

HSC Research and Development 2018 Doctoral Fellowship Awards

Guidance Notes

***June 2017
(Version 1.1)***

Closing date for applications: **WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2017 AT 2PM**

The application form should be saved as a .pdf file and submitted by e-mail to eimear.cowan@hscni.net. All the signatories who have e-signed the application declaration page (section 15b) must be cc'd into the submission email.

Contents

	Page
PART 1	
1 Introduction	3
2 Eligibility	3
3 Scope	4
4 Application Process	5
5 Evaluation	6
6 Notification	7
7 Successful Applicants	8
 PART 2	
Guidance for Completion of Application Forms	10-14

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Health & Social Care Research & Development Division of the Public Health Agency (HSC R&D Division) offers Doctoral Fellowships to support research training in Northern Ireland. The scheme forms part of a commitment to increase the ability of researchers to conduct high quality R&D and for managers and professionals to be aware of, and act upon, the results.
- 1.2 Doctoral Fellowships are intended to enable individuals undertake research training as a means of developing a research career in health and social care, and to follow a training programme leading to a PhD. Doctoral Fellowships represent a significant investment for HSC R&D Division and for the individual fellow. It is essential that applicants intend to pursue a long-term career in HSC R&D and must be prepared to demonstrate their commitment to research.
- 1.3 All inquiries and correspondence relating to the HSC R&D Doctoral Fellowship Scheme should be addressed to:

Strand Administrator: Mrs Eimear Cowan eimear.cowan@hscni.net
Programme Manager: Dr Naomh Gallagher & Dr Clive Wolsley

HSC R&D Division
4th Floor, Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street
BELFAST, BT2 8BS
Tel: (028) 9536 3490
<http://www.research.hscni.net/>

2 Eligibility and Remit

- 2.1 The Doctoral Fellowship scheme is intended for individuals **employed in or by Health and Social Care (HSC) or in voluntary/not-for-profit organisations in Northern Ireland involved in health or social care provision.** These include suitably qualified allied health professionals, dentists, health and social care managers, medical staff, nurses, optometrists, pharmacists, social workers, healthcare scientists and other independent contractors. Applicants must be able to demonstrate evidence of a substantive employment contract or a contract with a recognised training agency (e.g. NIMDTA). Awardees will continue to be employed within the HSC or a voluntary/not-for-profit organisation for the duration of the Fellowship and therefore will undertake the Fellowship under the terms and conditions of their existing employment contract including financial arrangements.
- 2.2 Employees of Public Sector Bodies other than Health & Social Care (HSC) Bodies are not eligible to apply under this scheme.
- 2.3 University or other HEI employees are not eligible to apply under this scheme. Joint appointments between universities (and other educational institutions) and HSC Bodies will be treated as if they were full university employees and are, therefore, not eligible for funding. However, applications are welcomed from those undertaking training as part of the Clinical Academic Pathway within the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science at Queen's University Belfast.

- 2.4 All applicants must have obtained agreement and support from their employer for their planned programme of training.
- 2.5 The Doctoral Fellowship programme is intended as an important step for those who wish to pursue a career in health & social care research. Applicants must be able to **demonstrate the benefit that the award** will have for them personally both in terms of research and career advancement.
- 2.6 HSC R&D Division will only support research training applications in which the applicant will be based in a high quality training environment.
- 2.7 **The applicant must be accepted for a higher research degree by an academic institution in Northern Ireland** before starting their research programme as evidenced by the declarations in the application form.
- 2.8 Applicants **must not start their formal research training programme** before receipt of an HSC R&D Doctoral Fellowship. Retrospective applications will be considered invalid. Applications will not be considered for completion of existing research degree programmes or previously funded research activity.
- 2.9 During the Fellowship, the applicant is expected to conduct a high quality piece of **research which is relevant to the HSC**. Research on animals is not eligible under this scheme. Applications for taught or professional doctorates are not eligible under this scheme.
- 2.10 The remit for applications includes **all areas of health and social care**.

3 Scope

- 3.1 The Doctoral Fellowship award is available on a **full-time** or **part-time** basis.
- 3.2 The maximum duration of the award is 3 years full-time or 6 years part-time. Only in exceptional circumstances will any extension for Doctoral Fellows be considered.
- 3.3 Fellowships cannot normally be deferred. **The award must normally commence between April and December 2018.**
- 3.4 The maximum award available for full-time study is **£250,000** over a three-year period. Applicants are advised that all costs should be justified and kept to a minimum. Part-time awards will be made on a pro-rata basis up to the maximum value, and the total time for which support will be provided will be equivalent to three years full-time. Applications which are in excess of this funding limit must explain how the shortfall in funding will be resolved.
- 3.5 The awards will support:

the applicant's basic salary costs (plus employer's contribution to superannuation and national insurance, and normal increments and inflationary pay awards) for the number of sessions/hours devoted to the research training programme, but excluding time spent on professional duties. Promotional increases will not be supported during the tenure of the award. In the circumstances where an applicant is promoted in the period between submission of an application and interview date, the applicant must inform HSC R&D Division as soon as they are aware of the promotional increase

University tuition fees

a contribution towards **research and training expenses up to a maximum of £27,000** (such as travelling expenses relevant to the project, small items of essential equipment which will require full justification, consumables and specific training courses). HSC R&D Division will also support fees and/or travel and subsistence costs for attendance at research conferences.

cost of Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) in any stage of the research project, up to a maximum of £1,500.

3.6 Support will **not** be considered for:

overheads for administering the research training programme

facilities and services generally available within the HSC for the care of patients/clients

facilities and services generally available within the university for the support of students and researchers

4 Application Process

4.1 The closing date for receipt of applications by the HSC R&D Division is:

Wednesday, 18 October 2017 at 2pm

4.2 Applications for Doctoral Fellowship awards can be made only by **the prospective recipient**, and must be submitted on the appropriate application form.

Application forms are available from HSC R&D Division in electronic format. Information can be obtained from the HSC R&D Division website:

<http://www.research.hscni.net/health-social-care-rd-doctoral-fellowship-award-scheme>

4.3 Applicants are asked to complete and submit **an electronic copy of the application form with a e-signed declaration page**

The application form **must be saved as a pdf file**. (A scanned pdf version will not be acceptable). Applicants should use the following filename format based on the applicant's name e.g. DocFellow.smith.john.2018.pdf

Electronic signatures are required on the declaration page (section 15b)

The application form should be submitted by e-mail to eimear.cowan@hscni.net

All the **signatories** (who have e-signed the declaration page) **must be copied into the submission email**.

4.4 If acknowledgement of receipt by the HSC R&D Division is required a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed.

5 Evaluation

- 5.1 All applications will be validated by HSC R&D Division to ensure they meet the defined eligibility criteria and that they adhere to the appropriate format. Any invalid applications will not go forward for further evaluation. Applicants will be notified in writing if an application is deemed invalid.
- 5.2 All valid applications will be evaluated by external referees and by an HSC R&D Doctoral Fellowship Evaluation Panel.
- 5.3 HSC R&D will establish appropriate Evaluation Panels depending on the number and range of applications received.
- 5.4 For each Doctoral Fellowship application, external referees will typically be asked to comment on the following:
 - the scientific merit of the proposed research project
 - the quality of the training plan
 - the involvement of appropriate service users and the public as partners in the research process
- 5.5 While the Evaluation Panel will take account of the opinions of the external referees when assessing the applications they are not bound by this opinion. The Evaluation Panel will typically shortlist and evaluate applications based on a number of criteria including:

1. Scientific merit of the application

- Are the aims and objectives clearly stated?
- Has a critical review of the background literature been included?
- Is the methodology adequate and appropriate?
- Is the proposed research appropriate for a Doctoral Degree?
- Is the envisaged outcome likely to be achieved?
- Is the work duplicating research elsewhere?

2. Quality of training content of the application

- Is the proposed training programme appropriate taking into consideration the applicant's previous experience and the skills required for the proposed research?
- Is the plan of supervision adequate?
- Do the supervisors have suitable and relevant experience?

3. Applicant's potential as a researcher

- Does the applicant's motivational statement and CV demonstrate a commitment to a career in research and indicate future potential as a researcher in an area that could benefit the HSC?

4. Adequacy of the research environment

- Does the applicant's project relate to the Supervisor's existing research programmes?
- Is the standing of the research centre adequate to support the proposed research with a relevant focus on the HSC?
- Is support (human and infrastructure) for both research methodology and the research topic, available to the applicant?

5. Relevance to HSC/DoH NI

- Is the proposed research sufficiently relevant to the HSC/ Department of Health (DoH) NI to warrant support?

6. Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)

- Has the applicant demonstrated that they have involved service users and the public in identifying the research topic, prioritising the research questions and/or in preparing the application?
- Has the applicant demonstrated that they have sought to involve service users and the public, including from appropriate groups, in a partnership role in the research process rather than solely as research participants?
- Does the proposal demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of PPI?
- Is the level of/approach to PPI appropriate?
- Does the applicant aim to incorporate PPI in the reporting/dissemination of the study?

5.6 It is anticipated that shortlisting will be conducted during the week beginning **29 January 2018**

5.7 It is anticipated that shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview during the week beginning **12 February 2018**. Invitations for interview will be issued immediately after the shortlisting meeting. (It is expected that the dates on which interviews will take place will be confirmed by early December 2017 and will be posted on our website www.research.hscni.net for reference).

5.8 **Only those shortlisted applicants that provide written signed confirmation, by post or email, of their intention to attend for interview on the specified date will be interviewed.**

5.9 The number of awards made under the HSC R&D Division Doctoral Fellowship Scheme will depend on the quality of the applications and the funding available.

6 Notification

6.1 Each applicant will be notified of the outcome of their application by HSC R&D Division using the correspondence details specified on the application form.

6.2 Unsuccessful applicants may request **in writing**, feedback as to why the application was unsuccessful. Where relevant, this feedback will consist of comments from the Evaluation Panel and feedback from the external referees.

6.3 Unsuccessful applicants may apply again in response to further advertisements for research training awards from HSC R&D Division; however they are advised to discuss this with the office before making an application.

7 Successful Applicants

- 7.1 Acceptance of an Award from HSC R&D Division will constitute acceptance of HSC R&D Division core **Terms and Conditions** and any additional Terms and Conditions¹.
- 7.2 Awards must be accepted by an appropriate designated Host Organisation (normally the host University) which will manage the award on behalf of HSC R&D Division. HSC R&D Division will make appropriate arrangements with the relevant organisation(s) for claiming the Award.
- 7.3 The research expenses are awarded on an annual basis. It is essential that allocated research expenses are properly incurred and claimed within the relevant financial year. There will normally be no provision to allow funding to be carried forward from one financial year to the next.
- 7.4 Applicants must inform HSC R&D Division immediately if funding for the project becomes available from another source.
- 7.5 The agreed period of the award should provide for full analysis of data and completion of a research thesis and any other training requirements, as appropriate. Extensions of support for fellows will be given only in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.6 Successful applicants will be provided with feedback including comments from the Evaluation Panel and feedback from the external referees, which they are expected to consider prior to starting their research.
- 7.7 All Award Holders will be required to submit Progress Reports describing the progress of their project². For the majority of Awards the frequency of these reports will be on an annual basis however depending on the individual nature of the Award, more frequent reports may be required. Continuation of funding of the Award is subject to the receipt of prompt and satisfactory Progress Reports.
- 7.8 Award Holders will be required to inform HSC R&D Division of all the outputs and outcomes (research publications, future linked awards/grants, policy changes, intellectual property etc.) from Award funded research.
- 7.9 Where relevant, responsibilities required by Research Governance must be met. The responsibilities of the various Research Governance stakeholders, e.g. funder, sponsor(s), employing organisation(s), care organisation(s), Chief Investigator (CI) and researchers are set out in the Research Governance Framework for The Health and Social Care. All parties are expected to discharge their responsibilities in accordance with that Framework³.
- 7.10 Award Holders will be asked to provide a copy of their abstract and any revised versions of their abstract, which will be used by HSC R&D Division, in response to external requests for information. The content of the abstract should consider any potential disclosure of IP. HSC R&D may publish details of the abstract, names of investigators and project costs.
- 7.11 The support of the Public Health Agency, HSC R&D Division must be appropriately acknowledged in any published or public communication including all forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences⁴.

¹ For a copy of HSC R&D Division Terms and conditions please see: <http://www.research.hscni.net/terms-and-conditions-awards>

² To review HSC R&D Division reporting requirements please see: <http://www.research.hscni.net/reporting-requirements-award-holders>

³ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/research-governance-framework-health-and-social-care>

⁴ For guidance on acknowledging support from HSC R&D Division please see: <http://www.research.hscni.net/acknowledging-hsc-rd-division>

7.12 On completion of an HSC R&D Division Doctoral Fellowship the fellow is expected to have successfully completed a robust research and training programme and be able to show evidence of:

- completion of the research proposed in the application
- award of a PhD (research doctorate, not a professional doctorate)
- completion of a substantial and wide-ranging research training element
- appropriate personal and public involvement
- publications arising from the research program
- increased research skills
- involvement in collaborative relationships

PART 2

Guidance for Completion of Application Forms

All applications can only be judged on the information contained within the application form, including the research proposal and the CV. The information contained in these must be legible to allow referees and Evaluation Panel members to discharge their respective roles.

HSC R&D Division will regard **incomplete or incorrectly completed application forms as invalid. Applicants must adhere to the given layout.** In order to treat all applicants equally, the HSC R&D Division must enforce strictly the prescribed format requirements including font size and font type. **Unless otherwise stated, forms must be completed in typescript using Arial font size 11pt with single line spacing or greater.** Arial Narrow font will not be accepted as an alternative to Arial.

Applications that extend any of the existing text entry boxes or use alternative formatting will be treated as invalid and automatically excluded. Applicants should adhere to any word limits.

Applicants are asked to note the following instructions:

Question 1 Applicant's Details

- name and title
- professional background: Medical / dental practitioners should indicate their medical specialty. Other practitioners should indicate their professional title or area of expertise.
- Current job title

Question 2 Summary of Proposed Fellowship

- full scientific (protocol) title of the proposed research, often expressed using specialised, scientific vocabulary
- proposed duration, indicate full-time/part-time and include proposed start and end dates
- enter the degree awarding body (University)
- name of lead supervisor
- total cost of the award (a breakdown of the total costs should be provided in response to question 13)

Question 3 Employment details – provide details of your current employment

Correspondence details - the correspondence details are the only means by which HSC R&D Division can communicate with the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a correspondence address, with up-to-date telephone and email details to facilitate rapid communication. This is particularly critical for the notification of interview procedures (see Part 1 paragraph 5.7–5.8). Any changes in correspondence details must be communicated to HSC R&D Division at the earliest possible opportunity.

Question 4 Research proposal summary:

- full scientific (protocol) title of the proposed research
- scientific abstract (300 word limit)

- list of research methodology (e.g. clinical trial, cohort study, observational study, intervention study, epidemiological, questionnaire, interview etc)
- list of key identifiers related to the research proposal
- public or 'lay' title, designed to be understood by an interested non-scientist / non-specialist
- lay abstract: a summary which provides a description of the proposal written in plain English and suitable for public, patients and service users. (300 word limit)

Question 5a *Research proposal* – applicants must submit a structured description of the research project for which support is requested under the award.

Details that should be contained within the eight pages should include:

Pages 1-6

- aims and objectives of the project
- background – a critical review of the background literature to demonstrate the evidence-base from which the proposed project has been derived. In certain instances applicants may need to draw on preliminary work to support their research proposal (see question 6)
- plan of investigation – propose the hypothesis or reasoning for the study, the methods of research including a valid study design, with details on, research instruments, sample size, selection and exclusion criteria, power calculations, methods of data collection, and methods of data analysis. The proposal should reflect a basic but thorough theoretical knowledge, supported by specific expert advice.
- applicants must clearly set out what work they will be doing as part of the proposal, what work will be done by others in support of the project and what work has been/is being done by others in the field.
- ethical framework for the project

Page 7-8

- references (Harvard or Vancouver format)

Question 5b *Project Management Plan (PMP)* – applicants must complete a PMP to provide an indication of milestones and timescales for the Award. This should include a list of specific actions and outcomes relevant to the project and it should indicate who is responsible for the delivery of each action. A number of examples are given.

The PMP is often used to monitor the progress of a study and highlight successes and challenges.

Question 6 *Preliminary Work* – please give details of any preliminary or previous work which is relevant to this proposal. If appropriate and relevant to this application, include detail on any interaction with other organisations such as the HSC Trust Research Offices, NI Clinical Research Network, NI Cancer Trials Network, NI Clinical Research Facility, NI Clinical Trials Unit, NI Methodology Hub, etc.⁵

Question 7 *Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)* – HSC R&D Division believes that research grant applications and research projects are strengthened through the appropriate involvement of service users and the public and PPI is now a requirement in all funding applications. Applicants should use this section to

⁵ For further information on research infrastructure in NI please see <http://www.research.hscni.net/>

describe how service users and the public have been and will be involved in the planning, design and application of their project(s). Fellows are expected to make every effort to involve service users and the public, where appropriate, at each stage of the research process. **Applications which fail to address PPI appropriately may not be shortlisted.** The chosen level/approach of involvement should be fully justified.

For further guidance, applicants are referred to the HSC R&D Division website⁶ and are encouraged to contact Dr Gail Johnston, Programme Manager for PPI in HSC R&D Division (Tel: 028 95 363490, Email: gail.johnston@hscni.net).

- Question 8 Statement of Motivation* – Applicants should use this section to summarise their motivation for the project and for undertaking a PhD. They should include any personal qualities they believe are needed to undertake a doctoral fellowship and describe how they already demonstrate these qualities or how they might develop them. Applicants should also use this section to demonstrate their commitment to an on-going career in health and social care research and describe how completion of a PhD will increase research capacity in their area of work. They may wish to make reference to the relevance, benefit and impact of the proposed research to the wider HSC/DoH NI.
- Question 9 Applicants CV* – Applicants should complete a CV within the application form using the standardised format. This should include only the most relevant information to the application.
- Question 10 Plan of supervision and training* – Applicants should outline details of the formal and informal training they will receive during the course of their Fellowship and provide details of their plan of supervision. The contribution of each supervisor and any additional collaborators should be clearly described. In this section, applicants must also detail the training they intend to undertake during their Fellowship. This should include both generic research training, and training that is specifically relevant to the applicant’s own research project.
- Question 11 Training environment & Institutional commitment* –
- Applicants should indicate how the training environment is suitable to support their project, including how the proposed project relates to existing research programmes and what support (human and infrastructure) is available to the applicant. Within this section, the applicant should describe clearly how they will access advice and support for statistics and data management for their project. Where appropriate, applicants should detail any training in statistics and data management they will seek to undertake.
 - This section should be completed by the authorised signatory of the University awarding the degree (who is also required to sign the declaration under section 15b). This section should be used to detail the facilities and other institutional support that will be available to the applicant during their Fellowship.
- Question 12 Supervisor’s Grants, Publications and Supervisory Record*
The proposed supervision arrangements must comply with the requirements of the relevant university. It is advisable that at least one supervisor should

⁶ <http://www.research.hscni.net/personal-and-public-involvement-researchers>

have supervised a minimum of one successful PhD or equivalent higher research degree. Please list up to six significant and relevant publications with full authors, title and journal or book reference (Harvard or Vancouver format). If there are more than two supervisors, this page must be duplicated.

Question 13a&b Finance – A schedule of estimated expenditure is required showing the breakdown of funding for expenses required over the relevant years. Applicants proposing to undertake full-time study should complete Question 13a and applicants proposing part-time study should complete Question 13b. If the total funding required exceeds the **maximum award limit of £250,000** applicants must explain how the shortfall in funding will be resolved.

Research and training expenses should include travelling expenses relevant to the project, essential equipment or consumables and attendance at specific training courses. The HSC R&D Division Doctoral Fellowships **cannot provide research expense support in excess of the £27,000 limit**. Where an application indicates research expenses are in excess of the overall limit the applicant must explain how any shortfall in funding will be resolved. It is usually expected that the costs for research expenses are spread across all years of the Fellowship, (e.g. For 3 years full-time then up to £9,000 could be awarded per annum). Travel and subsistence costs are intended for dissemination of the research findings and an opportunity to build partnerships within the relevant research community.

PPI costs can be identified to assist in recruiting and implementing PPI. A maximum of **£1,500** is allowed across the lifetime of the award.

Question 13c Justification for support – justification of each item of anticipated expenditure is required as well as how any shortfall in funding will be resolved.

Question 14 Nominations for referees – applicants are requested to nominate two scientific referees who could be asked to assist the HSC R&D Division in the evaluation of the proposed research programme. They must be familiar with the field of research, **reside outside Northern Ireland** and should not be current or recent collaborators with the applicant or supervisor(s). HSC R&D Division recognises the demands placed on prospective peer reviewers by an unexpected request for comments, and would ask applicants to secure agreement from their nominated peer reviewers to increase the likelihood of securing meaningful and timely feedback. HSC R&D Division may also request additional external peer review. Please inform HSC R&D if there are any persons you wish were not contacted to fulfil this role and justify.

Question 15a Host Research Organisation and Employers Details – provide details of the organisations who will be involved in support this application.

The Host Organisation should indicate the research sponsor for the Award.

Refer to the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care⁷ which identifies key stakeholders involved in health and social care research. These stakeholders are allocated responsibilities and prior to the commencement of any study they must agree formally to undertake these responsibilities.

HSC R&D Division will act as funder for these awards but cannot act as sponsor. If successful, applicants will be requested to confirm their employing

⁷ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/research-governance-framework-health-and-social-care>

organisation for the duration of the research, the sponsoring organisation and any relevant care organisations (i.e. organisations which are responsible for service users participating in the research) which will be involved in the research.

Question 15b Declarations – electronic signatures are required

- (i) *Applicant's signature*
 - The applicant is required to e-sign the application.
- (ii) *Lead Supervisor's signature (from the Host Organisation)*
 - The Lead supervisor should be aware that they are e-signing on behalf of all the supervisors from all organisations and therefore should be aware of their level of support.
- (iii) *Host Organisation: University signatory – Academic*
 - This should be e-signed by the Head of School/Faculty **or** Research Centre Director **or** Head of Research Institute confirming that the University supports the application and the supervisory arrangements
- (iv) *Host Organisation: University signatory - Finance*
 - This should be e-signed by an appropriate representative from the Host Organisation Research Office
- (v) *Employing Organisation: Research Office*
 - This should be e-signed by the employing organisation research office confirming they are aware of the proposed research and any implications for the organisation.
- (vi) *Employing Organisation: Finance*
 - This should be e-signed by the Research Finance Officer or Director of Finance of the employing organisation for the duration of the award.

Universities cannot sign off an application in the role of employing organisation. In the case of Specialist Registrars, the NI Medical and Dental Training Agency will assign them a supernumerary posting in the relevant Trust. Senior House Officers who have not yet been awarded an NTN will be assigned to a relevant Trust in a locum capacity. The relevant Trust is deemed to be the Trust which acts as Care Organisation.

If the sponsoring organisation is an HSC Trust or University please note that it is essential to submit your finalised application to the relevant research office of the proposed sponsoring organisation a minimum of six weeks in advance of the closing date for this award (i.e. by 6 September 2017) to allow adequate time for the Trust or University to confirm sponsorship. Applicants are advised to make contact with the relevant Trust and University research offices as early as possible during the preparation of their application.

Failure to provide all the requisite e-signatures will result in the application being excluded automatically at the initial validation stage.

****All signatories must be cc'd into the final email of submission****