

# Apply to be a Year 1 & 2 Medical Student Community Research Project Supervisor & Host

The Pears Cumbria School of Medicine

A partnership between

IMPERIAL



**A funded opportunity for you to host medical students to undertake a longitudinal health improvement research project supporting your services and communities, commencing October 2026.**

## About us

The [Pears Cumbria School of Medicine](#) has a vision to improve health outcomes for the people of Cumbria through producing doctors committed to delivering cutting-edge healthcare, and serving the needs of their local community.

Our student curriculum includes an innovative 'Prevention and Healthcare Delivery' module that runs through years 1 and 2 of the programme. The module includes public health, quality improvement, leadership and education, models of healthcare and health inequalities.

As part of the module, students are asked to undertake a community research project in a clinical or community context during their first eighteen months. Students work in teams of five or six to support an improvement that benefits the health outcomes of an identified group of citizens/patients. The project can be based in a community, care or hospital setting.

We hope you will want to become one of our hosts, providing and supporting one of these student research projects, starting in Autumn 2026 and running for about 18 months.

As a guide, students will have at least 150 hours allocated time each to undertake the work, including several full and half days where they can attend physical locations as part of their research. A draft schedule of allocated time is included below.

In Year 1, students research the context of an issue affecting your service, area or population, and then through an evidence review, design an intervention or improvement with an evaluation research plan, including consideration of governance, ethics and any new technologies (e.g. AI). In Year 2, we aim for that research project to be implemented, giving students the chance to evaluate an impact and report their findings.

Students are assessed on the work carried out during the project in both years, including through submission of a protocol and evidence review, delivery of a peer education session, and a final poster. We recognise that not all interventions will be delivered and that, as with all research, outcomes will be varied. Our hope is that the students experience the journey through the process of undertaking research and improvement in a real world setting with citizens/patients, and learn with you as they do so.

**Q: What kind of projects are you looking for?**

**A:** We're hoping for a real mix for our students to choose from. There needs to be an opportunity for students to collect and respond to some kind of data, and that they can deliver or describe an improvement to the health outcomes of a community, population or service user group.

## An opportunity for you

**Funding:** Project supervisors will be funded to support the PCSM students and to enable the project (see below). To participate, you will need to be able to offer our students an opportunity to investigate and improve a service/area that benefits local citizens/patients within the region.

You will support our students to conduct robust evidence review and staff/patient/people engagement on the opportunities and challenges of improving a health outcome, and work with them as they design, and hopefully test, an improvement that responds to that need. We will provide library support and mentorship in research methods to enable their work.

You will also support the students as they learn to work as a team and seek to overcome the common challenges that arise when trying to make improvements. Students have further access to a tutor who is there to support them at PCSM.

Our students are graduate entry, with a previous scientific degree, bringing a rich mix of past academic and employment experiences. They will already have enhanced DBS and workplace health checks undertaken as part of their clinical placement preparation. If students require additional honorary arrangements to access your organisation, this can be supported. You may need ethical approval to collect data etc. and we will support this as much as is reasonable.

**Q: I've not been a formal research investigator. Does this matter?**

**A:** No. Whilst we do need you to have familiarity with conducting research or quality improvement, we can support you on unfamiliar areas. We're happy to support an enthusiastic supervisor with a great idea, and an ability to support students as they undertake a literature review and then design and execute a protocol.

## Expectations of you as a Project Supervisor

You will have ...

- Understanding of research/quality improvement methodologies (quantitative and/or qualitative)
- Awareness of systematic literature search strategies, e.g. supporting decision making on inclusion/exclusion of study types
- Ability to guide students on identifying bias and collating evidence from multiple sources
- Familiarity with ethical and data governance considerations around designing and implementing data collection
- Excellent communication skills, and ability to monitor and guide performance and timescales of the student team, ideally with past education experience with medical or other healthcare professionals
- Experience or knowledge in designing interventions / research to improve patient/citizen experience/outcomes
- Support from a place / site / institution to ensure the project can be progressed and delivered in complement to wider priorities
- Supervisor availability of equivalent of one day per month to contribute to the project.

## Funding

We hope that the investment of our student time will deliver measurable improvements for your service users/staff and organisation, as well as longer term impact for the communities you serve through producing more connected and capable future doctors.

We also recognise that the supervisor function requires dedicated time and that a dedicated resource can help unlock a project opportunity. You, through your organisation, will be granted £16,000 (£8,000 year 1, £8,000 year 2) for each group of students hosted. This is to cover both your time, and any resources needed for the project or by the students.

It is expected that supervisors will be available for;

- Regular check-in and support for student groups throughout their project, including supporting timescales and group working. It is expected that students will manage their own timeline. We anticipate this would be a monthly meeting (via teams), support of any site visits, and interim queries addressed via email as a minimum.
- Supervisor comment of draft materials produced for project and assessments, within an acceptable timeframe.
- Ad-hoc education on topics required to deliver project
- Supporting student access to site and patients/people/data as required, including facilitating face to face visits, and any necessary information governance requirements.
- Attendance at student assessment centre days (x3 days maximum, per 18 months)

We cannot cover any additional costs (such as software licenses) that are not already available to students as part of their registration with the university. However, the funding provided can be used for these purposes.

Organisations will be asked to provide a brief report at the end of year 1 and project close on how the monies have been used. Students will be expected to support the production of this report, as would be expected for many research grants.

## Support from PCSM

PCSM will have a lead Senior Teaching Fellow for any queries or issues that arise through the project time. Students will also have access to library services. There will be additional support via the module lead and some administration support.

Transport and project costs will not be additionally reimbursed beyond the project grant, although it is planned that students will have access to vehicles from the PCSM to travel to your location.

Students may, as part of their learning journey, be encouraged to apply for small grants from local and national bodies to support their improvement idea, and placements are encouraged to use some of their supervisor reimbursement to enable the project.

### **Q: Do I need a separate PCSM Research Hub grant to apply?**

**A:** No. These projects are separate and distinct from the PCSM Research Hub 'Health Research Projects' that have been recently awarded. The intention is that our projects are student-led, with students taking the lead on design and delivery of a project set at an appropriate level for year 1/2 graduate entry medical students.

## Application process

If you would like to be considered as a project supervisor for our students, please complete the [online form](#) by July 20<sup>th</sup> 2026 at 17:00.

If there is extensive interest in participating, we reserve the right to close applications early, or to undertake a second selection stage for shortlisted supervisors and projects.

Applications will initially be longlisted against four criteria;

- Alignment to the school vision
- Capacity for good supervision
- Appropriateness of complexity and opportunity for student learning
- Fit with local communities

The outcome of this long listing will be notified to you by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026.

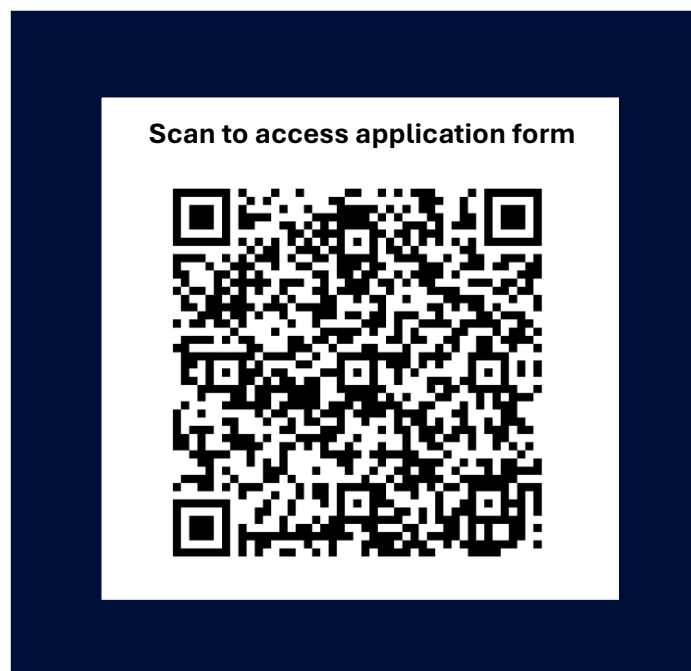
The short list of projects will then be presented to students during their first weeks at the school in September 2026, and they will be asked to rank their preferred projects. Using a 'least dissatisfaction' algorithm, we will then identify which projects are selected for delivery and communicate the final outcome of your application to you by early October at the latest.

Once selected, organisations will be asked to sign an agreement between themselves, PCSM and the students agreeing to deliver the project. A sample of the agreement is available on request from the school office.

A list of the application questions is available below.

For further information, please contact:

Dr Christopher Chiswell, [c.chiswell@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:c.chiswell@imperial.ac.uk) (Module lead)



# Supplementary information

## Project Host Application Questions

1. Supervisor details
  - a. Supervisor name
  - b. Supervisor job title
  - c. Supervisor email
  - d. Supervisor phone
  
2. Organisation details
  - a. Name of organisation or place where the student will be based
  - b. Base location for student placement
  - c. Does your line manager/professional lead support you acting as supervisor for this project? yes/no
  - d. Name of your business partner/manager for agreement communications
  - e. Email address of your business partner/manager for agreement communications
  - f. Postal address (and registration number if non-nhs) of your business partner/manager for agreement communications
  - g. Phone number of your business partner/manager for agreement communications
  
3. Proposed project
  - a. Working title of proposed project
  - b. Provide a brief description of the research area the students will work on, and the potential impact they could have (1250 characters max)
  - c. What past experiences or knowledge might help a student succeed with the project? (750 characters max)
  - d. What skills and competencies can students expect to develop through the project? (750 characters max)
  
4. Supervisor experience
  - a. What is your experience (as project supervisor) of education / research / quality improvement and supervision (1250 characters max)

## Draft Student Timetable (subject to change)

Students are generally based in Carlisle for their studies until February 2028 (Term 2, Year 2), when half of the cohort will relocate to south Cumbria for clinical placements.

The table below shows allocated timetable time for PHD project work, although students are also expected to use independent study time as required. Wednesday afternoons are also left free for students, although we cannot guarantee availability of students during this time as some undertake fixed co-curricular activities.

Projects can be located anywhere in Cumbria, or Lancaster district if delivered through UHMBT of LSCFT NHS, but please consider travel logistics considering the timetable if physical site presence will be important for achieving the project.

Students have access to the full Microsoft office cloud suite including teams for virtual work through their Imperial device logins.

### Year 1 Provisional Timetable Availability for projects

Date	Duration
16.05.26 pm	1.5 hours
06.11.26 pm	1.5 hours
09.11.26 pm	1.5 hours
20.11.26 pm	1.25 hours
30.11.26 Week	Independent study - Some availability
08.12.26 pm	Full day
10.12.26 pm	Full day
15.01.27 pm	1.5 hours
05.02.27 pm	1.5 hours
12.02.27 pm	1.25 hours
15.02.26 Week	Independent study - some availability
26.02.27 pm	1.5 hours
05.03.27 pm	1.25 hours
16.03.27	Full day
17.03.27	Full morning
18.03.27 or 19.03.27	Full day
22.03.27 pm	1.5 hours
23.03.27	Full day
24.03.27 am	1.5 hours
25.03.27	Full day
30.03.27	Full day
07.03.27 pm	Full afternoon
28.05.27 pm	Full afternoon
18.06.27 pm	2 hours

We do not have the draft Year 2 timetable shareable at this stage, but we anticipate students will have between 1.5 and 3 hours of project time per week (generally Fridays) from September 2027 until January 2028, with full days of availability in mid-November 2027. After students begin placements in February 2028, they are expected to be continuing with their projects, but we hope that most of the data collection will be fully completed by this stage.

# **Student Community Research Project Assessment Method**

Students are assessed in both year 1 and year 2 on their project progress.

In year 1, this provisionally includes submission of;

- Part 1a - Critical literature review on clinical practice – 2000 words
- Part 1b - Critical literature review on efficacy of proposed intervention or research methodology – 2000 words
- Part 2 - Community research project protocol – 1500 words
- Part 3 - Lay A4 poster including infographic on review findings

Submission is expected to be in May 2027 for these items.

In year 2, assessment provisionally includes;

- An A0 scientific conference poster
- An oral poster defence ('viva')
- A group teaching session delivered to first year students on their research area
- Individual structured critical reflection on their work
- A peer assessment from their group

Submission dates for completed work are again likely to be late spring 2028 for year 2.