

# **The Royal College of Radiologists**

## **THE FACULTY OF CLINICAL RADIOLOGY**

### **Guidance for Prospective Applicants Applying to NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) and Lectureship (ACL) Posts in Radiology**

The Integrated Academic Training Pathway scheme for training of Academic Clinical Fellows (ACFs) and Lecturers (ACLs) was launched by the Research Capacity Development Programme of the National Institute of Health Research (NCCRC of the Department of Health). The ACF posts are usually available during Years 1-3 of training in Radiology and incorporate academic training; ACFs thus spend 75% of their time undertaking clinical specialty training and 25% undertaking research or educationalist training. Funding for research expenses associated with the academic component of these posts must be provided where necessary by members of the host partnership.

ACFs are aimed at those who, at the early stages of their specialty training, show outstanding potential for a career in academic medicine. This Programme for training of academic radiologists was implemented to help mentor, teach, and tutor highly selected trainees in the principles and practice of Radiology research to prepare them for a career in academic Radiology. This phase of Radiology training occurs in parallel with clinical training, and allows ACFs to make a significant start to their clinical specialty training with a broad range of academic opportunities that enable (a) the preparation of an application for a research Training Fellowship or a programme for training as an educationalist (success in these applications is defined as the end point of an ACF), and (b) research potentially leading to a higher degree. Registration for this would most often take place during a Training Fellowship, although under some circumstances candidates might start preparing for a PhD or MD in a radiology-based subject during their ACF period based on the research conducted therein.

Following the completion of the ACF period, a trainee will be in a position to embark on a successfully awarded research Training Fellowship or rejoin the non-academic specialty training programme (while relinquishing the (A) suffix to their NTN) or apply for Clinical Lecturer posts to complete specialty training incorporating academic training, provided that appropriate academic (having a research higher degree, eg MD or PhD) and clinical competences have been obtained. The nature of the research undertaken during the ACF period (whether basic or clinical) may affect the timing of eligibility to sit the Final FRCR Part B Examination and the timing of eligibility for a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). This is at the discretion of the Warden of the Faculty of Clinical Radiology. An ACF appointment does not exclude the possibility of undertaking focussed individualised training (FIT).

ACLs start at the end of the research training fellowship or educationalist training programme and are intended for those trainees who have obtained a higher degree and remain set on a career in academic Radiology. This phase will offer post-doctoral research or educationalist career development for the trainees with opportunities to develop an application for a post-doctoral training support (eg Clinician Scientist Award, Project Grant). The end of the Clinical Lectureship phase is marked by: a) completion of clinical training and the attainment of a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT), and b) also by a period of high-quality, further post-doctoral training.

ACFs and ACLs would be assisted in making the transition to independent postdoctoral investigators via these successful applications for postdoctoral research training fellowships and awards, and ultimately to a long-term expectation of obtaining Senior Lectureships in Radiology,

where academic careers combine research and clinical practice, and with the capability to establish independent research groups supported by long term research funding.

ACF and ACL programmes must have their posts approved by PMETB if time spent in them is to lead to acquisition of knowledge and skills appropriate to a CCT. To obtain approval, written confirmation from both the College and Deanery must be obtained stating that they support the proposed ACF or ACL. Out of programme activity for research (OOPR) must be prospectively approved by PMETB if it is to count towards the award of a CCT. PMETB requires information on the following from the College and Deanery in order to process and approve applications for ACF OOPR:

- A formal covering letter from the Deanery to PMETB seeking prospective approval of the OOPR and confirming that the placement has Deanery support.
- Confirmation that the College is aware of and supports the OOPR. The College should indicate the length of time the OOPR should count towards the trainee's CCT.
- A statement detailing the purpose and structure of the OOPR, including confirmation that the placement is subject to quality management in line with PMETB requirements.

Those who are eligible to apply for specialty training posts or those who currently hold an SpR or StR post may apply for an ACF. Currently, individuals who have a PhD are not excluded from applying for an ACF but will be expected to further their postdoctoral research experience. Further details about eligibility can be found in the document 'NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships: Entry, Eligibility and Exit Points for Appointments made in 2009'. <http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/intetacatrain/acfguidancenotes>

ACFs are delivered through ACF Programmes. These Programmes have been awarded to University/NHS Trust/Deanery partnerships. A list of Programmes is available by following the above link. Further details about the ACF can be obtained from these contacts.

Programmes do not necessarily have ACF posts available every year. Those that do will recruit to the ACF using an application process similar to that used for standard speciality training but adapted to incorporate an assessment of an applicant's potential for development as an academic.

The ACF recruitment rounds will be run by Postgraduate Deaneries in England, using National Guidance and a National Application Form. Those interested must contact the relevant Deanery to confirm the availability of the post and to find out about the application procedure and timetable. Making an application for an ACF does not preclude an application for non-academic training in Radiology.

*TFM/DL/November 2009*