

Frequently Asked Questions

Background:

The Academic Centre for Healthy Ageing (ACHA) is a new research, education and training centre from Barts Health NHS Trust and Queen Mary University of London.

We work closely with local people and health and care staff in north east London to improve care and support for people as they grow older.

ACHA was awarded match funding from the Dunhill Medical Trust to establish this PhD programme, to support ACHA's academic ambitions to build research capacity in Healthy Ageing.

ACHA's PhD programme, "New approaches to **FrA**ility: **I**nclusivity and **RE**silience in Ageing **R**esearch" (FAIRER-DTP) is due to begin in January 2025.

FAIRER will focus, like ACHA, on applied health research, responding to the needs of our local population and health and care system and seeking implementable solutions. ACHA academics will oversee the programme via a Steering Group and propose doctorates based on the three overarching areas of ACHA:

- 1) frailty prevention and living well with long term conditions and multimorbidity
- 2) rehabilitation
- 3) cognition

In line with the principles of ACHA, the three non-clinical PhD studentships, which will be registered at Queen Mary University of London, will be embedded within ACHA; a vibrant community of applied health researchers, clinicians and health professionals and local people. They will also benefit from the extensive support offered to QMUL PhD students.

These three separate doctoral programmes will be synergistic, exploring three aspects of our vision for fairer, more inclusive approaches to changing the trajectories of frailty in older age.

How many PhDs will be funded?

Three, full-time non-clinical PhDs will be funded. Students must start their PhDs in January 2025. The students will be registered at Queen Mary University of London.

Can I propose my own project?

No. Students must apply for one of the six PhD projects listed below. Three PhDs will be awarded with candidates awarded their first choice PhD as far as possible. If two successful candidates want to do the same PhD, the highest ranking candidate will get their first choice and the next ranking candidate will be offered their second choice.

Research projects and supervisor contacts:

1. Behaviour change to improve cognitive wellbeing in older people from underserved groups with Mild Cognitive Impairment. **Contact:** [Dr Megan Armstrong](#)
2. Understanding inequalities in delirium identification to improve care and patient outcomes. **Contact:** [Liz Sampson: elizabeth.sampson@nhs.net](mailto:elizabeth.sampson@nhs.net)
3. Designing an inequalities focussed digital health intervention for healthy ageing. **Contact:** [Dr Jamie Ross](#)
4. Development of a rehabilitation intervention to reduce concerns about falls among carers of older adults with cognitive impairment and fracture. **Contact:** [Professor Katie Sheehan](#)
5. The Influence of Multigenerational Housing on Healthcare Use for Persons Living with Dementia. **Contact:** [Professor Claudia Cooper](#)
6. Monitoring of fracture repair in older people to optimise recovery. **Contact:** [Professor Jerry Tsang: jtsang@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jtsang@ed.ac.uk) (In post in July 2024)

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Further details about the projects are available [here](#).

How do I apply?

Prospective applicants should get in touch with their prospective supervisor to discuss the research project they want to apply for. Contact details can be found above, next to each project title.

Please keep the bartshealth.acha@nhs.net copied into your correspondence.

The application itself should be made via the [QMUL online system](#).

Please note: This is a standard form for people applying for PhDs at QMUL and we are not able to edit it. **We have written a [guidance document](#) to help you complete this form for the ACHA PhDs. It is vital that you read this when completing the online form.**

For your online application please select "Semester 2 (January Start)" and include the following "supporting documents" alongside those requested in the guidance:

- A curriculum vitae
- A brief (1000 Word) personal statement (**see guidance document for required content**)
- A recent example of academic writing

The uploaded Personal Statement has the option for applicants to describe more unusual career trajectories or experience, or if candidates have any personal circumstances that they feel the reviewers might want to take into account (**see guidance document**).

What is the deadline for applications?

Applications need to be submitted by **12 noon** on Friday 13 September 2024. The shortlisting of candidates will take place in September 2024. Those who have been shortlisted will be interviewed in person in mid-October 2024, the exact date will be confirmed shortly. NB it will not be possible to be interviewed remotely.

When will successful applicants start their PhD?

Students will start their PhD studentship in January 2025. It is not possible to defer the PhD.

When will I hear about the outcome of my application?

Applicants will be informed w/c 30th September 2024 if they have been successful in securing an interview place. Shortlisted candidates will generally be informed of the outcome of the interviews within two weeks. All offers of places are subject to references. Please Note: successful candidates will be required to confirm their acceptance of an offer of a place on the programme within two weeks of being notified.

Who can be funded?

Students must be residents in the UK with eligibility to live and work in the UK and must be eligible for UK home student fees.

Candidates who are enrolled on a Masters or other higher degree must have completed this before enrolling on their PhD, it is not possible to be enrolled on two higher degrees simultaneously on this programme. Please note: this programme cannot be used by people who have already currently registered for a PhD (funded or unfunded).

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What funding is available?

PhD Studentship awards include home student fees and an annual stipend of £28,057 for 4 years and up to £10,000 pa research and training costs (including doctoral fees) for the first 3 years.

Is it possible to study part time?

Students can be full time or part time. Full time fellows (i.e. students) are permitted to work up to one day per week whilst funded full time by the scheme across. Students wishing to pursue their PhD part time will have their duration of funding extended pro rata and their stipend reduced pro rata. It will not be possible to do a part time doctorate at a lower WTE than 0.6, (ie over 6 years 8 months)

Where will students be based? Is it possible to study remotely?

It is not possible to be entirely remote. Students are expected to spend a minimum of two days a week within the Academic Centre of Healthy Ageing and embedded within the local health and care system.

What will be expected of me if I receive funding?

As we are required to monitor the successes and future career paths of our doctoral trainees, it is a requirement of accepting a post on the programme that PhD students agree to complete and return annual questionnaires. PhD students will receive these questionnaires whilst studying for their doctorates and, possibly, for a few years following the award of their doctorate. Collecting this information will help us to improve the programme and support future doctoral opportunities.

Who will be the supervisors?

Primary and secondary supervisors will be based at Queen Mary University of London within the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, they are listed next to their project title on p1 of the [project descriptions](#). Through the Academic Centre for Health Ageing, we will help identify a 3rd supervisor from the local health and care system from within which Whipps Cross Hospital operates, to support ACHA's focus on applied health research.

What will the Programme offer students?

Queen Mary University of London offers a superb environment for training. QMUL's research outputs, impact performance and research environment are highly competitive, as assessed in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework. We were ranked 7th in the UK for quality.

We will support students' projects and development plans by drawing on expertise across clinical, lived, academic and policy areas. Within ACHA, the doctoral students will join a multidisciplinary team, with opportunities to observe the practice of, and interface with, those involved in the care of older people. The ACHA also has excellent links to acute hospitals, local public health, primary care, the Integrated Care System and social care, and will support recruitment of PPIE members with lived experience who will be part of all thesis committees.

In addition to their supervisors, all students will have a trained mentor, typically a post-doctoral researcher who will always be from a different Institute at QMUL to the student. Furthermore, ACHA, Barts Health NHS Trust and QMUL cover a wide span of networking and educational opportunities; doctoral students will be included and fully integrated into these and made aware of all potential opportunities.

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What research training will be available for doctoral students?

- Bespoke research training programmes for students will be structured and tailored to meet the needs of the individual and their project.
- Doctoral students will take a selection of training modules provided by QMUL to ensure robust training in research methods, as required.
- In addition, all Fellows will receive training in research integrity, ethics, research governance, maximising research impact, leadership skills and working with the media.
- PhD students can, as a group, express training need for other areas

What is the programme's vision on equality, diversity and inclusion?

ACHA supports equality, diversity, and inclusion in several ways. Firstly, as the centre is part of Barts Health, it fully aligns with the Trust's WeCare Values and WeBelong Inclusion Strategy. Situated in one of the most diverse regions in the country, with one of the most diverse workforces in the NHS, ACHA offers a unique opportunity for applicants to see their work have a far-reaching impact. Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) at ACHA actively involves diverse community members and organisations in the research process, ensuring their perspectives shape study design, implementation, and outcomes. This inclusive approach fosters equality by addressing diverse needs (reflected below in two of our 7 core principles).

Build trust with marginalised communities and those affected by health inequalities.

We will prioritise connecting to communities where they are and where they feel safe and engage in meaningful discussions with clear aims, actions and next steps.

Reflect the local diversity of thought and abilities - We will ensure we are as inclusive as possible in our practice, respecting the diverse abilities, values and cultures of our local population.

What can I expect if I apply and I am invited to interview?

- All applications will be independently reviewed by up to three peer reviewers
- Interviews will be in person, at Whipps Cross Hospital
- Following independent review up to 7 applicants will be invited for an in person interview

How do I get further information?

A webinar about the scheme will be held on Monday 22nd July, 12.30pm, register here:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/138c751c-1295-4a68-8438-1ac44cab9d97@37c354b2-85b0-47f5-b222-07b48d774ee3>

For specific questions, please email bartshealth.acha@nhs.net