



Africa Health Research Training Programme Stage 1 Application Guidance

The PhD Training Programme

The Africa Health Research Training Programme (CREATE) supports PhD fellowships for up to 25 UK fellows and up to 25 matched African fellows from our partner countries (see below).

The focus of this current guidance is for UK fellows. There is separate guidance for African fellows.

We welcome applications from individuals, regardless of their background, who have the scientific rigour, drive and ambition to carry out world-class research that focuses on issues of public health importance in Africa.

The programme is located at five UK institutions: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM – lead institution); King's College London (KCL), Queen Mary University of London (QMUL); City St George's University of London (CSGUL); and Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS).

A CREATE fellowship provides an unrivalled opportunity to undertake research training at an African Partner Institution (API) where there is a critical mass of other researchers from a broad range of disciplines. The six APIs that will host fellows are: the MRC Unit in The Gambia and the MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit; the Biomedical Research and Training Institute (BRTI) and the Zvitambo Institute for Maternal and Child Health Research (Zvitambo), in Harare, Zimbabwe; Zambart at the University of Zambia (Zambart-UNZA), Lusaka, Zambia; and the Centre for Innovative Drug Development and Therapeutic Trials for Africa at Addis Ababa University (CDT-AAU), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Our mix of partners will provide a vibrant and thriving research environment for PhD fellows.

CREATE will provide up to 25 PhD fellowships to health professionals registered with an appropriate professional body in the UK. Fellows will register for their PhD at one of the five partner UK institutions. In addition, the programme aims to recruit and support an equal number of fellows based in the African partner countries (Uganda, The Gambia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia) to undertake a PhD. UK recruited fellows will be paired with the African PhD fellow in the same country where they will be based, to create a blended north-south cohort of fellows. All CREATE fellows, regardless of their source of recruitment, will be able to access a large supervisory pool, training and mentorship offered by the programme.

A structured research training programme, termed the *Digital Global Health Academy*, will be delivered to fellows regardless of where they are based, aimed at equipping them to be future academic leaders and mentors, to maximise their research impact and to address the substantial inequalities in global health. In particular, we aim to help fellows develop the skills to build positive, inclusive research cultures.

Information about the application process

The following guidance refers to application for UK candidates

The PhD programme is open to all health professionals registered with UK professional bodies who want to undertake research focused on the major global health challenges in Africa. This programme will provide a 3-year research PhD training fellowship. Candidates apply through a centralised admissions process at LSHTM, but if awarded a fellowship can be based at any one of the UK institutions.

Our supervisory pool covers a range of global health expertise, across health professions, from infectious diseases, maternal, child and adolescent health, and non-communicable diseases, neglected tropical diseases and mental health. Research does not need to be restricted to these areas but should be focused on the health needs of people in sub-Saharan Africa. We strongly encourage interdisciplinary research projects, and all fellows will have one or more supervisors from their UK institution, as well as a supervisor from the African Partner Institution (API) or a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the African partner country. It is generally expected that fellows will spend approximately 2 years in the African partner country undertaking their research. All fellows will also have a mentor (matched to their health profession) to provide support and guidance for balancing their clinical and research career.

Eligibility criteria

- 1) Health professional (with an undergraduate degree): Healthcare professionals eligible to apply include: art therapists, chiropodists/podiatrists, chiropractors, clinical psychologists, dental hygienists, dental nurses, dental therapists, dentists, dieticians, drama therapists, health visitors, healthcare scientists (in life sciences, physiological sciences, physical sciences and biomechanical engineering, and bioinformatics), medical graduates, midwives, music therapists, non-medical public health specialists, nurses, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, optometrists and dispensing opticians, orthoptists, osteopaths, paramedics, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, physiotherapists, practitioner psychologists, prosthetists and orthotists, radiographers, social workers, speech and language therapists, vets.
- 2) Registered with a relevant health professional body in the UK or Republic of Ireland (such as the General Medical Council, Irish Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, Health and Care Professions Council, General Optical Council, General Pharmaceutical Council, General Dental Council and others).

Medical graduates need to have completed their internship (e.g.: Foundation Training or equivalent). All other healthcare professionals need to have at least 1 year of clinical practice.

- 3) Applicants should be eligible to work in the UK and qualify for home or UK-level fees.

Projects must demonstrate a clear relevance to the main aim of the PhD fellowship programme.

An unsuccessful candidate can reapply once but should seek advice from the programme management group, via the Programme Director, prior to considering reapplication.

What will the fellowship provide?

The scheme covers the fellow's salary, research costs, PhD registration fees, and overseas living costs (flights, relocation, contribution towards rent and security, health insurance and schooling, if relevant). Salaries should be requested according to experience on the appropriate clinical salary scale, including London weighting if relevant. Typically, consultant

level salaries and NHS salaries above Band 7 will not be funded; if this issue arises, this should be discussed individually with the Programme Director.

Clinical work during fellowship

Routine clinical work (not related to research) should be limited to no more than 8 hours a week (2 clinical sessions) full-time equivalent (FTE) (16 hours for craft specialities FTE, 4 clinical sessions) during the fellowship and the host institution must provide a signed statement agreeing to this restriction. Fellows working clinically or undertaking patient-facing research in the country where they are conducting their PhD research must ensure that they are registered with the appropriate health professional body and are undertaking appropriate continuing professional education to maintain their registration.

How to apply

Applications must be received through the online LSHTM application system via <http://jobs.lshtm.ac.uk> by **11:59pm GMT on Friday the 7th November 2025**.

No applications received after the deadline will be accepted.

The application needs to contain the following elements:

1. Application form (completed online)*
2. Supporting letter from academic referee (emailed to HR)**
3. Completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (emailed to HR)**

*We are aware that some of the questions in the online form ask for repeat information. Please note that for shortlisting purposes it is essential that you answer **all** questions fully.

**Academic referee letter and the Equal Opportunities form should be sent to the following email: Nunzia.Limongelli@lshtm.ac.uk (reference: CREATE Stage 1 Application)

The fellowship application is a two-stage process. The initial application assesses your career history to date, your achievements in research to date, your experience of working in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), your motivation to enrol in this doctoral training programme and a brief outline of your ideas for a PhD. It is not expected that you have identified a definite PhD supervisor and developed a specific project by this stage, although it would be expected that you have some broad ideas for your research project, potential supervisory team, UK institution and African Partner Institution - although these do not need to be fixed at this stage.

Applicants will be shortlisted based on this application form by a panel comprising multidisciplinary research experts and health professionals. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the Stage 1 Application by mid-December 2025.

Shortlisted candidates then need to identify a supervisor(s) and develop a PhD proposal, which will specify their research aims, hypotheses, approach, impact, and budget. The full application (Stage 2) will be due by **11:59pm GMT Tuesday the 17th of March 2026**. Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of interdisciplinary academics, and all shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview to discuss their proposal. Interviews will be held in May 2026, with an outcome expected by mid-May 2026. Funding decisions will be based on the outcomes of interviews.

Successful applicants will be required to take up their fellowship within 12 months of the award being made. The fellowship will be withdrawn if the award is not taken up within this period.

Guidance for completion of the Stage 1 application form

1. **University degrees / diplomas / professional qualifications:** please ensure you provide the grade (e.g. II.2, II.1, First class, Merit/Distinction) for all degrees, together with institution and year of award.
2. **Prizes:** Only list those awarded for academic achievement at university level and above. This section should include any recognition for clinical leadership, management, innovation or research.
3. **Employment since clinical qualification:** please provide these in reverse chronological order.
4. **Your clinical specialty:** provide details of your healthcare profession, your specialty training (where applicable), and current status.
5. **Why do you think you are a good fit for this scheme?** Please explain how your track record, experience, and future plans make you a good fit for this PhD fellowship programme focused on global health research in Africa.
6. **What do you hope to achieve through this PhD fellowship programme?** Please explain your motivation for undertaking training through this PhD fellowship, what you hope to achieve, and how this will provide a good basis for your future career.
7. **Relevant experience of working with populations from/in low- or middle-income country settings.** Please provide any experience you have had to date, as a volunteer, clinician or researcher, in LMIC settings, particularly in Africa; what your specific role was; and what your experiences were. If you have not worked in LMIC settings previously, explain what relevant experience you have with populations from LMICs in a high-income setting.
8. **Research training:** Please describe any specific *training* you have received in research methodology, which could encompass design, analysis and reporting skills; laboratory methods; clinical trials; qualitative methodology; research communication and impact; and patient and public involvement and engagement.
9. **Publications:** Please enter a complete list of your research publications to-date (full citations including title and all authors). These should be separated into
 - Original peer reviewed papers
 - Pre-Prints
 - Reviews
 - Books or book chapters
 - Editorials, letters or case reports
 - Conference presentations
 - Oral
 - Poster
 - Other research outputs, such as
 - Development and sharing of new datasets, software, research reagents, tools, methods, products or patents.
 - Contributions to collaborations/consortia/team science
 - Participation in Patient & Public involvement (PPI) and engagement activities
 - Influences on policy, practice, education or training
 - Development of new preventative, diagnostic, treatment or management approaches and interventions
 - Improvements to health or quality of life of patients and the public

- 10. Tell us about a research activity you have undertaken that you are particularly proud of, and what its impact was.** Explain how you contributed to the generation of research ideas and/or implementation of research, highlight any funding you won, and describe why the research output was of particular relevance.
- 11. How have you contributed to the development of individuals?** This includes your teaching activities or workshops, and the supervision of students and colleagues. Mention mentoring of members in your field and support you provided to the advancement of colleagues, be it junior or senior. Highlight the establishment of collaborations, from institutional (maybe interdisciplinary) to international.
- 12. How have you contributed to broader society?** This includes examples of societal engagement and knowledge exchange. It can include engagement with the public sector, industry and the private sector, with clients and the broader public, inclusion of patients in processes and advocacy. It can include other impacts across research such as practice and policy including efforts to advise policy-makers at local, national or international level.
- 13. Mention career breaks, secondments, volunteering, part-time work and other relevant experience (including in-time spent in different sectors).**
- 14. Ideas for a PhD project.** This is not expected to be a summary of a specific proposal, but you should outline your area of interest, any broad research questions you have identified, and any plans you may have discussed with a potential supervisor, including the UK and African location proposed.
- 15. Please indicate how you heard about this programme.**
- 16. Please provide a letter of support from an academic referee.** This should be no longer than 1-2 A4 pages, in 11 font typeface. The letter should outline how the referee knows you, in what context they supervised your work, and what your skills and achievements were. They should specifically highlight your suitability for the PhD fellowship and any relevant skills that make you a good fit for this programme.

Part-time working

We are supportive of fellows undertaking their fellowships part-time as part of their usual working pattern and with the support of the host organisation. Part-time working is not permitted for the purposes of continuing clinical training or to maintain another salaried position. Fellows have the opportunity to work part-time either from the outset of their PhD fellowship or as a result of a change to their working pattern during their PhD.

Questions related to part-time work can be discussed with the Programme Director.

Further Information and Contact

Information about the programme can be found on the website: <https://www.create-phd.org/>

For any questions or queries about the programme or application form, please email : create-phd@lshtm.ac.uk