

Tuition Fees Award (Clinical Doctorate Programme at the University of Stirling)

29 April 2024

Full Details, Terms and Conditions

1. Introduction

NHS Lothian Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions (NMAHP) Directorate has entered into a collaborative agreement with the University of Stirling (Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport) jointly to support full tuition fee costs of part-time postgraduate research training in the form of the University's Clinical Doctorate programme for a number of NMAHPs employed by the Board. These opportunities are intended for staff at the early stage of their research career development, regardless of the stage of their clinical career development. This will serve to promote research capacity and capability by building a sustainable caucus of NMAHPs within NHS Lothian developing research skills and knowledge alongside their developing clinical skills and knowledge. Ultimately it will sustain a higher volume of quality applied healthcare research amongst these professions in the Board area.

2. Types of training supported

This collaborative agreement will support only part-time registration on the University of Stirling's Clinical Doctorate programme leading to the qualification of Doctor of Nursing, Midwifery, or Professional Health Studies:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/courses/pg-taught/health-sciences-sport/clinical-doctorates/>

3. Types of funding available

NHS Lothian and the University of Stirling have agreed jointly to contribute the full cost of tuition fees for the duration of study (minimum of 4 years and maximum of 8 years). No other form of financial support (e.g. salary backfill, other study expenses) is available to successful applicants.

4. Process of awarding funding

Awards will be made following a competitive application process open to all registered Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals¹ employed by NHS Lothian. Staff on fixed term contracts can apply only for awards whose duration would not extend beyond the last day of their contract. Individuals with NHS Lothian honorary contract status only are not eligible for an award.

Applicants are required to complete and return an application form.

Interviews will form part of the selection process. The Awards Panel will comprise NHS Lothian's Executive Director for Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions or the Director of Allied Health Professions, and the NHS Lothian

¹ The eligible AHP Professions are Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech & Language Therapy, Dietetics, Podiatry, Radiography, Prosthetics, Orthotics, Orthoptics, and Arts Therapies.

representatives of the Lothian NMAHP Research Strategy Group². Following interviews the Awards Panel will consider which, if any, applicants should be funded in order to maximise organisational benefit and minimise organisational risk.

Importantly, awards will be conditional on applicants providing written evidence of the offer of a place on the University's Clinical Doctorate programme commencing in the same calendar year. Applicants should contact the Programme Director for information on entry requirements and how to apply for a place i.e. this is a separate process and the offer of an award does not guarantee a place on the course.

Applications will be viewed particularly favourably where they demonstrate:

- Investigation of an applied healthcare research question
 - in a subject area of strategic importance to NHS Lothian, and
 - with potential to benefit NHS Lothian patients in the short to medium term
- A clearly articulated scientific case for studying the question
- A clearly articulated and feasible proposed methodology (where appropriate)
- The applicant's interest in research, as demonstrated by previous research activities and achievements, and an intention to pursue research knowledge, skills and activity beyond the timeframe of the award.
- A conceptual connection to other recent or ongoing research work in Lothian.

5. Terms and conditions of awards

Award recipients' existing employment terms and conditions with NHS Lothian will be unaffected by the receipt of this award.

All provisions described in NHS Lothian's Study Leave Policy are applicable to these awards. Award recipients should pay particular attention to the repayment requirements regarding NHS Lothian's contribution to course fees should they leave NHS Lothian employment or decide to leave the course prior to completion.

5.1 Contract of Agreement

On receipt of the offer of an award a successful applicant will be required to sign a Contract of Agreement to confirm in writing that they accept the offer of award on the basis of the specified terms and conditions. The Contract of Agreement will detail the following:

5.1.1 Agreed aims, research questions, and intended outputs and outcomes of study

The agreed aims, specific research questions, and intended outputs and outcomes of the funded period of study will be detailed in the Contract of Agreement. These will reflect those described in the applicant's successful application for an award except in those circumstances where funding is awarded by the Awards Panel on condition of amendments to the aims, questions and intended outputs and outcomes described in the application.

² Prof Juliet MacArthur, Chief Nurse Research and Andy Peters, AHP Research and Development Facilitator

5.1.2 Duration of awards

The Contract of Agreement will stipulate the start and end dates of the period of award. The period of award will be a minimum of 4 years and a maximum of 8 years except in those circumstances described in 5.1.6.1-5.1.6.8.

5.1.3 Study leave arrangements

Where a recipient of an award requires time away from their NHS Lothian post(s) to pursue their study the recipient will need to have gained agreement for this with their service manager(s) via standard NHS Lothian study leave request procedures. Details of the study leave agreed will be documented in the Contract of Agreement.

5.1.4 Payment mechanisms

Payment of contributions to tuition fees expenses will be conducted directly between NHS Lothian and the University of Stirling. Payments will be authorised by an NHS Lothian representative of Lothian's NMAHP Research Strategy Group.

Award recipients will have no role or responsibilities with regard to this process. However, if an award recipient receives an invoice for tuition fees from the University they should inform one of the Lothian representatives of Lothian's NMAHP Research Strategy Group immediately.

5.1.5 Reporting mechanisms

Recipients of an award will be required to provide Progress Reports at 12 months from the date of commencement of award, and annually thereafter up to the Final Report.

Progress Reports will cover:

- Teaching modules attended
- Course assignments completed
- Occurrence of academic supervision and meetings with the line manager
- Any impact of study on service
- Instances of other outputs such as networking, conference presentations, and publications
- Any issues encountered.

The Final Report will provide an overview of the recipient's personal and research achievements as a result of receiving the award. It will also include the recipient's views on their future engagement in research and the potential next steps for their research study/activity.

All Progress Reports and Final Reports will need to be countersigned by the recipient's line or service manager and their academic supervisor.

5.1.6 Termination and suspension of awards

All awards will automatically terminate at the end of the award period (see section 5.1.2) except in certain circumstances described in sections 5.1.6.1-5.1.6.8.

In circumstances where the award is terminated prematurely (see sections 5.1.6.1-5.1.6.3) the following will apply:

- A Final Report may be requested (as per the specifications in section 5.1.5).

- Repayment of NHS Lothian's contribution towards course fees will be required of the award recipient, as described in NHS Lothian's Study Leave Policy.
- Recipients will have a right of appeal against a decision to terminate the award.

It is the responsibility of the recipient of an award to inform one of the NHS Lothian representatives of Lothian's NMAHP Research Strategy Group of any of the circumstances described in sections 5.1.6.1-5.1.6.7 below at the earliest opportunity:

5.1.6.1 Recipient leaves NHS Lothian employment

Where the recipient of an award leaves the employment of NHS Lothian for any reason the award will be terminated on the last day of employment with NHS Lothian. In this circumstance the conditions described in 5.1.6 will apply.

5.1.6.2 Recipient obtains alternative employment within NHS Lothian

Where the recipient of an award leaves the employment of the service with whom a period of study leave was agreed under the terms of the Contract of Agreement, in order to take employment within a different NHS Lothian service, the award will be suspended pending amendment of the Contract of Agreement.

If it is not possible to amend the Contract of Agreement to the satisfaction of all the necessary signatories (particularly the recipient's new service manager) the award will be terminated on the last day of employment by the original service. In this circumstance the conditions described in 5.1.6 will apply.

5.1.6.3 Premature termination of recipient's period of study

Where the recipient of an award gives notice of wishing to terminate their period of study, or their study is terminated for any other reason, the award will be terminated on the last day of the terminated period of study. In this circumstance the conditions described in 5.1.6 will apply.

5.1.6.4 Changes in recipient's contracted hours of employment

Where the recipient of an award seeks a change in their contracted hours of employment with NHS Lothian there may be occasion to amend the Contract of Agreement or suspend or terminate the award. Discussion will be required between the recipient of the award, their service manager, one of NHS Lothian's representatives on Lothian's NMAHP Research Strategy Group, and the academic supervisor to determine if there are grounds for amending the Contract of Agreement or suspending or terminating the award. If the award is terminated then the conditions described in 5.1.6 will apply.

5.1.6.5 Maternity/paternity/parental leave

Where the recipient of an award takes maternity, paternity, or parental leave and seeks the suspension of their studies for a definite period covering all or part of this leave then the award may be suspended for the period in question and the Contract of Agreement amended accordingly. The capping limit for the duration of awards (see section 5.1.2) may in such circumstances be extended by a period equal to the period of suspension of the award agreed by all signatories to the Contract of Agreement.

Where the recipient of an award chooses not to return to work with NHS Lothian after a period of maternity leave the terms and conditions described in section 5.1.6.1 will apply.

5.1.6.6 Sickness absence

The awards are unaffected by any periods of short term sickness absence of recipients from their NHS Lothian employment.

Where recipients of awards experience a period of long term sickness absence (as defined by NHS Lothian HR policy) from their NHS Lothian employment and requests the suspension of their studies for a definite period covering all or part of this leave then the award may be suspended for the period in question and the Contract of Agreement amended accordingly. The capping limit for the duration of awards (see section 5.1.2) may in such circumstances be extended by a period equal to the period of suspension of the award agreed by all signatories to the Contract of Agreement.

The award will, subject to discussions with Occupational Health and HR and any relevant changes in employment, be reinstated on return to work and resumption of study.

If the recipient of an award is not able to return to work following a period of long term sickness absence the award will be terminated. The requirement to submit a Final Progress Report will be waived in such circumstances.

5.1.6.7 Recipient seeks a suspension of study for other reasons

Where the recipient of an award gives notice of wishing to suspend their study for a fixed period, for reasons other than those described in sections 5.1.6.5 and 5.1.6.6, the signatories to the Contract of Agreement will enter discussions to determine whether the award should be suspended for the equivalent period of time. If the award is suspended in this way the Contract of Agreement will be amended accordingly.

Requests by recipients of an award to suspend their study indefinitely, for reasons other than those described in sections 5.1.6.5 and 5.1.6.6 will be regarded as requests to terminate their study and the conditions described in section 5.1.6 will apply.

5.1.6.8 Unsatisfactory Progress Reports

Where Progress Reports (see section 5.1.5) submitted by recipients of awards are deemed unsatisfactory NHS Lothian has the right to terminate the award. In such circumstances NHS Lothian will give the recipient one month's written notice of termination of their award.

5.1.7 Required signatories

The Contract of Agreement relating to an award will be an agreement between the recipient of the award and NHS Lothian. The Contract of Agreement will be signed by the Board's Executive Director, Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions or an NHS Lothian member of the NMAHP Research Strategy Group on behalf of the Board. The Contract of Agreement will be countersigned by the recipient's service manager in those instances where the intended period of study requires study leave from normal duties.

Copies of the written agreements will be retained by all parties.