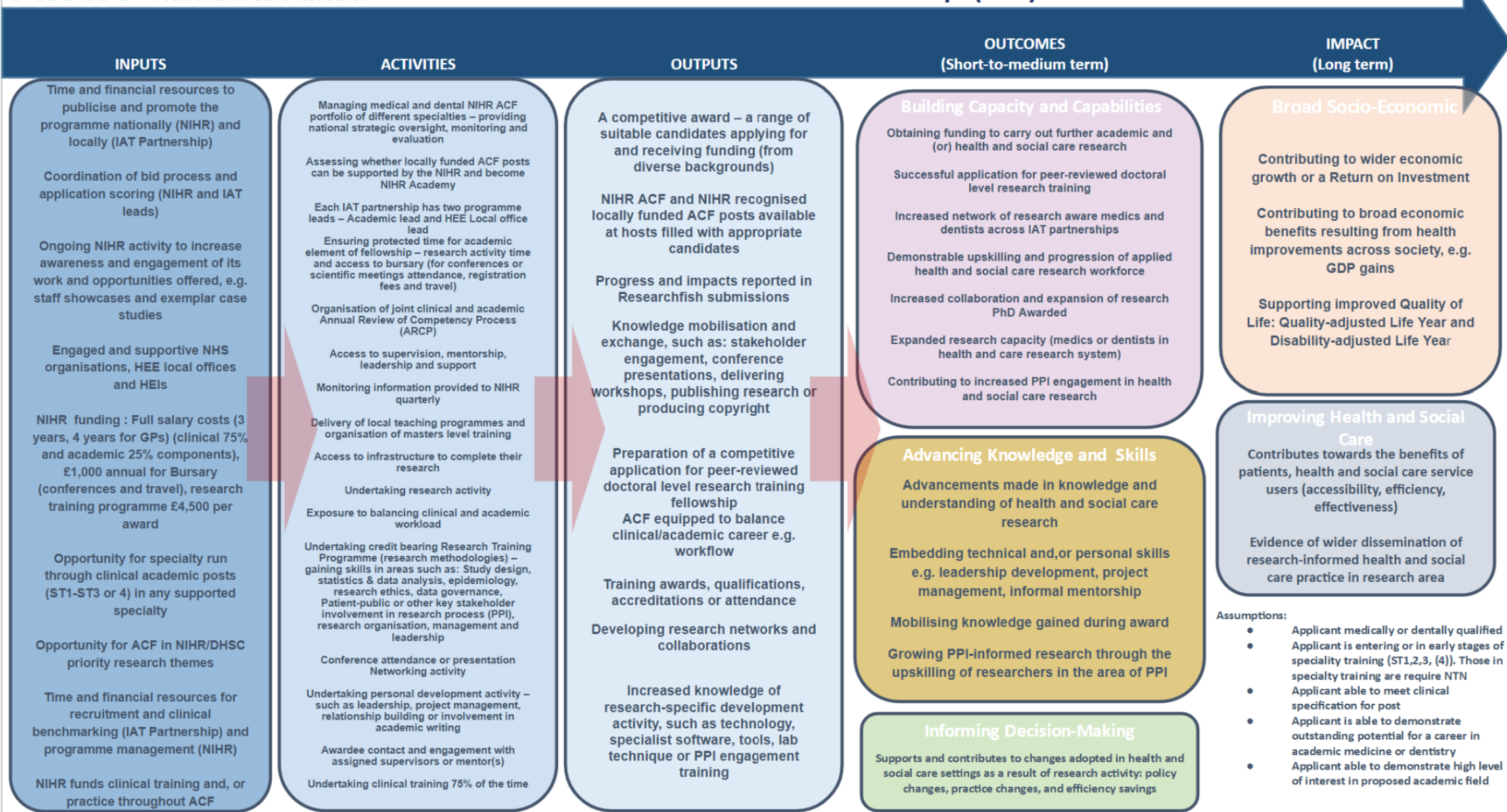


NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF)



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Introduction

The Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) is a pre-doctoral career development award offered through the Integrated Academic Training (IAT) programme. The ACF is available to medics and dentists which incorporates academic training into their clinical practice. The ACF offers access to Masters-level research training in order to develop academic skills, and allows for 25% of an awardee's time to be spent in research or educational training. As a career development award, it supports the core workstream 'Attracting, training and supporting the best researchers... to tackle complex health and social care challenges' from Best Research for Best Health: The Next Chapter. In turn, this will contribute to the overarching mission of the NIHR which is to improve the health and wealth of the nation.

The NIHR uses logic models to visually represent how a programme or research award is expected to achieve the outcomes, and resultant impact, that are defined during the development process of a programme or research award. A logic model then becomes an important tool in the process of evaluating a programme or award, which in turn guides a learning process of how a programme can be altered to better achieve its aims. The logic model is a linear flow diagram that reads from left to right, and is divided into the following sections: inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes and impact.

Inputs

The first section in the logic model for the NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship is the 'inputs'. The inputs are the resources that are made available so that the programme can operate and achieve its defined goals. The inputs in this logic model are:

- Time and financial resources to publicise and promote the programme nationally (NIHR) and locally (IAT Partnership)
- Coordination of bid process and application scoring (NIHR and IAT leads)
- Ongoing NIHR activity to increase awareness and engagement of its work and opportunities offered, e.g. staff showcases and exemplar case studies
- Engaged and supportive NHS organisations, HEE local offices and HEIs
- NIHR funding : Full salary costs (3 years, 4 years for GPs) (clinical 75% and academic 25% components), £1,000 annual for Bursary (conferences and travel), research training programme £4,500 per award
- Opportunity for specialty run through clinical academic posts (ST1-ST3 or 4) in any supported specialty
- Opportunity for ACF in NIHR/DHSC priority research themes
- Time and financial resources for recruitment and clinical benchmarking (IAT Partnership) and programme management (NIHR)
- NIHR funds clinical training and, or practice throughout ACF

Activities

Following the logic model from left to right, the next part of this logic model is the activities section. These are the activities of the NIHR and the researchers who hold the awards, using the resources provided by the logic model inputs.

- Managing medical and dental NIHR ACF portfolio of different specialties – providing national strategic oversight, monitoring and evaluation
- Assessing whether locally funded ACF posts can be supported by the NIHR and become NIHR Academy
- Each IAT partnership has two programme leads – Academic lead and HEE Local office lead
- Ensuring protected time for academic element of fellowship – research activity time and access to bursary (for conferences or scientific meetings attendance, registration fees and travel)
- Organisation of joint clinical and academic Annual Review of Competency Process (ARCP)
- Access to supervision, mentorship, leadership and support
- Monitoring information provided to NIHR quarterly
- Delivery of local teaching programmes and organisation of masters level training
- Access to infrastructure to complete their research
- Undertaking research activity
- Exposure to balancing clinical and academic workload
- Undertaking credit bearing Research Training

- Programme (research methodologies) – gaining skills in areas such as: Study design, statistics & data analysis, epidemiology, research ethics, data governance, Patient-public or other key stakeholder involvement in research process (PPI), research organisation, management and leadership
- Conference attendance or presentation
- Networking activity
- Undertaking personal development activity – such as leadership, project management, relationship building or involvement in academic writing
- Awardee contact and engagement with assigned supervisors or mentor(s)
- Undertaking clinical training 75% of the time

Outputs

The next stage in the logic model, after the activities section, are the outputs. The outputs arise as a direct result of the previously defined activities. The outputs for this logic model are:

- A competitive award – a range of suitable candidates applying for and receiving funding (from diverse backgrounds)
- NIHR ACF and NIHR recognised locally funded ACF posts available at hosts filled with appropriate candidates
- Progress and impacts reported in Researchfish submissions
- Knowledge mobilisation and exchange, such as: stakeholder engagement, conference presentations, delivering workshops, publishing research or producing copyright
- Preparation of a competitive application for peer-reviewed doctoral level research training fellowship
- ACF equipped to balance clinical academic career (e.g. workflow)
- Training awards, qualifications, accreditations or attendance
- Developing research networks and collaborations
- Increased knowledge of research-specific development activity, such as technology, specialist software, tools, lab technique or PPI engagement training

Outcomes

The fourth part of the logic model is the outcomes section. Outcomes are the measurable, often medium-to-long-term, changes that we expect to see as a result of the programme or award taking place. The outcomes for this model are divided into the following five different sub-sections: building capacity, advancing knowledge

and skills, informing decision-making, broad socio-economic, and health impact. The outcomes within each of the five sub-sections are listed here:

Building Capacity and Capabilities:

- Obtaining funding to carry out further academic and (or) health and social care research
- Successful application for peer-reviewed doctoral level research training
- Increased network of research aware medics and dentists across IAT partnerships
- Demonstrable upskilling and progression of applied health and social care research workforce
- Increased collaboration and expansion of research
- PhD Awarded
- Expanded research capacity (medics or dentists in health and care research system)
- Contributing to increased PPI engagement in health and social care research

Advancing Knowledge and Skills:

- Advancements made in knowledge and understanding of health and social care research
- Embedding technical and/or personal skills e.g. leadership development, project management, informal mentorship
- Mobilising knowledge gained during award
- Growing PPI-informed research through the upskilling of researchers in the area of PPI

Informing Decision-Making:

- Supports and contributes to changes adopted in health and social care settings as a result of research activity: policy changes, practice changes, and efficiency savings

Broad Socio-Economic:

- Contributing to wider economic growth or a Return on Investment
- Contributing to broad economic benefits resulting from health improvements across society, e.g. GDP gains
- Supporting improved Quality of Life: Quality-adjusted Life Year and Disability-adjusted Life Year

Improving Health and Social Care:

- Contributes towards the benefits of patients, health and social care service users (accessibility, efficiency, effectiveness)
- Evidence of wider dissemination of research-informed health and social care practice in research area

Assumptions

The assumptions included within the logic model are underlying principles, ideas, and beliefs that we hold about how an award will work. The assumptions may be about a number of different things, such as the external or internal environment of the award, relevant stakeholders participation, or the problem that it seeks to address. The assumptions included in this logic model are:

- Applicant medically or dentally qualified
- Applicant is entering or in early stages of speciality training (ST1,2,3, (4)). Those in specialty training are require NTN
- Applicant able to meet clinical specification for post
- Applicant is able to demonstrate outstanding potential for a career in academic medicine or dentistry
- Applicant able to demonstrate high level of interest in proposed academic field

Contributions and acknowledgements

The NIHR supports the principles of open research, including full and appropriate recognition of the many varied contributions to the creation of knowledge. Those that have contributed to this work are listed alphabetically according to their surname.

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