



**Call for Applications for Research Training with Academic Training Opportunities**

**Academic F2  
JOB DESCRIPTION**

**4 month rotation (one post)**

**Public Health / Cancer at population level**

**Lead Academics: Prof Anna Gavin, consultant in Public Health Medicine, accredited trainer, and Prof Ciaran O'Neill, health economist and Prof Helen Coleman, Deputy Directors, N. Ireland Cancer Registry, Centre for Public Health**

## **Outline of the post**

This post is within the multidisciplinary working environment of the N. Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR) within the Centre for Public health, QUB located in the Mulhouse Building at the RVH.

The NICR is a population based cancer registry, funded by the Public Health Agency, which aims to collect data on all malignant and certain non-malignant tumours diagnosed in N. Ireland. The aim of the Registry is to provide accurate, timely information on cancers occurring in the population of Northern Ireland for research, planning and education so that the burden of disease may be reduced and the experience of patients and their outcomes improved.

The Registry is responsible for the production of Official Statistics on cancer incidence, prevalence and survival in Northern Ireland and provides evidence to help inform decision making about cancer services. The datasets on population level premalignant disease such as Barrett's Oesophagus and colorectal polyps have provided new information on disease risk which have resulted in high level peer reviewed publications.

The Registry is closely linked to a worldwide network of cancer registries to engender collaborative working and harmonisation of research and statistical methods. We are involved in international research projects such as the International Cancer Benchmarking Partnership, local and national audits on cancer care and supports various local research projects.

## **Prior to starting the placement**

You should explore the NICR web page which illustrates the range of datasets available and research projects that the NICR lead and are involved with. We also have annual newsletters which provide summaries of work undertaken.

Following successful application, you are invited to visit the NICR at the earliest opportunity to discuss the forthcoming placement with Academic Supervisors. This will help with planning a suitable research project and academic experience and allow staff in the Registry time to prepare any datasets that you may require. You are also advised to identify a clinical supervisor if interested in a particular type of cancer.

## **Generic academic skills**

By undertaking this academic F2 placement you will gain insights into population based academic medicine while also developing your knowledge, skills and aptitudes for academic medicine. If you are interested in a particular cancer then academic oncology expertise will also be enhanced. These skills will be useful also in clinical medicine. We encourage you to have a project which with sufficient preplacement work should give experience of achieving ethical approvals, and with sufficient hard work result in a conference poster and possibly a peer reviewed publication.

## During the 4 month placement

### Academic component

On joining the NICR you will have an initial appraisal meeting to review your learning portfolio and agree the educational objectives for this F2 placement. You will receive feedback from your supervisors throughout the 4-month attachment with regular assessment to ensure academic competencies are achieved. The Registry has expert statisticians available to advise on methodological issues

### Research skills

The registry in addition to providing routine statistics and monitoring of cancer services is involved in several research projects funded by various agencies including Macmillan and Prostate Cancer UK and in the past CRUK, and Cancer Focus.

We have datasets available for analysis including -

- trends in symptoms at presentation,
- data on lung cancer comparing patient, clinical, disease and service related factors by survival time
- Detailed information on patterns of care and outcomes of the most common cancers.

**Research training:** With guidance it is envisaged you will be able to complete a number of research project tasks (learn about the research governance and managing large datasets confidentially; experience on ethics applications; issues relevant to clinical academic research; undertake a literature review; interrogate a database; practise scientific writing; presentation of data in an abstract, as a poster and/or oral presentation).

Mentorship: You will have access to experienced clinical academic staff from the Centre for Public Health who are available to provide longer term advice and encouragement to help you pursue a career in academic medicine

### Teaching skills

Public Health medicine has active undergraduate and postgraduate educational opportunities. We run a Masters in Public Health and teach undergraduate medical students.

1. You will be encouraged to participate in the undergraduate teaching of 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students (on line seminar). This teaching will be directly observed by your academic supervisor with multiple opportunities for feedback to improve your confidence and competence.
2. Formal postgraduate education includes regular journal clubs and scientific presentations from the Centre of Excellence invited speakers held within the Centre for Public Health.

### Clinical component

You will have particular opportunities to expand your knowledge of documentation and management of chronic diseases in a population setting including recent work on cancer and heart disease, stroke and mental health .

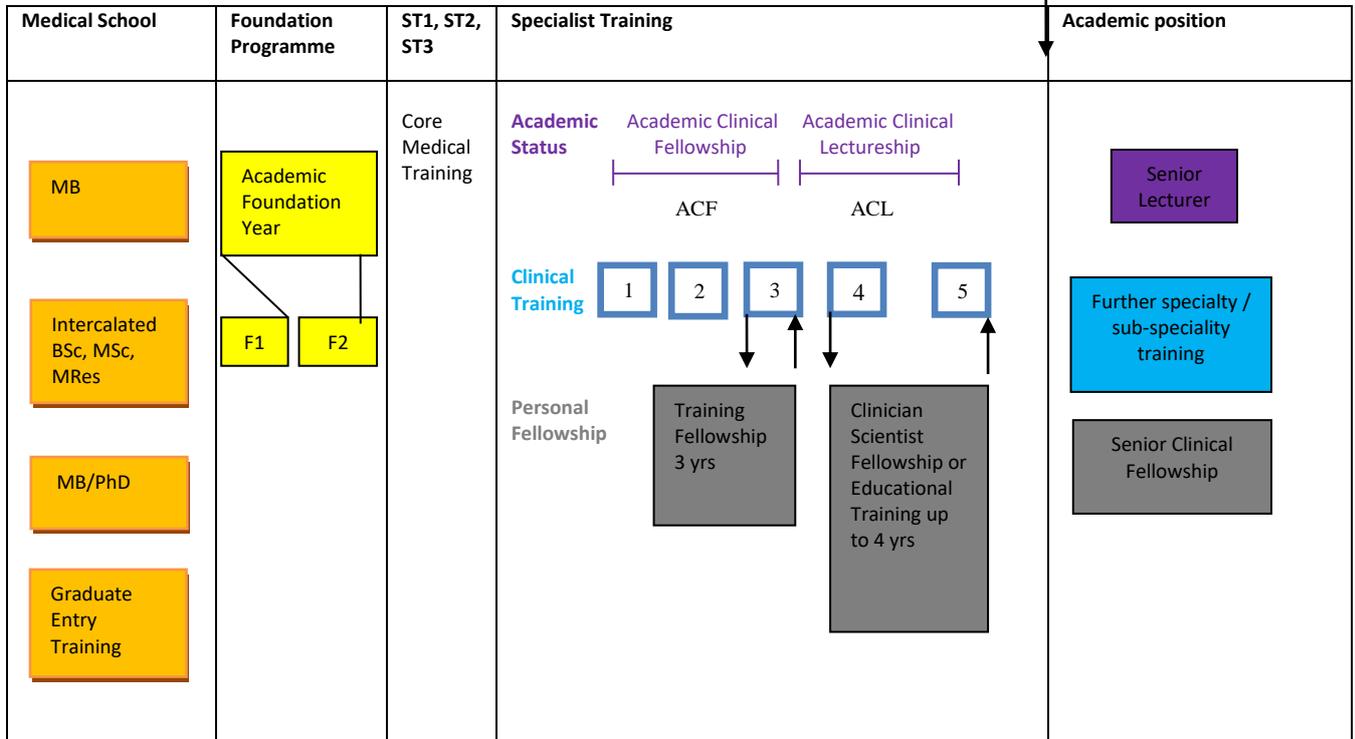
There is an expectation that you will attend some regional cancer services planning meetings such as Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NICaN) and also experience cancer MDT clinical meetings.

### **Provisional job plan**

This job plan has been designed to introduce the successful candidate to major areas of population health with an emphasis on oncology. There will be a dedicated study/ work area available for use in the N. Ireland Cancer Registry.

ACADEMIC TRAINING PATH

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The timings of personal fellowships are indicative – there should be flexibility according to individual career progression

**Academic F2:** Academic F2 training posts are for 4 months. This will be with two other rotations one of which will be a General Medicine attachment.

**ACF/ACL:** Trainees already appointed at ST3 or above are eligible to apply. Trainees who have undertaken postgraduate research (PhD or MD) should have already submitted their thesis, or be within three months of submission.

## **Testimonial from Dr Conor McKenna F2 Doctor who work in NICR 2016**

I worked as an Academic F2 within the Centre for Public Health from December 2015 – April 2016. At medical school in the University of Manchester, through placements in Clinical Oncology and ENT-Head and Neck Surgery, I developed an interest in head and neck cancer research, pre-clinical and clinical motivating me to pursue an Academic Foundation Programme. Prior to commencing my academic post in the Centre for Public Health I had been in a busy clinical placement within the Northern Ireland Cancer Centre as an Oncology F2 doctor. This exposed me to the inpatient experience of cancer patients within Northern Ireland and renewed my interest in head and neck cancer patients and their care.

My four-month research placement was principally undertaken with the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR). The purpose was to produce a detailed report on head and neck cancer in Northern Ireland encompassing the incidence, prevalence, mortality and survival of head and neck cancer patients from 1993-2013. I also carried out a detailed audit of care for patients with larynx, oropharynx and oral cavity cancers diagnosed in 2013, looking at patient characteristics, referral process, MDT management and outcomes.

The friendly and supportive working environment in the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry allowed me to work effectively towards my research aims. I had training in data protection and confidentiality and was able to utilise the strong academic and clinical links of the NICR to produce a strong piece of work which I have submitted for presentation at an international conference. Their wealth of information on cancer registries across all the health and social care trusts allowed me to take a broad view of head and neck cancer across all of Northern Ireland, an important feature for a relatively uncommon group of cancers. I found the staff to be very welcoming and encouraging and their input and concentrated expertise helped to shape the scope of my work.

I would, without reservation, recommend the NICR as a research environment for future academic foundation trainees and indeed any clinician/scientist with an interest in local cancer epidemiology and patterns of care.

Conor McKenna  
F2 Doctor - June 2016