

Health and Care Professional (HCP) Internships: Information for Managers

Cohort 2 2026-7

Dr Julie Macinnes and Beth Flowers



What is the HCP Internship Programme all about?

The HCP Internship Programme provides funding and support for health and social care professionals to advance their knowledge and skills in research

It is aimed at professionals from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of career aspirations

The internships provide flexible and individually tailored programmes of learning designed to meet the needs and aspirations of each intern providing individuals with a strong foundation on which to build a research related career

Who is the programme delivered by?

The programme is funded by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR)

In our region, it is delivered by the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration, Kent, Surrey and Sussex (NIHR ARC KSS) and partners including NHS Trusts, Universities and other organisations including the Research Delivery Network and the Health Innovation Network, together with Public Advisors

Meet the ARC KSS Academy Team



Dr Julie MacInnes

Research Capacity and
Academic Career
Development Lead



Beth Flowers

Academy Manager



**Theresa Gadsby-
Bourner**

Academy Facilitator

Who can apply for an internship?

Applicants ***must*** be a registered Health or Care Professional from this NIHR list:

The Programme ***excludes*** Doctors and Dentists

- ✓ Academy for Healthcare Science
- ✓ General Chiropractic Council
- ✓ General Optical Council
- ✓ General Dental Council
- ✓ General Medical Council
- ✓ General Osteopathic Council
- ✓ General Pharmaceutical Council
- ✓ Health and Care Professions Council
- ✓ Nursing and Midwifery Council
- ✓ Social Work England
- ✓ UK Public Health Register

Who can apply for an internship?

In addition:

- ✓ Applicants ***must*** be at a pre-doctoral stage of their career i.e they do not have a PhD or an equivalent doctoral level qualification in research
- ✓ Applicants ***must*** work in Kent, Surrey or Sussex (other regions have similar programmes)

How long is the internship and what funding is available?

33 internships will be offered every year for the next 2 years
10 places are 'ring-fenced' for radiographers and pharmacists
Each internship lasts up to **9 months**

Up to **£10,000** is offered per internship, plus £700 for your employing organisation (or the organisation where you will be undertaking your internship) towards administration costs and mentorship

You will be asked to provide some basic costings for your internship – contact the ARC KSS Academy for help with this

Is any previous research experience needed?

The internships are for those with little or no research knowledge, skills or experience, right through to those aspiring to clinical/Practitioner academic careers

....we are keen to receive applications from those working in settings such as primary and community care, local authorities, social care and research delivery

There are 4 levels or types of internship

<i>Stepping into Research:</i> For those in clinical, practitioner or other roles with little or no research experience but who want to take the first step into research to learn about ways to engage with research to improve professional practice and embed research in care	<i>Growing in Research:</i> For those in enhanced or advanced roles who want to develop the research pillar of their role and/or to develop team research culture and confidence
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Delivery leadership in Research: For those in (or aspiring to) research delivery roles who want to extend their research delivery skills, improve research delivery practice and leadership, and/or gain experience in wider aspects of the research process

Clinician or Practitioner academic leadership in Research: For those aspiring clinical academics who want to develop their research knowledge and skills to lay foundations for future funding awards

What can interns do?

We anticipate that many applicants may not have a clear vision about how to develop their ideas for an internship or what is available, therefore we have developed a ‘menu’ of opportunities to choose from (*see the Application Form*)

This menu is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive but is designed to stimulate ideas and open-up possibilities to advance research careers at all levels



Stepping into Research

If you are new to research develop a bespoke plan to get you started on your research journey & understand more about how to embed research in your everyday practice



Growing in Research

Already have some experience in research & ready to take the next step, develop your own bespoke programme to help you grow as a research leader & support access to research



Delivery Research Leadership

Want to know more about supporting access to research where you work, develop a bespoke plan to get you started or develop your skills in research delivery roles



Clinical/Practitioner Academic

Interested in developing your career to combine practice and being a researcher, develop a bespoke programme to help you get started on your clinical/practitioner academic journey

What help and support will interns receive? *Mentorship*

Interns will be supported by a **mentor**

A mentor is normally an experienced professional who provides guidance and support to develop skills and knowledge. They may provide advice, career guidance, and opportunities to develop research ideas, for example

If interns already have a mentor in mind, they are asked to indicate this in the application form

If interns do not have a workplace mentor, ARC KSS and partners will be able to help them find one through our mentor/mentee matching service

What help and support will interns receive?

Academic Supervision

If interns are undertaking an academic module/course as part of their internship, academic support will normally be provided by the University or institution delivering that module/course

ARC KSS can also help interns find an academic supervisor, if need (this is funded separately and is not part of the £10,000)

What help and support will interns receive?

Peer support

ARC KSS and partners will bring together all interns, online, every other month, so they can share successes and challenges and seek further support

Near the end of the internship ARC KSS and partners will host an online Celebration Event for interns and managers so they can share experiences and support the next cohort of interns

As a manager, why should I support participation?

Supporting staff to apply helps build capacity within your team and contributes to organisational priorities around quality, innovation and professional development

Benefits for your team and service

- New skills and knowledge – interns bring learning back to improve practice
- Alignment with organisational priorities – contributes to research-active, evidence-based care
- Retention and development – supporting staff development improves both individual and team growth, engagement and loyalty

Minimising disruption

- The internship provides funding towards backfill, reducing service impact
- Interns are encouraged to plan their workload to ensure continuity and minimise disruption

What are the timelines?

Submission deadline for applications: **5pm 30th Sept** to arckssacademy@kent.ac.uk

Applicants will receive a decision within **8 weeks** of the deadline. If successful, they may be asked to address any specific queries relating to their application, with the support of the ARC KSS team

The start date for the internship will be **1st February 2027**

The internship must finish by **31st October 2027**

The application process

Applicants need to complete the Application Form and send to:

arckssacademy@kent.ac.uk

They should refer to the Guidance for Applicants which describes in detail what is needed for each section

They must provide all the information requested on the application form using clear and concise language with minimal use of technical jargon

What happens after the application has been submitted?

An assessment panel, which includes public members, will meet to discuss all applications. The panel will assess:

Personal strengths: Does this application present a good opportunity to support a career trajectory for someone who is building or becoming involved in research?

Objectives: How appropriate are the proposed activities and plans for skills development? Are activities clearly explained and appropriate? Is the timeline achievable?

Sharing learning: Are there clear plans to share the skills and knowledge gained during the internship within organisation(s) or more widely?

PCIE and Inclusivity: Are there plans to include patient, public or community involvement and engagement (where relevant)? Does the internship promote inclusivity?

A note about agreement ('contract')

Once successful applicants have accepted their place on the internship programme, there will need to be an agreement between their employer and the programme team (Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, SPFT)

Applicants are asked to provide the contact details of someone who has oversight of research or finance at their organisation who will be our contact for arranging the agreement ('contract').

This process will take place before intern starts the programme

Your role as a manager

- Discuss the application with your staff member as part of their professional development
- Identify who in your organisation needs to sign the internship agreement
- Support staff to balance their internship commitments with service delivery
- Encourage staff to share learning and knowledge gained with colleagues
- ***Further information can be found in the 'Guide for Managers' which is available via a link which will be circulated***

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

Please contact the ARC KSS Academy team in the first instance:

arckssacademy@kent.ac.uk

Next steps for applicants...

1

- Check you are eligible
- i.e profession, level (pre-doctoral), KSS

2

- Identify who you will need to support you and discuss the internship opportunity with them
- e.g manager, mentor, R&I or other (finance) contact

3

- Think about which of the 4 levels of internship best describes your research experience
- Stepping into research; Growing in research; Delivery research leadership; Clinical/practitioner academic

4

- Think about the activities you might undertake as part of the internship
- See the 'menu' for examples but also add your own ideas

5

- Prepare your application, making sure you refer to the Guidance for Applicants document
- Contact the ARC KSS Academy for 1-2-1 support or if you have any questions

Thank you!