



**Imperial Health Charity
Pre-Doctoral
Research
Fellowship**

Guidance notes, 2026/27



Imperial
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Charity

HELPING
OUR HOSPITALS
DO MORE

NIHR | Imperial Biomedical
Research Centre

CHARING CROSS • HAMMERSMITH • QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S & CHELSEA • ST MARY'S • WESTERN EYE

Information for applicants



We support the five hospitals of Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust: Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea, St Mary's and the Western Eye.

Imperial Health Charity is committed to supporting pioneering research and the training and development of staff at our hospitals.

Together with our funding partner, the NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre, we run an annual Research Fellowship programme. You're asked to identify an important research question that will have an impact on patient care within the Trust, its surrounding communities and the wider NHS.

We've funded fellows who've carried out research into new and novel diagnostic techniques and treatment, self-management and aftercare, research into service delivery, team dynamics and decision making, shift handover procedures and projects on the implementation of clinical guidelines.

Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowships are available to both medics and healthcare professionals outside of medicine (NMAHPPs), including nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, healthcare scientists, pharmacy staff and psychologists.

Information in these Guidance Notes covers the following topics:

1. Purpose.....	3
2. Available funding and application timeframe.....	4
3. Criteria and eligibility	7
4. Key resources.....	9
5. Planning your application.....	10
6. Completing the online application form.....	19
7. Assessment process.....	21
8. Assessment criteria	22
9. Our fellows, 2025/26	24
10. FAQs	24

1. Purpose

The key aim of the Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowship scheme is to provide funding for Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust staff to take time out of their current training programme or job role - either full time for up to 12 months, or part time (minimum 0.5 WTE) for 24 months - to develop their research skills and undertake a project for the benefit of patients at the Trust.

This scheme is open to medics and healthcare professionals outside of medicine. We're particularly encouraging those outside of medicine (NMAHPPs)* to apply, for example, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists, psychologists and healthcare scientists.

This scheme creates a strong foundation from which to build an academic career. It is intended that successful applicants will be able to utilise the skills and data produced in their research project to springboard onto successful funding bids for further study - for instance, through an application to NIHR for a doctoral fellowship.

As part of our charitable objectives, we're committed to supporting our hospitals to undertake pioneering research and invest in the training and development of hospital staff for the benefit of patients.

Please note: it's important that you check your eligibility for this scheme in the detailed guidance below. If you have any questions about your eligibility to apply, please email **Philip Howard**, Grants Manager: grants@imperialcharity.org.uk

*NMAHPPs is the chosen acronym of the [Imperial College Academic Health Science Centre](#) to describe healthcare professionals outside of medicine, standing for Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals, Healthcare Scientists, Pharmacy staff, and Psychologists.

2. Available funding and application timeframe

Available funding

The funding covers your salary and related research expenses. You must be able to carry out for your fellowship full-time for 12 months or part-time (minimum 0.5 WTE) up to 24 months.

The charity can support the full cost of an individual's salary and related research costs up to a maximum of £85,000.

If your current annual salary exceeds this funding threshold, we may be able to consider you undertaking your fellowship for less than 12 months provided you're confident you're able to complete it in this time. We wouldn't be able to offer a fellowship above our funding threshold. Please email **Philip Howard**, Grants Manager (grants@imperialcharity.org.uk) to discuss this further. Please do not start an application until we have been able to advise you.

Application timeframe

Application window opens on **Wednesday 1 October 2025**

Application window closes on **Thursday 5 February 2026, at 12 noon**

Funding outcome notification by **mid-June 2026**

Expected fellowship start date: **autumn 2026** (provided you have been able to back-fill your current post or arranged your out-of-programme).

“The experience has opened up new research opportunities for me.”

Adine Adonis, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist

Many patients affected by an inflammation of the spinal cord are left unable to walk, with bladder, bowel and erectile dysfunction severely affecting their quality of life. The progressive condition – known as HTLV-1 Associated Myelopathy (HAM) – kills off spinal cord nerves, including those that supply the leg muscles.

Adine's fellowship gave her the opportunity to explore ways of measuring muscle strength in patients affected by the condition using a hand-held device called a dynamometer.

In a research study involving around 50 patients – at the Trust's National Centre for Human Retrovirology - she was able to test whether the device could be used in a clinical setting to identify muscle weakness sooner and provide treatment options to prevent further muscle and functional deterioration.

Adine said: “The fellowship gave me the opportunity to explore how research helps make a difference to clinical practice.

“The experience has opened up new research opportunities for me, and I have since been awarded a patient

and public involvement grant from the BRC which has allowed me to explore participants' views on what matters most to them. The seeds of this were planted during my fellowship.”



Applications open

Application window opens on [Flexigrant](#) Imperial Health Charity's online grants system, on **Wednesday 1 October 2025**.

Preparing your application

Quick links:

[Developing your research proposal](#)

[Research Governance and Integrity Team SOP](#)

[Research Fellowships info page](#)

Top tips:

- Get the support of your Trust line manager as early as possible. They will help support you and back-fill your substantive position if you're an NMAHPP. If you're a Pre-Doc medic, you also need to reach out to your training programme director to request your out-of-programme.
- Consult your Trust Divisional Research Manager (DRM) early too. They need to advise you on your costs and any set-up and archive fees. Make sure your salary costs include high-cost area supplement, employer's NI and pension contributions, and any potential pay awards.
- Give ample time to obtain the required signatures, and the supporting letter(s) from your supervisor(s).

Reach out to CATO for guidance and support

Submit

You must submit your application by 12noon on **Thursday 5 February 2026**.

Checklist – make sure you include these documents with your application:

- Updated CV
- Gantt chart, and any reports, images, data or illustrations to support your research project
- Quotes for any single cost item above £500
- Signatures of approval form
- Supervisor letter(s) of support

Assessment period

Your application will be assessed, first by our grants team and then by the Research Fellowship Committee. You must be prepared to provide additional information during this period.

Outcome

You'll be notified of the outcome of your application and if you are successful you'll receive your Fellowship Grant Award Letter by mid-June 2026.

Managing your grant

- You must accept our fellowship grant offer grant by 31 July 2026
- You'll need to provide written confirmation that your back-fill or Out-of-Programme (Research) request (for medics) has been secured before you start your fellowship.
- If you need ethics approval, we recommend you get started on this as soon as possible. You must provide us with a copy when this is received, in line with when you planned for this on your Gantt chart.

Welcome and networking

You must attend a welcome/learning event in June 2026.
Attendance is mandatory.

Progress

Complete a Progress Report on if you need to request any changes to your fellowship.

Completion

You must submit your **End of Grant Report** and **final invoice** within **three months** of your fellowship end date.

We may also ask for an annual update for up to three years after your fellowship.

3. Criteria and eligibility

Before beginning an application, please make sure you have read and understood the eligibility requirements below.

We strongly advise you to read the Sample application form side by side with the Guidance notes. The form will give you additional information on what is required from you.

If you have any questions, please email **Philip Howard**, Grants Manager (grants@imperialcharity.org.uk). We understand that you may have complicated contractual arrangements and we won't have covered all situations below. Please email us describing your circumstances and we can assess your eligibility before you complete the application form.

(i) You must hold an NHS employment contract with Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (ICHT), noting that you currently deliver services to, and plan to undertake your proposed research project for the benefit of ICHT patients and/or its surrounding communities. You must have started in your ICHT role at the point of applying, and still be employed by ICHT when your fellowship ends.

If you're a doctor in training and currently on rotation, you must be at ICHT at the point of applying. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please contact us, describing your current employment situation.

If you're employed by another NHS Trust but your Trust has a Service Level Agreement with ICHT, and you spend at least 80% of your work time at one of the ICHT hospitals and/or directly care for ICHT patients, please contact us before you apply, describing your current employment situation.

If you're employed by Imperial College London (ICL) but have an honorary contract with ICHT, you are eligible to apply, provided your job at ICHT includes delivering or directly supporting clinical services, and that you plan to undertake your proposed research project for the benefit of ICHT patients.

You're not eligible to apply if you're employed by ICL only.

Past and current academic clinical fellows are not eligible to apply.

If you're a clinical research fellow, it's also unlikely you'll be eligible. Please contact us, describing your current ICHT role, for instance, how much of your time is spent on research, is the research project your own etc.

(ii) You must not be registered for, have secured funding for, or hold a PhD or MD. Nor will the fellowship fund any part of a PhD

or MD including salaries, fees or consumables. Our Pre-Doctoral fellowships are for you to carry out a standalone research project for you to collect sufficient pilot data to then do a PhD or MD.

(iii) If you have a MSc or are currently undertaking or have registered for an MSc or MRes, you are eligible to apply for the fellowship to run alongside your intended research project. However, you'll need to demonstrate that you're able to do both concurrently and that your fellowship research project is a standalone project.

If you have a MRes, please contact us before you apply to confirm your eligibility for the scheme.

(iv) The charity will not fund salaries, fees or consumables related to an MSc or MRes. However, the costs for certain MSc training modules (excluding IT or personal development courses) will be considered if they are directly related to the research project. Please refer to our 'Costs that can and cannot be supported' in the Guidance Notes document that you can download from our [website](#)

(v) You must be able to demonstrate a commitment to use the fellowship position to undertake further study, ideally - but not exclusively - a PhD or an MD.

(vi) You must be resident and have a legal right to work in the UK. If you currently have a work visa, please contact the grants team before you apply.

4. Key resources

You need the support of your line manager, Trust divisional research manager, and at least one Trust supervisor for your project, who must be an established investigator.

It's important that you reach out to these people to secure their buy-in as early as possible. This ensures that you will be able to take the protected time out for your fellowship (through them arranging your back-fill, or supporting your out-of-programme request), that your costs will be appropriate, and that your proposal is competitive. To show their support, these people need to sign your application (or in the case of your supervisor/s, provide a supporting letter).

Trust Divisional Research Managers contact details:

Medicine and Integrated Care: Scott Mullaney
scott.mullaney@nhs.net

Surgery and Cancer: Donna Copeland
donna.copeland@nhs.net

Women's, cardiac, clinical support, sexual health: Ella Johnson
ella.johnson@nhs.net

If you're a medic, you should also ensure that you have discussed your application with your training programme director, to enable you to organise your out-of-programme request.

If you have questions at any point about the funding available, your eligibility, or how to apply, please contact **Philip Howard**, Grants Manager: grants@imperialcharity.org.uk

The following contacts are also available to discuss your application:

Clinical Academic Training Office (CATO)
cato@imperial.ac.uk

We also recommend that you consult the following useful links:

[Developing your research proposal](#)

Guidance on the Trust intranet about preparing for research

[Research Governance and Integrity Team SOP](#)

Guidance about managing research at the Trust

[Research Fellowships info page](#)

Imperial Health Charity's website

5. Planning your application

Top Tip

Your application will be reviewed by our Research Fellowship Committee, which has a broad and varied range of expertise, so it's important that your proposal is clearly presented and can be easily understood by those outside your area of research. Avoid using too much field-specific jargon and make sure all acronyms and abbreviations are defined on first use. Please refer to the Pre-Doc Sample Application Form for further guidance.

We strongly encourage applicants to consider integrating their research question within their current clinical services, engaging with patient cohorts that they are currently working with, and with the expectation that the outputs and outcomes will have an immediate impact on patient services.

The application form asks for the following important information:

1. Personal details

- Your Trust contact information
- Your personal statement, CV and publication details, including education and training.

2. Abstract

- Comprehensive and concise overview of your planned work (you should use plain English as the abstract will be used by the charity for reporting back to its trustees).

3. Full proposal (1,200 words)

- Research question
You are asked to identify an important research question that will make an impact on patient care within the Trust, its surrounding communities and the wider NHS.
- Background information
It's important to acknowledge existing studies, evidence base, pilot data, publications and established tools. The committee is also looking to see your comments and acknowledgement of existing tools/data and your reasons for utilising them (or not utilising them) in your proposed research project. We do not expect you to gather this data but will want to make sure you are aware of them and can build on the evidence base or any locally conducted work.
- Measurable aims and objectives, including how you will evaluate its impact
- Design of project/plan of investigation
- Methods of analysis proposed (quantitative or qualitative)
- Practical application of the research
The committee is looking for important and interesting research topics that will have a demonstrable impact on satisfying the charity's strategic objectives - immediate or long

term. Quantifying the project endpoints and practical application is key.

- References
- Gantt chart/optional figures (you must provide a Gantt chart for your research project that includes information on Health Research Authority (HRA) application/approval, if applicable, and back-fill. This will enable the committee to determine if your project can be delivered within your fellowship period. The committee also encourages you to provide pertinent data that illustrates your proposed research project).

4. Research supervisor

Your chosen supervisor(s) must have relevant academic research and professional background to support you in the delivery of your project. They should be permanent Trust staff (this means their employment contract has no end date), or have an Honorary contract with the Trust, showing they deliver or support clinical services, with no end date. This is to ensure you have the support you need at the Trust to undertake your fellowship. If your intended supervisor works only at Imperial College London, please get in touch with us to discuss further.

Where a research topic is particularly specialist, we can accept the addition of an external supervisor to your application.

5. Fit with the charity's strategic objectives

The charity's current strategic objectives are:

- a) enhance the patient experience throughout the care and treatment journey
- b) expand the Trust's capacity to deliver outstanding care and improve health outcomes
- c) support better health and wellbeing for patients in our surrounding communities

The committee is looking for you to show how your research project will have a direct impact on the above, while also expecting the project to create learning and knowledge that can be disseminated more widely within the NHS.

6. Costings

- Ensure you provide accurate and realistic costings, and that each cost can be related back to the purpose of your proposed project.
- Costings should cover your salary and any reasonable research

Top Tip

If you're awarded a fellowship, the Trust/College will first pay for any approved costs upfront, and then invoice the charity for reimbursement. This means you need to follow the Trust/College's procurement rules.

For larger purchases (items over £5,000 at the Trust, or items over £10,000 at the College), you'll need to seek at least two quotes, so it'll be worth considering this at application stage.

Find out more on the Trust intranet: search 'Procurement', or on the College website: search 'Purchasing'.

expenses only. Supervisor time can't be costed.

- Use the table overleaf as a guide on what and how much you can apply for. You must provide a detailed breakdown of your costs, and full justification for each cost, in your application. If you do not provide this, your application will be withdrawn. You must also provide quotes for any single item over £500 (except your salary).
- Your salary costs should be provided by your Trust Divisional Research Manager. Make sure you include high cost area supplement, and your employer's pension and national insurance contributions. Your fellowship is more than likely to straddle two financial years, for instance FY 2026/27 and FY 2027/28. Make sure when finalising your salary that any potential pay awards are included.

Your divisional research manager must review your costs to help ensure you have considered everything necessary:

- Medicine and Integrated Care: Scott Mullaney
scott.mullaney@nhs.net
Surgery and Cancer: Donna Copeland
donna.copeland@nhs.net
Women's, cardiac, clinical support, sexual health: Ella Johnson
ella.johnson@nhs.net

Cost type	Maximum amount?	Costs that can be supported	Costs that cannot be supported
Salary	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	<p>For the fellow - include basic salary, high cost area supplement, employer's pension contribution, and employers' national insurance contribution</p> <p>If your fellowship straddles over two financial years, make sure you also include any potential pay awards</p> <p>Our fellows are employed either by ICHT or ICL during their fellowship period. Therefore, the charity doesn't pay for maternity/ paternity leave or long-term sick leave. Your fellowship will pause from the day you go on maternity/ paternity leave, or long-term sick leave and will be reactivated when you resume your fellowship</p> <p>Other staffing needs - the charity will consider the salary of other posts, such as data statistician or clinical trial unit staff, up to 0.2 FTE, if they're essential to the delivery of your research project</p>	<p>Redundancy Childcare UK apprenticeship levy</p> <p>Our fellowship is for you to undertake a standalone research project. We can't pay your salary for you to undertake a PhD, MD, MSc or MRes</p> <p>However, you can undertake a MSc or MRes alongside your fellowship</p> <p>(We can pay for essential MSc training courses on a case-by-case basis, as explained below)</p>
Personal computer	Up to £1,000 and within the £85,000 threshold	Laptop for fellow only, that must be essential to the delivery of your research project	<p>Generic software and computer accessories (drives, cases, chargers, batteries etc)</p> <p>Please note: CATO offer bursaries for all fellows for the purchase of software programmes/licences required to undertake research projects (SPSS, NVIVO, EndNotes, etc). This means you should not include these in your application</p>
Equipment	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	<p>Small items for the fellow's use only. You must provide full justification as to why this is essential for your research project</p> <p>Our fellowships are for a short duration (12 months at 1 WTE). High value equipment won't be considered</p>	<p>Maintenance, service</p> <p>If the equipment is VAT exempt, you shouldn't include VAT costs in your application as it can be reclaimed by ICHT/ICL</p>

Cost type	Maximum amount?	Costs that can be supported	Costs that cannot be supported
Training courses	Up to £1,500 total, for all costs relating to training courses including travel and accommodation, and within the £85,000 threshold	<p>Only for fellows</p> <p>You must explain why you wish to undertake this training, including why it's essential for you to deliver your research project, and how the courses will further your academic research career</p> <p>We would consider MSc training courses/ modules that are directly related to the delivery of the your research project</p> <p>If the training course is outside London, you need to provide a full explanation as to why there is no comparable course in London</p> <p>Fellows must provide a detailed breakdown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course fee • standard/advanced purchase travel (outside London) • reasonable airport transfer (up to £50 return) • reasonable public transport to training venue from hotel (up to £25 in total) • accommodation up to £100 per night outside London • food up to £30 per day (if the training provider provides lunch and tea, the amount allowed is £15 per day). We'll not pay for alcohol <p>We encourage fellows to take advantage of Early bird discounts where possible</p>	<p>Training associated with a PhD or MD</p> <p>Non-science specific, IT or personal development training courses</p> <p>Training courses outside the UK</p> <p>Travel insurance</p>

Cost type	Maximum amount?	Costs that can be supported	Costs that cannot be supported
		<p>The training budget is up to £1,500 only inclusive of all the costs outlined above</p> <p>For training courses in London, we'll not pay for any travel or other expenses, such as food</p> <p>Where possible, we encourage all fellows to consider their carbon footprint and to limit their travel etc. If an available course is held virtually, this is a preferable option to in-person</p>	
Conference	Up to £2,000 total, for all costs relating to conferences including travel and accommodation, and within the £85,000 threshold	<p>Only for the fellow. You must present your IHC/NIHR Imperial BRC research project as a condition of attending conferences</p> <p>You can only include up to two UK conferences, or one UK conference and one in continental Europe or North America</p> <p>For conferences in London, we'll not pay for any travel or other expenses, such as food</p> <p>You must provide a detailed breakdown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conference fee • standard/advanced purchase travel (outside London) • reasonable airport transfer (up to £75 return) • reasonable public transport to conference venue from hotel (up to £25 in total) 	<p>Travel insurance</p> <p>Visas</p> <p>Passport fees</p> <p>Excess luggage charges</p> <p>Etc</p>

Cost type	Maximum amount?	Costs that can be supported	Costs that cannot be supported
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accommodation up to £100 per night (outside London) • food up to £30 per day (if the training provider provides lunch and tea, the amount allowed is £15 per day). We'll not pay for alcohol <p>The conference budget is up to £2,000 only inclusive of all the costs outlined above. We encourage fellows to take advantage of Early bird discounts where possible</p> <p>Conferences can take place within three months of your fellowship end date. However, the costs must be incurred within your fellowship period</p> <p>Where possible, we encourage all fellows to consider their carbon footprint and to limit their travel etc. If the conference is a hybrid of in-person and virtual, the latter is a preferable option</p>	
Travel	Up to £300 and within the £85,00 threshold	<p>This cost type is for you to travel to attend meetings with research partners within the UK only</p> <p>Training course and/or conference travel mustn't be included here</p> <p>Where possible, we encourage all fellows to consider their carbon footprint and to limit their travel etc. If the meeting can be held virtually, this is a preferable option to in-person</p>	<p>Costs you would normally pay to travel to work and within London</p> <p>Congestion charges and ULEZ charges</p> <p>Parking fees</p> <p>Any fines such as penalty parking charges</p> <p>Any costs associated with using a car, hire or private, except petrol</p>
Laboratory costs	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	Reasonable lab chemicals and materials essential for you to deliver your research project only	
Catering	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	Reasonable refreshments for PPI studies participants	Catering for research/collaborative meetings

Cost type	Maximum amount?	Costs that can be supported	Costs that cannot be supported
Consumables	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	Reasonable items for PPI studies	
Volunteers	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	Reasonable participant expenses involved in PPI studies	
Animal research	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	<p>While NIHR funding does not allow costs associated with the use of animals in research, the charity takes a more flexible view, only when it's necessary to use animals in research. You and your supervisors need to demonstrate your compliance with NC3Rs (National Centre for the 3Rs of Animals in Research) – the 3Rs being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replace: Use of non-animal methods as much as possible 2. Reduce: Involve as few animals in research as possible 3. Refine: Define studies with the highest possible animal welfare <p>As such, where animal research is absolutely necessary, we would fund your fellowship solely from our funds. We will consider reasonable costs associated with the purchase, transportation and maintenance of the animals provided it's essential to the delivery of the research project (and not to the whole research group), plus Home license fees for the fellow only, which is capped at £250 for the duration of your fellowship</p>	Training costs
Access charges for use of equipment and facilities	No set amount, and within the £85,000 threshold	Only standard JRO set-up and archive costs as directed by fellows' relevant ICHT Divisional Research Managers	The charity expects the fellow's sponsor/host institution to absorb non JRO costs. You can't include access charges costs such data storage

Cost type	Maximum amount?	Costs that can be supported	Costs that cannot be supported
Publication costs	You can't include these costs in your application. However, if there's an underspend near your fellowship end date, we can consider you using this for this purpose. Please contact us at that point		
Recruitment			Not allowed
Furniture			Not allowed
Utility costs			Not allowed
Standard telephone and internet costs			Not allowed
Departmental support staff			Not allowed
Clothing			Such as lab coats, gloves, PPE etc. Not allowed
Fees to professional membership organisations			Not allowed
Insurance			Such as travel, IT, not allowed

7. Application support and declarations

Please consult your primary supervisor on any HRA requirements for your research project. If you're awarded a fellowship, we would expect your HRA application to be progressed as soon as possible.

Please consult your primary supervisor if your research project involves the use of animals or animal tissue.

If you're a medic, please confirm you have discussed your application with your training programme director.

6. Completing the online application form

Top Tip

You must allow time to secure signatures from your line manager and DRM, and your supporting letter/s from your supervisor/s, in advance of the deadline – you cannot submit your application without them.

All applications must be submitted via our online grants management system, [Flexigrant](#).

You need to register on the system before you can begin an application. All applications must be completed by the intended candidate using their Trust email address only.

A sample application form in Word Doc format is available **for reference only**, so you can work offline more easily. This can be downloaded from our website.

When completing your online application form you'll be able to save your work and come back to it later. If you leave your computer, the system will automatically save and log you out after a maximum of two hours. Simply log back in to continue.

At the bottom of the application summary page is a 'Submit Application' button. This button is initially greyed out and only becomes available when all pages of the application are marked as 'complete'. Please note that supporting documents must be uploaded where requested in order for a section to be considered complete.

When you click on the 'Submit' button you will be asked to confirm that you wish to submit your application. Once submitted, you will be able to log in and view your application but NOT amend it.

The online application system will close on **Thursday 5 February 2026, at 12 noon**. Please ensure you plan sufficient time to complete and submit your form.

Prior to final submission, your application must be approved and signed by you, your line manager, and your divisional research manager. The 'Signatures of Approval' document can be downloaded from the online application form and sent to the relevant people, who by signing confirm they have read the application and offer their support. The signatures on the form can be wet or electronic.

We also require a letter of support from each of your supervisors. Their letter(s) should clearly state that they have read your application in full and agree to be your supervisor. You can then upload their letter(s) with your application.

It can take time to secure the required signatures and letters of support. Keep this in mind when preparing your proposal as we cannot accept late applications. The onus is on you as the applicant to secure these signatures and letter(s) in advance of the application deadline. **If you apply without these signatures and letter(s) your application will be automatically withdrawn.**

7. Assessment process

All fellowship applications are assessed on the quality of the applicant and their research project, and the project's alignment with the objectives of the Research Fellowship programme.

Upon submission, applications will undergo an initial assessment and eligibility check by the charity before being reviewed by the Research Fellowship Committee.

The review process will take place between February and March 2026. We may be in touch during this time to seek clarification on your application.

The committee will then make funding recommendations and all applicants will be notified of the outcome by mid-June 2026.

You'll be provided with feedback regardless of whether or not you've been successful.

8. Assessment criteria

Applications are scored across four categories:

(i) Quality of the applicant

Have you produced a clear and coherent proposal, showing attention to detail in response to all questions?

Have you clearly presented your personal qualifications and experience, and the relevance of these to the proposed area of research?

Have you allocated a sufficient number of hours per month to achieve the project aims?

(ii) Quality of the project

Does the project seem sufficiently important with regard to the number of potential beneficiaries, the research being conducted and alignment to charity and BRC strategic objectives?

Have you presented measurable aims and identified significant outcomes?

Is your project achievable in the time given?

Are your costings well thought through and reasonable?

Have you presented a sound methodology?

(iii) Quality of the supervisor(s)

Have you provided a convincing case for the choice of supervisor(s)?

Have the supervisor(s) allocated sufficient hours to oversee the project?

Are the qualifications and experience of the named supervisor(s) satisfactory in relation to the project?

(iv) Quality of long-term career plans

Have you made a good case for the importance of this fellowship to your future clinical academic research career?

Have you provided/identified a clear long-term pathway for your career?

When addressing questions in the application form regarding your career goals, it is important to demonstrate how the fellowship position will support your progression on a clinical academic research career path.

The committee wishes to see a clear and considered response to taking on future study. This should be reflected both in response to your personal career pathway and the future development of your area of research.

9. Our Pre- and Post-doc fellows, 2025/26

In 2025/26, we awarded five fellowships to support research projects across the Trust.

Binod Thapa (Healthcare scientist)

Using stereological modelling to improve microscopic semen analysis in men with infertility

Deena Paul (Nurse)

Understanding Cognitive changes over time in patients with Immune Thrombocytopenia

Jonathan King (Doctor)

ALARM: Avoiding Liver-related Admissions using Remote Monitoring

Megumi Nimura (Nurse)

How Diet Before and During Early Pregnancy Affects Gut and Vaginal Bacteria, and Birth Outcomes: A Feasibility Study

Theo Ross (Physiotherapist)

Functional Screening for Detection of Kinematic Markers of Knee Osteoarthritis Using Markerless Motion Capture

10. FAQs

We've included some of our most commonly asked questions below..

I'm not a medic. Is this the right scheme for me?

Yes. We're particularly encouraging applicants who are nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists, research practitioners, psychologists and healthcare scientists, as well as medics. If you're interested and need more information, please approach the key contacts listed above who will be happy to talk through your options and offer advice.

How does the fellowship work?

You can take 12-months full time or 0.5 WTE for up to 24 months for Pre-doctoral fellowships. Your substantive post must be backfilled or, if you're a medic, you must arrange your out-of-training programme (OOP) before you start. You'll need to discuss any potential application with your Trust line manager, divisional research manager and training programme director (where appropriate) to gain support for your fellowship and organise the necessary arrangements in good time. You should be able to return to your previous role or your training programme after the fellowship with the support of your line manager.

How do the finances work?

You'll be awarded a fellowship grant from Imperial Health Charity and the NIHR Imperial BRC. The relevant finance department at the Trust (or Imperial College London if you plan to carry out the bulk of your research there) will establish a unique grant account code for you. The Trust/College will then invoice the charity quarterly and in arrears for any approved spending on your grant using the grant reference number in your grant award letter.

What costs can I include in my proposal?

The funding covers your basic salary plus on-costs (high cost area supplement, employer's NIC and pension contributions) and related research expenses for up to 12 months full-time or 0.5 WTE for up to 24 months for Pre-doctoral fellowships. Funding for supervisor(s) time isn't eligible and shouldn't be included.

If successful, when would I be able to start?

You must start your fellowship by 31 October 2026 and having attended the mandatory welcome/learning event in June 2026. This usually means starting around September/October. You need to have back-filled your current post or arranged your out-of-programme (for medics) beforehand. If you think you won't be able to start in this timeframe, please contact us immediately.

If successful, will I be able to postpone the award?

You should only apply if you intend to start your fellowship by 31 October 2026. This is an annual fellowship funding programme. In exceptional circumstances we can delay the fellowship but this is not guaranteed and you must discuss this with us as soon as possible.

My out-of-programme request requirements are restrictive. Can I still apply?

We are aware that some out-of-programme requests for doctors in training have different timelines to the length of the application process. Please inform us before you begin your application if there will be an issue for you to take up a fellowship by 31 October 2026.

What can I do if my circumstances change?

If you apply and your circumstances change during the assessment process or upon successful receipt of a fellowship you must inform us as soon as possible. We aim to be as flexible as possible. Your fellowship cannot be used to finance paid maternity leave, paternity leave or long-term sick leave. Such matters lie with your employer, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. We can issue a no-cost extension to extend or pause your fellowship for a defined, limited period of time if necessary.

Can I resubmit my application if it is unsuccessful?

We do allow unsuccessful applicants to reapply to future grant rounds, as long as the proposal is significantly different from your previous application and takes into consideration the feedback provided by the Research Fellowship Committee.

I have funding pending/secured from elsewhere. Can I still apply?

We ask all applicants to be as transparent as possible during the application process. If you've submitted an application elsewhere,

please detail this in your application and when you expect to receive notification of the outcome. Please notify us immediately if you receive notification of an award in order to withdraw/decline your application from the process. If you're successful in your fellowship application to us, as well as securing another fellowship elsewhere (such as NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowship), you must decide which you wish to take up. As our programme is highly competitive, you cannot take up our fellowship as well as the PCAF, for instance, whether concurrently or in staggered periods. This is so other strong candidates could benefit from our fellowship. If you have already secured funding from elsewhere you should not apply.

Can I combine the fellowship funding with other part funding I have from another funder?

Please email our grants team (grants@imperialcharity.org.uk) before you apply, detailing your situation as clearly as possible. We will then advise you accordingly. We don't supplement existing grants (whether the grant is from the charity or elsewhere).

Our fellowship funding focuses on the individual and the research question. Applications are considered independently and funding must not be dependent on another funding source.

If I'm successful, what are the reporting requirements?

As a fellow, you'll need to complete an end of grant report. Additionally, we reserve the right to request post-award reporting for up to 3 years after you have completed your fellowship to comply with impact and evaluation measures. If at any point during your fellowship you request to pause it or make any significant changes, we'll ask you to complete a progress report before a decision can be made.