

THE BIRMINGHAM CANCER RESEARCH UK CLINICAL ACADEMIC TRAINING PROGRAMME

CLINICAL RESEARCH TRAINING FELLOWSHIP PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDANCE

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Background to the Clinical Research Training Fellowships (CRTFs)

The University of Birmingham was awarded [Cancer Research UK Clinical Academic Training Programme](#) funding in 2024. This funding is intended to support development of clinical academics in cancer related fields, aligned with and accelerating the translational outputs from Birmingham's three core complementary research strengths:

- Cancer Immunology
- Cancer Genomics and Epigenetics
- Tumour Microenvironment and Metabolism

We are therefore looking to fund one, three-year, Clinical Research Training Fellowship project starting in September 2027.

The Clinical Research Training Fellowship offers an excellent opportunity for clinical academic training in an exciting, multidisciplinary environment and routinely attracts outstanding candidates.

Funding envelope of up to £265,000 to cover:

- Salary - for three years,
- Running expenses – approximately £13,500 annually for three years
 - Under 'Running expenses', up to £1,500 from the overall budget is ringfenced for researcher development activities to attend conferences, external training courses or workshops (registration, travel, etc).
- PhD tuition fees



Who can apply?

Candidate eligibility

Clinical Research Training Fellowships are only open to applicants with a medical degree that are currently undertaking clinical training and are expected to return to this in the UK, following completion of the PhD.

Supervisor eligibility

Supervisors must meet requirements detailed in the [University's code of practice on the supervision and monitoring progress of postgraduate researchers](#). This includes that:

- The contract of the lead supervisor must cover the length of the studentship.
- At least one of the supervisors must have previously supervised a student through to successful completion of a PhD or MD.
- Each member of the supervisory team should normally be a member of the University teaching or research staff, who is experienced in and actively engaged in research, who holds a research degree at the same level as, or higher than, the degree being supervised or who has appropriate equivalent experience or professional qualifications or status.
- Postdoctoral researchers are permitted to act as co-supervisors provided that the contract of employment covers the normal duration of the postgraduate researcher's registered programme of study.
- In exceptional cases (see 2.15 in the [University's code of practice on the supervision and monitoring progress of postgraduate researchers](#)), the co-supervisor may be appointed from outside the University.

In addition:

- Supervisors are only permitted to act as lead supervisor for one CRUK CRTF at a time and will not be eligible to apply for a further CRTF until the current student is in their final year.
- To ensure a high quality of supervision for students, the lead supervisor can hold no more than four PhD students as first supervisor at the start of the proposed project.
- Supervisors must have a track record of high-quality research.
- A minimum of two supervisors are required for each project. PhD students must be supervised by a minimum of 2 supervisors, where at least one is a clinical academic. Details of additional supervisors should be included if applicable.

Project eligibility

Projects must be directly relevant to cancer and should fit within Birmingham's core research themes:

- Cancer Immunology
- Cancer Genomics & Epigenetics
- Tumour Microenvironment & Metabolism

Expectations for supervisors and fellows upon award of PhD

Training

Formal training is an important part of the Clinical Academic Training Programme.

- Successful supervisors will be required to undertake refresher supervisor training before the studentship starts.
- Supervisors and fellows will be required to comply with College and Programme training requirements. This may include courses available through the Graduate School and other DTP programmes, regular attendance at relevant local seminar series and MSc course modules.
- Supervisors should enable and encourage fellows to incorporate regular clinic time to ensure clinical skills are maintained throughout the fellowship.

Timeframes

Each full time Clinical Research Training Fellowship is for a period of three years.

- All students are expected to submit their thesis within the agreed registration period.

Research engagement

A condition of Cancer Research UK funding is that supervisors and students are expected to participate in research engagement activities. This includes but is not limited to:

- Provision of online content (e.g. webpages, Twitter)
- Speaking at events to raise the profile of the Programme and Cancer Research UK
- Support for activities such as laboratory tours or school visits
- Engagement with widening participation activities (e.g. mentorship through In2Science network)
- Commitment to offer a short term (2 week) summer placement within the host lab bi-annually for the duration of the studentship



Application form guidance

Extensive guidance is provided within the application form.

Reminders

- Please adhere to stated word limits. Applications exceeding these will not be reviewed.
- The 1,200 word limit for the scientific proposal excludes references.
- Preliminary data is encouraged and up to 2 pages (A4) may be appended to the application.
- If running costs are likely to exceed the amount available through the studentship, details of additional funding sources should be given in the “timescale and feasibility” section.
- Any ethical approval and / or an animal license will need to be in place before funding can be released.

Authorisation

Applications must be signed by:

- Lead supervisor
- School Director – to confirm support for the proposal and that appropriate space and facilities exist within the Institute.
 - An email of support in lieu of an electronic signature will be accepted and should be included with the application at the time of submission.

Submission

Deadline for submission of full application is **Monday 1st February 2027**.

An electronic copy of the project proposal should be emailed to Fayeon Fyfield-Calder (ecmcbham@contacts.bham.ac.uk) along with the **other documents** required which are **specific to the Clinical Research Training Fellow candidate applying**, namely:

- A **detailed CV**, including your nationality and country of birth;
- Names and addresses of two **referees**, ideally who have supervised your laboratory research, but excluding proposed supervisors for the project;
- A **personal statement** highlighting your research experience/capabilities and your reason for applying;
- Copies of your **degree certificates** with transcripts;
- Evidence of your proficiency in the English language, if applicable.

Review process information

Applications will be reviewed by a Studentship Review Panel, chaired by Programme Lead, Professor Gary Middleton and made up of clinical and academic researchers across the core themes.

Reviewers will score and provide feedback based on:

- alignment with the Cancer Research UK's aims and Birmingham's core research themes
- scientific excellence
- feasibility
- training opportunities
- translational line of sight

Successful applicants will be required to follow local approval procedures.

Key contacts

Please direct all enquiries to Fayeon Fyfield-Calder in the first instance.