

Physician Associate SESPA Research Fellowships 2024

Supporting Information and FAQ

We have collated the supporting information here for Physician Associates (PA) and employers in relation to the new Research Fellowship offered by the South East School of Physician Associates (SESPA). This is a pilot fellowship in the discipline of Research. If you have any further questions following reading this document, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

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The Research Fellowship at SESPA is starting this September 2024. Applications are open to all PAs working permanently in the South East region.

This fellowship will comprise of a 1-day secondment (Thursday or Friday) to the South East School of PAs to enable the PA both the dedicated learning opportunities and on the job research time to complete the fellowship successfully. The fellowship will include a fully funded PGCert in Clinical Research Delivery. There will be research and learning opportunities provided to the PA from our internal research offering or through our local partnerships.

Intended Outcomes for PAs:

- Achieve PGCert in Clinical Research
- Gain skills, knowledge and experience in a variety of research settings
- Further role development opportunities with their employer
- Gain confidence and ability to lead research projects with their employer
- Poster presentations at conferences such as the FPA Annual / SESPA Conference

Intended outcomes for employers/health care systems:

- Support colleagues of all backgrounds with research
- Encourage the retention of their PA workforce
- To develop future researchers and leaders within their organisations
- To attain individuals able to lead research projects and programmes
- Improve multi professional research to benefit patient care

Alignment to the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR)

The Newcastle University PGCert in Clinical Research is aligned to the [NIHR Clinician Researcher Credentials Framework](#).

The NIHR-AoMRC Clinician Researcher Credentials Framework has been developed jointly by the NIHR and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC), led by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), working with Higher Education Institutions to develop a national framework of Master's level qualifications. These qualifications provide the networks, skills and confidence needed for healthcare practitioners from any regulated profession to lead and support clinical research delivery.

How does it work?

- Participating health and care professionals develop their research delivery skill set with the aim of becoming Clinician Researchers.

- The learning is made up of a combination of:
 - Online modules
 - Flexible access to modules of high-quality interactive learning. These theoretical modules will develop knowledge of and insight into the approaches to, and delivery of, clinical research.
 - Research Practice Experience (RPE)
 - Practical modules that enable learners to take part in clinical research in their area of interest, as part of existing research studies, whilst being supported under the supervision and mentorship of a senior researcher. This will develop their experience and expertise to grow future local research leadership capability within the NHS.
- The qualifications are designed to fit around clinical working commitments, and learners are able to undertake the credentials in stages to develop their chosen career path.

What is a Clinician Researcher?

- Clinician Researchers are individuals with responsibility for leading or contributing to clinical research locally within their clinical setting, whilst maximising the potential of working as part of a Clinical Research Network. Within a research team, they predominantly take on the role of Collaborator, Co-Investigator or Principal Investigator (PI).

Who is the NIHR-AoMRC Clinician Researcher Credentials Framework for?

- The NIHR-AoMRC Clinician Researcher Credentials Framework is aimed at experienced health and care practitioners from all professional backgrounds, who aspire to take on the roles of Collaborator, Co-Investigator or Principal Investigator (PI). This includes those who have no or limited research experience and those currently working in research delivery.
- Clinician researchers may be from all registered healthcare disciplines including medicine, nursing, midwifery, pharmacists, healthcare scientists and other allied health professions.

Framework level offered

- SESPA will fund the Postgraduate Certificate level (60 credits) via Newcastle University (fully online learning)
 - 1x RPE Module, 2 or 3 online modules (dependent on credits)
- The Postgraduate Certificate provides core learning modules to quickly bring learners to the level of Local Co-Investigators on a variety of studies. Learners may be able to act as Local Principal Investigators on less complex research studies as their expertise deepens.

Postgraduate Certificate 60 Credits/600 hours	
20 Credits	Integrity, Infrastructure and Information Governance in Healthcare Research (theory, online)
20 Credits	Study Design, Data Management and Communication of Clinical Research: Doing Clinical Research Well (theory, online)
20 Credits	Clinical Research Delivery in Practice (Workplace Placement)

- Learners will complete three 20-credit modules:
 - Integrity, Infrastructure and Information Governance in Healthcare Research (theory, online)
 - Study Design, Data Management and Communication of Clinical Research (theory, online)
 - Research Delivery in Practice (Workplace Placement)
- The first two are interactive taught modules. The third module is a workplace-based module. This allows acquired skills in leadership in clinical research delivery to be directly applied in the learner’s own work environment under the mentorship of experienced senior clinical researchers.
- For further information, please visit the Newcastle University course [page](#).

Good Clinical Practice (GCP)

PA Research fellows will also complete NIHR Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training. GCP is the agreed international standard for conducting clinical research.

Associate PI scheme

- All fellows will undertake the NIHR Associate PI training to further enhance their research skills and contribute to the research outcomes of their department.
- The Associate PI Scheme is a six month in-work training opportunity, providing practical experience for healthcare professionals starting their research career.
- Please note this may not be completed fully during the fellowship, however, SESPA do ask for a report on any research activity carried out within 24 months after completion of the fellowship to support and enhance development of future fellowships.

Timeline:

Application Go Live	24th May
Applications Close/Shortlist Date	6th June
Provisional Interview Date	14th June
Final shortlisting list sent to NU	14th June
Candidates informed of successful outcome	28th June

FAQs:

How do I apply:

Please click this link to complete the online application form:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/sespa-twv/sespa-research-fellowship-application-2024>

Who is it for?

This developmental opportunity is aimed at experienced qualified Physician Associates with an interest in clinical research.

What experience do I need to apply?

You should have at least 2 years’ experience working clinically as a Physician Associate in any setting.



What is the time commitment needed?

You will be required to ensure you can commit to the expectations of study time; there is a high level of self-study required. Some of this will be factored into the fellowship secondment day; however, you will need to complete some activities in your own time to complete all elements.

When is the fellowship?

You will be required to be seconded to the school 1 day per week, this will usually be Thursday or Friday however occasionally your employer may be required to support further compulsory training contact days which may fall outside of the standard secondment day. In this instance, you can swap the day with the necessary day on that particular week.

How long is the fellowship?

The fellowship starts in September 2024 and is expected to be completed over 12 months.

Will I need to sign a contract?

The PA, employer and SESPA will all sign a learner agreement prior to the fellowship commencement to confirm the required commitment to the programme for its duration.

Can I apply if I only locum in the South East region?

Unfortunately, we can only accept applications from applicants with permanent PA roles in the South East region.

Do I need to be on the PAMVR?

You will need to provide your PAMVR number and ensure you stay on the register for the duration of your fellowship.

Will I be expected to travel?

The majority of the teaching will be virtually delivered so there will be no travel for these aspects. Furthermore, most of your research activity will be in your own workplace settings. There may be occasional travel to the SESPA hub site, as well as our local partnerships such as the Royal Berkshire Hospital for specific learning or research opportunities.

Where can I find more information about the PGCert in Clinical Research?

It is anticipated the PGCert will be delivered through the University of Newcastle. Further details can be found on their [website](#).

Where can I find more information about the NIHR aspect?

As part of the SESPA fellowship we will fund and support you to undertake a PGCert/NIHR accredited courses. This fellowship is widely and internationally recognised evidence of your ability and commitment to research. Please see their [website](#) for more information.

What is the benefit of completing the SESPA Fellowship?

We envisage that this Research Fellowship will enable you to gain the necessary skills, experience and confidence to support research opportunities in the clinical workplace. This will enable you to offer your expertise to your employing organisation following the fellowship completion and undertake future responsibility for areas within your workplace for research. PAs will be able to successfully support multi professional research to benefit patient care.



Will my employer get salary back payments or funding for releasing me?

No, your employer will not receive any salary back payments. It is expected that your employer will continue to pay your full salary throughout the fellowship and release you 1 day a week to the school as a secondment paid by your employer. We believe that this is an opportunity that will benefit both the PA and the employer, as you will be able to use the skills and experience when returning to your employer full time after finishing the fellowship. It may be that you chose to undertake the fellowship in your own time on a non-working day if you only work part time or only work certain weekdays.

Does my employer need to pay anything for this opportunity?

The post graduate qualification will be fully paid by SESPA. Your employer only pays for the PAs full salary as normal. This is considered as part of their contribution and investment to the PA's development within the organisation and the future benefit upon the PA's successful completion in the employing setting.

Will there be any additional costs?

The PA may incur additional costs such as travel expenses between research environments, university and your place of clinical work or home. You may also have general study costs such as study materials. These will not be reimbursed by SESPA or the universities.

Please email us if you have any further questions or would like to have an informal discussion prior to application ~ sepaschool.tvw@royalberkshire.nhs.uk