# Postgraduate research training and clinical academic careers: an open evening for all clinicians

**DIVISION OF PSYCHIATRY**

## Hosted by the MSc Mental Health Research Sciences Team, Division of Psychiatry, UCL

## 12th May 2020

**Question and answers (Q&A) from the event**

**Can module credits taken with other universities count towards the MSc?**

Unfortunately, it is not possible to transfer modules credits from other courses to count towards the MSc in Mental Health Research Sciences.

**What are ways that I could build up my CV during core psychiatry training in preparation for applying for clinical academic fellowships?**

Your core training in psychiatry is a good time to build upon your research experience if you are hoping to pursue a clinical-academic career. It is usually expected that you would have completed a masters before undertaking a PhD due to the competitive nature of PhD applications. A masters puts you in a competitive position and demonstrates that you are committed to a clinical-academic career.

Moreover, take opportunities to get involved in clinically based research such as Quality Improvement projects in your clinical setting as these can lead to publication. Also, contact people working in academic settings to see if there are opportunities to get involved in this research.

You can apply for an academic post at any point so you can start applying early on in your training.

**Can you do a PhD in mental health and neuroscience if you haven’t got a background in neuroscience?**

In general, it is good to undertake a PhD in an area where you already have some general experience or knowledge. One of the main functions of PhD’s is to train you in a particular area, so you are not expected to have specialist knowledge. If the PhD is not your area of knowledge, then you will need to persuade the interview panel why you should be considered for the PhD over others who may have more specific experience.

**What is the process for applying for PhDs and developing a project? Are you able to bring your own ideas or are there projects already outlined that you can apply to?**

Most people bring their own ideas. PhD’s are really challenging so it is important for you to be passionate about what you are doing. The Division of Psychiatry does have more bespoke ideas advertised so if you do see PhD advertised and it meets your interests, it is worth applying. PhD opportunities are advertised on findaphd.com. Most people interested in pursuing a PhD will already have some links with the Division, either through completion of the MSc or through doing blocks within their ACF and would have developed links with potential PhD supervisors through this route.

If you are thinking of applying for PhD fellowships, e.g. NIHR, then you would need to develop your own research proposal, so it is important to get in contact with academics in your existing networks or approach academics in your area of interest to gain their interest/support the development of your proposal.

**How built does your CV need to be to apply for a PhD fellowship?**

It is important to demonstrate that you have a commitment to a clinical-academic career as funding bodies want to offer awards to people, they are confident will continue on this career path. You should have some publications and be able to persuade them that you want to go down an academic career, and that you have the skills and determination to do so.

**Does having a non-research focused MSc sufficient to going on to do a PhD?**

It depends. You would want to have developed some specific skills and experience in research. We do get people doing our MSc who have done less research focused MScs before. Or you can build up your research experience after completion of your clinically focused MSc.

**What is the process for applying for the pre-PhD ACF? I am interested in multiple areas and not sure how to process with this process.**

That is an application you have to make through Health Education England. It is a national recruitment drive but you can specify where you would like to do it. In London, I think it is limited to Kings, UCL and Imperial but it changes yearly. David Osborne is the link person for this in our department. These are pre-PhD fellowships that allow people to have time to prepare a PhD application. You don’t have to have a fixed project but there is an expectation that you know what area you are interested in. If you are applying for a PhD fellowship, then you are expected to have a worked-up project.