

NIHR Exeter BRC PhD Studentship Project Call Guidance

2024-25



**About the PhD Studentships 2024/25**

The NIHR Exeter BRC are committed to developing and nurturing a diverse and rich pipeline of talented researchers by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to excel and contribute significantly to the local and national economy via the delivery of high-quality and impactful translational biomedical research. Expertise will be harnessed from across the partnership to deliver the best possible training and career development opportunities, with the students provided the opportunity to be embedded in a rich research culture, with a growing body of early career researchers.

The NIHR Exeter BRC are excited to announce a call for a further round of PhD studentships, for a November 2024 to January 2025 start. We welcome applications from NIHR Exeter BRC partners across our entire region, including Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

We are seeking projects that align with the below priority areas and apply to areas of Biomedical Research:

1. Data Science
2. Clinical Trials and Statistics
3. Patient and Public Engagement and Involvement (PPIE)
4. Diagnostics and imaging

Projects using either qualitative or quantitative research methods are welcome. In addition, we welcome projects from the following areas; respiratory medicine, psychiatry/mental health and surgery (BRC shadow themes) to build capacity in these areas.

Studentships will cover home tuition fees plus an annual tax-free stipend of at least £19,237 (in alignment with standard Research Council UK rate) for 3 years full-time study. In addition, each student will receive a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) of £5000 per year – these funds are to be used to support the research project e.g. consumables, alongside the development of the student and any training they should require.

**Supervisory team criteria**

We welcome applications from senior and emerging leaders of our BRC community across the partnership, to who’s research aligns with one or more of the priority areas outlined above. As the primary supervisor and lead applicant, you must:

* The University guidelines for PhD supervision eligibility can be found [here](https://as.exeter.ac.uk/academic-policy-standards/tqa-manual/pgr/supervisionofresearchdegreestudents/) - all applicants must comply with these. Guidelines for the responsibility of supervisors can be found [here](https://as.exeter.ac.uk/academic-policy-standards/tqa-manual/pgr/supervisionofpgr/).
* Hold a permanent contract with the University of Exeter. Please note that if you hold an honorary contract with the University of Exeter, you are not eligible to be the primary supervisor, but can be a named co-supervisor.

One co-supervisor needs to be named and is a formal requirement. Up to two additional co-supervisors can be named on the project.

You are only permitted to submit one application as lead applicant but can be named as a co-supervisor on an unlimited number of projects.

**Project selection process**

All applications will be reviewed by a core BRC panel against a set of criteria, to include the following key elements; alignment to priority area, excellence in science, translational opportunity, training and career development opportunities for the student, supervisory team and existing infrastructure support, alongside approach to PPIE and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Projects selected to be taken forward will be advertised at a minimum, on the NIHR Exeter BRC website, the Universities Postgraduate Study advertisement page, FindaPhD.com and jobs.ac.uk. Supervisors of selected projects are also strongly encouraged to use their own networks and spheres of influence to attract excellent candidates. The NIHR Exeter BRC will also promote the programme in targeted advertising. The title and project description wording you put on the application form will be used on our website to advertise your project. Therefore, please ensure that it is jargon-free and understandable to applicants who are not yet experts in your field.

**Student selection process**

* What are the student eligibility criteria?

Students will need to meet the standard academic eligibility criteria. Applicants for a studentship must have obtained, or be about to obtain, a UK degree, or the equivalent qualification gained outside the UK, in an appropriate subject area. Fees are only available to Home students. It should also be noted that students will need to meet the English language requirements for the University.

* How will candidates apply?

Students will submit their applications via the Universities Student Record System – all candidates will be asked up upload the following information; personal details, qualifications/transcripts, CV and personal statement.

* How will students be selected?

Applications will be shortlisted by the lead supervisor of the project, alongside at least one other member of the supervisory team. All applications will be assessed based upon research potential as opposed to research experience to afford candidates who have not have the resources or opportunities to undertake internships or study for a master’s degree to be assessed on equal terms with those who have had these opportunities. Interviews will take place online – this format ensures equity for all applicants should some not be able to attend in-person.

Interview panels will consist of the lead supervisor, at least one other member of the supervisory team, the NIHR Exeter BRC Training and Events Manager and a PPIE representative. The Training Manager will sit across all panels as an observer to ensure that appropriate recruitment procedures are followed. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes and candidates will be asked to present for 5 minutes, to be followed by questions from the panel – a standardised question set and scoring template will be used across all studentships. The selection of the candidate to offer the studentship is at the discretion of the interviewing panel.

**Key dates for the recruitment process**

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| **NIHR Exeter BRC PhD Studentship Recruitment Schedule****Key Dates\*** |
| **Date** | **Deadline** |
| Thursday 18th July – Monday 19th August 2024 at 10am | Call for project applications |
| W/C 19th August | Review of project applications |
| 26th August – 17th September 2024 | Studentship adverts live for applications |
| 18th – 20th September  | Candidate application shortlisting  |
| W/C 30rd September  | Candidate interviews |
| November 2024 – January 2025  | Candidate start date |

\*It should be noted that with the submission of a PhD studentship project application, you are committing to the timeline as outlined above. Should it become apparent during the recruitment process that this is no longer the case, we reserve the right to withdraw the offer of the studentship.

**How to apply**

All PhD Studentship project applications should be submitted to the NIHRExeterBRC@exeter.ac.uk address by **10am Monday 19th August 2024.** If you have any questions regarding the PhD Project call, please do not hesitate to get in contact with Sophie at the above email address.