NHSE representatives, PS staff and link groups meet
- Cascade information from the meeting to trainees and provide input to actions as and when required
- Attend and take the lead on the planning of the IAT annual symposium

Selection process:

It is the responsibility of the IAT programme to appoint at least one ACF and one ACL Rep. The selection process will vary dependent upon the governance processes and needs of the programme, but should be done in an open and transparent way so that the IAT rep pool fully represents the diversity of the clinical academic community.

Monitoring of Clinical Progress

Clinical progress is monitored by the North West Deanery through an Annual Review of Competency Progression (ARCP). This is the formal review of progress that all trainees are required to have for every year they are in training, whether working full or less than full time. The Postgraduate Associate Dean responsible for Academic Trainees is Dr Mumtaz Patel, mumtaz.patel@hee.nhs.uk.

Monitoring of Academic Progress

There are a number of forms available to help structure the monitoring meetings with your APL, academic supervisor and advisor (see table below). The forms are available [HERE](#).

Academic Progress Form 2 is mandatory and should be submitted to icatadmin@manchester.ac.uk before a deadline of **1st May** each year of the programme.

This form will then be reviewed by the IAT team to assess academic progress and a recommendation will be made to the ARCP panel. At the Deanery ARCP, a panel led by the clinical Training Programme Director (TPD) will consider academic progress alongside their assessment of clinical progression. **If this form has not been completed then you will receive an outcome 5.** Please ask if you need help with this.

Evidence of satisfactory academic progress is required at the Deanery ARCP, and progression depends on demonstrating this. Please note that this process is mandatory.

Annual ACF Monitoring and Academic Progress

The following table outlines the formal meetings required for monitoring the Academic Progress of ACFs.

Date	Meeting	With †
Year 1, September	Induction (MANDATORY) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to ACF Programme, Research Training Programme (RTP) and monitoring procedures - Registration form including ORCID - UoM honorary contract paperwork 	ACF Leads ACF Reps
Year 1, Before end-October <i>(Or within the first 3-months of ACF if not an August start)</i>	Project Planning Meeting (Form 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify potential supervisor/s and advisor - Discussion about project and how it will lead to a PhD/ Fellowship - Consider engagement with FBMH Doctoral Academy - Discussion about Training and RTP - Planning: Personal Development Plan (PDP) objectives 	ACF Supervisor <i>or</i> Academic Programme Lead (APL)
Year 1	Advisor meeting (optional) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General planning for the year including mapping of baseline competencies against the curriculum and setting agreed PDP targets for ARCP - Plans for obtaining intended competencies - Discussion about clinical-academic training 	ACF Advisor
ANNUALLY Before 1 st May	Academic Progress Form - Form 2 (MANDATORY) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress – outputs (abstracts, presentations, papers) - Generic academic competencies (for academic ARCP) - Planning for fellowship applications - Discussion about project and training - Engagement with FBMH Doctoral Academy and/or FBMH Fellowship Academy - The documentation from this meeting to be submitted to the ACF Co-Leads at icatadmin@manchester.ac.uk 	ACF supervisor/ APL/Advisor

APL and Training Programme Directors (TPDs) can be invited to **any** of the Progress meetings, but are not routinely expected; however, we particularly recommend this if difficulties hampering progression are encountered. A summary of each meeting during the monitoring of ACFs will be sent to the appropriate TPD.

PLEASE NOTE: It is your responsibility to organise these meetings with the appropriate people in plenty of time and ensure you send your completed forms to meet the deadline.

Academic Clinical Fellows: Training and Competency Curriculum mapping exercise

Item	Needed?	OPPORTUNITIES/PLANS TO ATTAIN SKILL
Statistics	CORE SKILL	Additional statistical training as appropriate for project: arrange via supervisor or seek advice Multiple short courses via: UoM Introduction to Statistics Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMI) - The University of Manchester
Clinical trial design	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session* Within team experience
Epidemiology		Masters Public Health (MPH) on line module (15 credits)
Ethical aspects of clinical research	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session*
Project design, planning, costing and management	CORE SKILL	Project/workplace learning: Fellowship application, Doctoral Academy, Fellowship Academy Within team experience Suggest engaging with <i>The NIHR Research Design Service for the North West</i> if research involves NHS patients
Research governance & the regulatory framework for research		Epigeum on-line CPD course
Good Clinical Practice (GCP)	CORE SKILL	Epigeum on-line CPD course NHS GCP courses and add certificate to portfolio
Patient and public involvement in research	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session* Research Support Workshops: Communicating your Research to the Public VOCAL: https://wearevocal.org/
Refereeing of papers and grant applications	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session* Seek opportunities with supervisor, evidence required. This is about understanding the process and needs, not becoming a reviewer!
Diversity and equal opportunities in research, and cultural competence	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session* GCP Training TEDI modules for University of Manchester staff TEDI modules available online via Deanery VOCAL: https://wearevocal.org/opportunities/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-research-advisory-group-brag/
Time management and personal effectiveness	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session*

Item	Needed?	OPPORTUNITIES/PLANS TO ATTAIN SKILL
		Utilise developmental resources of Vitae: http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/428241/Researcher-Development-Framework.html
Leadership: Practitioner, Partner and Leader roles	CORE SKILL	ACF mandatory training session* MPH online module (15 credits) Management: Leadership and Teams
Qualitative research Skills		ACF training session* (ACFs pursuing qualitative projects are strongly encouraged to take this up) MPH online module (15 credits)
Genomics		Genomics England: https://www.genomicsengland.co.uk/research/academic NHSE: https://www.england.nhs.uk/genomics/nhs-genomic-med-service/ https://www.genomicseducation.hee.nhs.uk/ Wellcome Connecting Science
Bioinformatics	OPTIONAL	MPH online biostatistics module (15 credits) NoWGEN Translation Manchester: Translational research support in Manchester Informatics training
Bespoke training needs	PROJECT SPECIFIC	Plan to be entered on project form Research Skills online

*Please also see page 7: Research Training Programme

GP ACF Trainees - Overall Training Pathway

The ACF programme involves an additional year of training when compared to standard GP training. This allows you to have dedicated time for academic work. This time can be distributed throughout the 4 years, but tends to be mainly concentrated in the last two years. Along the way you will need to fulfil the GP training requirements, including passing an Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) and exams. The time at which you choose to take the MRCGP exams can be relatively flexible, but we do have some recommendations based upon the experiences of previous GP ACFs.

- **In ST1** GP ACFs undertake full-time clinical training. There is no formally allocated academic time.
- **In ST2** GP ACFs undertake two 6-month training posts. Over the 12-month period you are required to complete 6 months of training in GP (equivalent to 7 clinical sessions per week for 6 months as per standard GP training requirements). You can consider doing some additional academic work at ST2, as long as this is allowed for in your final two years so that by the completion of training you will have done three years of clinical training and one year of academic training.
- **In ST3/4** GP ACFs distribute clinical and academic work across the two years to best meet individual clinical and academic needs, a decision made in consultation with their educational and academic supervisors. Over the 24-month period you are required to complete 12 months of training in GP (equivalent to 7 clinical sessions per week for 12 months as per standard GP training requirements).

The table below summarises what will be expected of you in each year.

Year of training	Clinical work	Academic time	Education time	Assessments required
ST1	Hospital jobs – 2x 6 months	None formally allocated	Half-day/ week (1 session) GPST teaching on Wednesday afternoons	Workplace Based Assessments WPBAs* Annual Review of Clinical Progress (ARCP), which will cover both clinical and academic ePortfolio entries
ST2	GP Posts - 2x 6 months 12 months of clinical training (7 clinical sessions, 3 educational sessions per week)	Can use half a day of educational time per week towards academic work. Can use more academic time if needed out of the ST3/4 allocation	Half-day/week (1 session) GPST teaching on Wednesday afternoons (on hospital training day) GP tutorial equivalent to 1 session/ week integrated pro-rata across the 12 months	WPBAs* ARCP as above. Think about doing AKT at the end of ST2 especially if considering SCA in ST3

ST3 - 4	GP training post – 12 months of clinical training (7 clinical sessions, 3 educational sessions per week) and 12 months of academic training, distributed over the 24 months	Academic time to complete 12 months in total	1 day/ week (2 sessions) ST3 study release course during the year you sit the CSA. Counts as 2 educational sessions GP tutorial equivalent to 1 session/ week integrated pro-rata across the 24 months	WPBA* ARCP Recommended to do SCA and AKT when feel ready
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Please refer to the latest requirements cited on the RCGP website: <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams>

There are 2 exams required for MRCGP and completion of training. The Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) is a multiple choice exam taken prior to the Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA) which is an OSCE type exam. The AKT is normally done in ST2/3 and the CSA can be done in ST3/4. The exact time depends on when you are ready and should be discussed with both your academic and clinical educational supervisors. We strongly advise you to attend the ST3 Study Release Course (SRC) in the year you intend to sit the SCA. Completing the SCA in the ST3 year has the advantage that it frees up more time for research activity in ST4, but you do need to be confident that your consultation skills are ready and it depends on the overall work you want to complete in ST3/4.

The Division of Population Health, Health Services Research and Primary Care

The research undertaken in the [Division](#) is diverse and multidisciplinary. There are researchers with a wide range of skills and from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds including social science, statistics, public health, informatics etc. Early on in your programme you will be introduced to the Centre Leads and encouraged to make contact with researchers leading programmes of work which you find interesting.

You will be expected to be self-directed in this, seeking out and meeting with researchers with whom you might like to work. This may seem a bit daunting at first, but you will be supported by your academic educational supervisor. Researchers will be delighted to engage with you, as you are enthusiastic, have clinical expertise, and represent potential research help which would come at no cost to the projects. Most will bite your hand off to have a clinician with free time to contribute to their work! You will be encouraged to work with researchers to gain a range of skills which might include, for example, qualitative interviewing and preparing articles for publication. In addition to your training programme, you will be encouraged to take part in the full range of activities in the [Centre for Primary Care & Health Services Research](#), including the regular research seminars (which take place on Tuesday lunchtimes at 1pm).

Research Groups in the Centre for Primary Care

The [Centre for Primary Care & Health Services Research](#) is acknowledged internationally to be one of the UK's leading research centres for research in primary care. The Centre for Primary Care is a founder member of the prestigious [NIHR School for Primary Care Research](#), a collaboration of 9 leading primary care departments in England.

The Centre makes a major contribution to the:

- [NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Research Collaboration \(GM PSRC\)](#)
- [Department of Health Policy Research Unit for NHS Commissioning \(PruComm\)](#)
- [NIHR ARC for Greater Manchester](#)

The work of the Centre is supported by multidisciplinary staff including general practitioners, psychiatrists, sociologists, psychologists, statisticians and health services researchers. You will have the opportunity to work with colleagues from the PSRC, PruComm, and ARC GM – it is up to you to investigate what is available and make the required links. Your academic educational supervisor will be able to support you in this.

The Centre also aims to support and promote the involvement of patients and the public in health research, through our Patient and Public Involvement Group PRIMER.