# Lothian Clinical Academic Research Pathways Partnership

# Clinical Academic Research Gateway Funding

# Pre-Doctoral Gateway Award

## Description

This is a funded opportunity for NMAHPPS professionals who have demonstrated that they are committed to pursuing a clinical academic career and are working towards the submission of an externally funded and highly competitive PhD studentship. These studentship would normally be full-time salaried opportunities, typically matching the professional’s clinical salary and includes academic fees, and are likely to be highly competitive and open to all healthcare professionals including doctors. Recent examples include Chief Scientist Office Clinical Academic Fellowships and University of Edinburgh - Edinburgh Clinical Academic Training (ECAT-I), Advanced Care Research Centre (ACRC), Multi-Morbidity Research Programme (with Glasgow University and St Andrews University), Carnegie PhD Scholarships. There are also numerous awards made by charitable foundations such as Wellcome, Medical Research Council, and Alzheimer Society[[1]](#footnote-1).

Other PhD studentships may be offered by universities that are based on a stipend award (typically a minimum of approx. £16k per annum). These types of applications would not normally be considered for this Gateway Award as they may not involve the same high level of competition and are typically less sought after by NMAHPPS professionals.

The Pre-Doctoral Gateway Award is not intended for application for clinical/professional doctorates or PhD by publication.

The Pre-doctoral Gateway Award will provide funded time and mentorship and will include opportunities for networking, support and feedback on the written application, preparation of an accompanying curriculum vitae and interview practice. The funding in this award is for 13 days over a 6 month period and will be paid to the service for backfill for the post holder. There is no additional funding for training or travel.

Where possible, the identified mentor is likely to be employed by the host institution where the PhD will be undertaken. However, it is recognised that some relevant PhD studentships will only be available in academic institutions that are not formally part of the Gateway Award Partnership. In this situation the mentor could still be from one of the partner academic institutions or more likely to be one of the professional research leads in NHS Lothian.

## Aims

1. To provide early to mid-career NMAHPPS professionals who have demonstrated a commitment to a clinical academic research career the opportunity prepare a competitive application for an externally funded, full time PhD studentship.
2. To provide mentorship that will enable professional and academic networking to enhance the studentship application and develop opportunities for future collaboration.
3. To coach the applicant for a competitive application process including interview preparation.

## Target Group

Early to mid-career NMAHPPS professionals who have demonstrated commitment to a clinical academic career and have a well-defined research topic that aligns with strategic priorities for NHS Lothian.

Applicants would be expected to have a clear intention to undertake a PhD as part of their career plan and are actively engaged in pursuing opportunities.

Applicants would be expected to hold a Master’s level qualification (or evidence of postgraduate study at SCQF Level 11).

## Criteria for Application

* In a substantive post employed by NHS Lothian
* Intention to apply for a ‘salaried’ PhD studentship rather than PhD that comes with a stipend, PhD by publication or clinical/professional doctorate
* Demonstration of interest and involvement in research during career to date, which has been identified in personal development plan and discussed with line manager
* Clear evidence of a research topic and questions including preliminary literature review and rationale for investigation that demonstrate link to practice priorities
* Outline identification of potential research methodology, including consideration of scope of study (e.g. qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods; single/multi-site; target subject group)
* Evidence of discussion with potential supervisor/director of studies in host institution with confirmation that would be accepted on PhD programme.

## Criteria for Award

* Support from immediate line manager to be released for study leave
* Clarification from candidate and line manager that any identified area of research interest is relevant to NHS Lothian priorities
* Confirmation that data collection for PhD study will be include NHS Lothian as a study site
* Application demonstrates academic ability to provide rationale for focus of study and suitable outline research methodology
* Demonstration of clear intention to apply for PhD studentship as part of career pathway regardless of outcome of application for this award

## Expected Outcomes

Evidence that PhD application submitted.

## Next Steps

If the PhD application is successful there should be ongoing engagement with the candidate to identify the most appropriate ways to maintain contact with NHS Lothian during the period of the studentship. If the studentship is a full-time commitment there may be opportunities to establish a formal ‘Clinical Home’ with a relevant service (which may be different to the place of employment at the time of application but would still be in NHS Lothian) that would confer an honorary contract and explicit mutually-agreed objectives for that ongoing involvement.

If the PhD application is unsuccessful candidates will be invited to continue to engage with their appropriate professional lead and mentor for other opportunities. However, the individual would not be eligible for a second Pre-Doctoral Gateway Award to make an application to a different funder.

1. An overview of PhD funding programmes and submission dates is available on the Royal College of Nursing [research funding opportunities web pages](https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/research-and-innovation/research-funding-opportunities) – the majority of those advertised are open to all healthcare professionals. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)