 **GOSH BRC Applied Child Health Informatics Theme PhD Studentships in Health Data Science and Informatics - Call for PhD Project Proposals**

**Guidance and Project Outline Application Form**

Deadline: **Monday 5th February 2024**

**Aim**

The NIHR Great Ormond Street Hospital Biomedical Research Centre (NIHR GOSH BRC) [**Applied Child Health and Informatics**](https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/our-research/our-research-infrastructure/nihr-great-ormond-street-hospital-brc/about-our-biomedical-research-centre/our-research-themes/applied-child-health-informatics/) (ACHI) PhD Studentship Programme aims to fund two non-clinical Health Data Science PhD studentships to support the training and development of the next generation of informatics and data science translational researchers. The Programme will support two students, one in the area of health data science/epidemiology/statistics and the other specialising in applied machine learning and informatics. The studentships will begin in October 2024 and be based at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) or the UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health (ICH). **At this stage, we invite staff at GOSH and ICH to submit a project proposal for a data science and informatics PhD studentship**, which we will consider for inclusion in the portfolio of projects for students to apply to.

**Background**

The NIHR Great Ormond Street Hospital Biomedical Research Centre (NIHR GOSH BRC) is a collaboration between GOSH and the ICH. The NIHR GOSH BRC provides cutting-edge facilities and world-leading expertise and access to over 200 rare disease patient populations allowing our staff and NHS, university, and industry collaborators to conduct pioneering translational research into childhood illnesses. We were first awarded BRC status from the NIHR in 2007 and, in 2022, we secured £35 million for our fourth term until 2027.

In its fourth term of funding, the NIHR GOSH BRC has five strategic research themes: genomic medicine, tissue engineering and regenerative medicine, gene, stem, and cellular therapies, accelerating novel therapies and applied child health and informatics. Alongside our themes, our Central Development Hub includes our career development academy, business development and patient and public involvement and engagement activities, which support our continued efforts to translate research into patient benefits.

Essential to delivering the BRC’s strategy is also our newly created Paediatric Excellence Initiative, a partnership between the BRC, Alder Hey, Birmingham and Sheffield Children’s Hospitals. The initiative will enable more rapid translation of our research, help to create a network of excellence, and reflects our ambition to ensure staff from a range of career stages, professions and backgrounds can influence our strategy.

**Call information**

The BRC’s Career Development Academy and the Applied Child Health and Informatics (ACHI) Theme are advertising **a call for PhD project proposals**,suitable for a three-year non-clinical PhD Studentship beginning in October 2024. Successful students will be appointed and registered as UCL PhD students and will be based at GOSH and/or ICH.

**PhD project remit**

The ACHI theme builds on the potential of data science to revolutionise the diagnosis, management, or outcomes of children with rare and/or complex conditions. It aims to improve personalised health care decision-making, based on data-derived evidence at scale in a continuously optimised research data environment. It will leverage legacy, genomic and Electronic Patient Record data to improve patients’ health by applying Artificial Intelligence and machine learning.

The ACHI theme has funding for two studentships, with one in the areas of **health data science/ epidemiology/statistics** and the other in the areas of **applied machine learning and informatics**. All projects submitted across these areas must be aiming to **improve the diagnosis, management, or outcomes of children with rare and/or complex conditions.**

If you have an idea for a project or have a data set to utilise, but do not currently have the data science expertise required to form a suitable supervisory team, please get in touch with us and we can discuss the project and see if there are any possible collaborators at UCL for the project. We are also open to receiving PhD project proposals from clinical/lab-based PIs where the project is not purely data driven but has a data science/informatics component. These projects would still need to align with the GOSH BRC’s overall remit. Please contact [brc@gosh.nhs.uk](mailto:brc@gosh.nhs.uk) to discuss this.

Projects may also be collaborative and involve a subsidiary supervisor and/or student time at our partner sites within the Paediatric Excellence Initiative (Alder Hey, Birmingham and Sheffield Children’s Hospitals). UCL CDTs in AI and i4health are also invited to submit projects, with a supervisor from within the CDT structure. In all these scenarios, a minimum of two thirds of the time of the studentship must be spent at GOSH and/or ICH and the principal supervisor must be substantively employed by GOSH or UCL (based at ICH).

We will accept project proposals where the student would be primarily based at the Francis Crick Institute, but in this scenario the principal supervisor must be substantively employed by GOSH and/ UCL (based at ICH).

**BRC funding is not allowed to support basic science projects (i.e., not translational), any research using animals or clinical projects supporting phase III trials. Therefore, these types of projects are not eligible for this call.**

**Project and supervisor eligibility and responsibilities**

If you are a principal supervisor of a GOSH BRC funded non-clinical PhD student awarded during this BRC term (1st December 2022 - 30th November 2027), you are not eligible to submit a project proposal for this call. Prospective principal supervisors may submit up to two project outlines for inclusion in the portfolio but can only take on one student per round.

The proposed principal supervisor must be on the UCL approved register of principal supervisors at the point of project submission. The subsidiary supervisor may be named as the intellectual lead, for example, when they expect to be eligible to become principal supervisor by the time the project starts.

Projects must propose a Principal and Subsidiary supervisory team that meets all UCL eligibility requirements, as defined by UCL Academic Manual: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-5-research-degrees-framework>). Please read this document carefully before submitting your project outline to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria. Any Subsidiary supervisors from our Paediatric Excellence Initiative must also be able to demonstrate they meet UCL eligibility requirements.

If you are unsure of whether you are an eligible principal or subsidiary supervisor, please confirm with the UCL ICH Research Degrees office ([ich.researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ich.researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk)) before submitting your PhD project proposal.

**Application and selection process**

* To submit a project proposal for consideration, please complete the ‘NIHR GOSH BRC ACHI PhD Studentship - Project Outline Submission Form’, which can be found below, and submit as a **word document** to [brc@gosh.nhs.uk](mailto:brc@gosh.nhs.uk). Please also include copies of the **supervisors’ CVs upon submission.**
* The deadline for receipt of project proposal applications is **Monday 5th February 2024.**
* If any sections of your application form exceed the word limit stated on the form, the BRC team will delete the text that comes after the limit prior to review.
* If any signatures are missing from the application form on the day of the deadline, then the application will not be considered. Please get in touch with the BRC if you have issues obtaining signatures.

Following submission of project proposals there will be several stages to the process of selecting projects and students:

* There will be a preliminary review of the project proposals by a shortlisting panel consisting of the BRC ACHI theme leadership, the BRC Career Development Academy, the BRC Core Leadership Team, the Paediatric Excellence Initiative and the BRC Junior Faculty. The Panel will select projects for the portfolio, which will be included in the Studentship advert. The shortlisting panel will also check suitability of the supervisors with the relevant departments to confirm they meet the requirements of being a supervisor.
* The studentship will be advertised widely, and prospective students will specify first and second choice projects as part of their applications.
* After which, a shortlisting and interview process will take place, which will involve representatives from each BRC ACHI theme Leadership Team, the BRC Career Development Academy, the Core BRC Leadership Team, the Paediatric Excellence Initiative, the BRC Junior Faculty and the relevant supervisors.
* Successful applicants will then work with the supervisor on a full PhD project proposal which will be submitted for internal peer review, and approval by the UCL/ICH Student's Thesis Committee. Full approval will only be confirmed after this review process has taken place.

**Selection criteria:**

The shortlisting panel will review project proposals using the following selection criteria:

* Alignment of the project proposal to the ACHI research theme remit for this call, as outlined in the guidance above.
* Innovative aspects of the proposed project and its scientific excellence.
* Likelihood that the project will lead in the future to translational impact. This may include but is not limited to patient benefit via novel interventions/biomarkers, changing clinical guidelines/practice, future external funding, and/or patent filing/commercial activity.
* Track record of the supervisory team for past PhD supervision.
* Feasibility of the project to be delivered within the PhD timeframe.
* Ensuring a range of different disease areas/research methodologies etc. benefit from BRC support.

**NIHR GOSH BRC ACHI Theme PhD Project Outline Application Form**

**1. Supervisory team**

**Principal Supervisor**

Name:

Job title:

Employment start date:

Employment end date:

Substantive employer (must be GOSH or UCL (based at ICH):

Department:

Email:

Area(s) of expertise:

Please confirm you meet the requirements of UCL eligibility criteria for a Principal supervisor:

Please list how many full time PhD students you currently have as Principal supervisor (please include student names and PhD start and end dates):

Please list how many full time PhD students you currently have as Subsidiary supervisor (please include student names and PhD start and end dates):

How many PhD students have you supervised over the last five years who have submitted their thesis within four years of starting their PhD?

If you are part of one UCLs CDTs, please list the CDT here:

**Subsidiary Supervisor(s) (please copy and paste this table if there’s more than one subsidiary supervisor)**

Name:

Job title:

Substantive employer:

Employment start date:

Employment end date:

Department:

Email:

Area(s) of expertise:

Please confirm you meet the requirements of UCL eligibility criteria for a Subsidiary supervisor:

Please list how many full time PhD students you currently have as Principal supervisor (please include student names and PhD start and end dates):

Please list how many full time PhD students you currently have as Subsidiary supervisor (please include student names and PhD start and end dates):

If you are part of one UCLs CDTs, please list the CDT here:

**Do you plan to change the principal supervisor during the PhD? If yes, please explain the reason why you would like to propose this change. Please also confirm why the subsidiary will become eligible to become principal supervisor at that time.***e.g. this may be because the subsidiary will become eligible to become the principal supervisor in year 2 of the PhD and they are providing the main intellectual and supervisory input.*

**Would you consider less than 100% PhD funding if part-funding was offered? If yes, please confirm where matched funding would be available from.**

**2. Project information**

**Please provide a project title that can be understood by a general audience.**

**Please describe how your project proposal aligns with the BRC’s ACHI research theme remit for this PhD project call – see guidance above for details about the remit for this call (200 words max)**

**Please provide a Plain English summary of the project you are proposing for inclusion in the GOSH BRC ACHI theme non-clinical PhD project portfolio (200 words max)**

**Please provide an outline of your proposed project (1,250 words max, excluding references). A maximum of 5 references should be given.**

**Background:**

**Aims/Objectives:**

**Methods:**

**Timeline:**

**Collaborations:**

**Plans for patient and public involvement and engagement for the project/student:**

**References:**

1. …
2. …
3. …
4. …
5. …

**Who should students contact to discuss the project before application (name and email):**

**Has the project been registered with the R&D Office?** Yes/No (delete as appropriate)

**If yes, please provide the R&D Number:**

**Have you submitted the project for inclusion in another PhD programme project portfolio?**

**Has the project received ethics approval?** Yes/No (delete as appropriate)

**If no, do you intend to apply for ethics approval before the student begins working on the project?** Yes/No (delete as appropriate)

**If the ethics approval needs to be obtained after the student’s start date, please indicate how this process will be built into the project timeline.**

*Please note that risk assessment(s) relating to the student’s project should be carried out before the student’s start date. It is also the Supervisory team’s responsibility to arrange for the project to be registered with the R&D Office and to obtain ethics approval.*

**3. Declarations**

I can confirm that the information given on this form is complete and correct and I shall be responsible for its overall management. I also confirm I meet the eligibility criteria for a Principal Supervisor as outlined in the UCL Academic Manual, including a contract for the duration of the studentship.

**Signature of Principal Supervisor ..............................................Date:........................................**

I confirm that I have read this application and that, if funded, will be the PhD student’s Subsidiary supervisor. I also confirm I meet the eligibility criteria for a Subsidiary Supervisor as outlined in the UCL Academic Manual, including a contract for the duration of the studentship.

**Signature of Subsidiary Supervisor: ........................................Date:..........................................**

*If there will be more than one subsidiary supervisor. Please copy and paste the above declaration statement and signature as appropriate’*

I can confirm that I have read this application and that, if funded, will provide all support necessary for the student to complete their PhD in this department/institution. If the person submitting the project proposal is the Head of Department, please request that your Section Head or Institute Director sign the form before submission.

**Name of Head of Section/Department:……………………………………………………………………………………..**

**Signature of Head of Section/Department:........................................Date:..................................**

**4. Submission checklist**

**Please ensure you submit the following documents by the deadline date:**

□ Completed application form as a word document

□ An up-to-date CV of proposed principal supervisor

□ An up-to-date CV of **all** proposed subsidiary supervisor/s

□ Head of Section/Department signature

Please submit the PhD proposal **as a word document** to[brc@gosh.nhs.uk](mailto:brc@gosh.nhs.uk)by **Monday 5th February 2024.**

**5. Monitoring questions (optional)**

**Principal Supervisor**

The following questions will **not** be used to assess your application. They will only be used for monitoring purposes. Monitoring enables us to see what is happening in practice, to set any targets for improvements, and measure progress.

**Ethnic Group**:

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ☐

Asian or Asian British ☐

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups ☐

White ☐

Other ethnic group ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

**Gender**:

Woman ☐

Man ☐

Transgender ☐

Non-binary or non-conforming ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

**Disability**: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

**Subsidiary Supervisor (please copy and paste this table if there’s more than one subsidiary supervisor)**

The following questions will **not** be used to assess your application. They will only be used for monitoring purposes. Monitoring enables us to see what is happening in practice, to set any targets for improvements, and measure progress.

**Ethnic Group**:

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ☐

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Mixed or multiple ethnic groups ☐

White ☐

Other ethnic group ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

**Gender**:

Woman ☐

Man ☐

Transgender ☐

Non-binary or non-conforming ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

**Disability**: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Prefer not to say ☐