



## Supervisor Information and Guide

### Programme information

The Programme provides 25 doctoral fellowships to UK-registered health care professionals who will register for their PhD at one of the five partner UK Institutions (UKIs): London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM); King's College London (KCL), Queen Mary University of London (QMUL); City St George's, University of London (CSGUL); and Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS). The fellows are funded by the Wellcome Trust through a Clinical PhD Programme. Funding covers Salary (at a clinical scale), research costs and overseas allowances.

Fellows will conduct their research at one of the 6 African Partner Institutions (APIs) in 5 countries: LSHTM MRC units in The Gambia or Uganda; the Biomedical Research and Training Institute (BRTI) or the Zvitambo Institute for Maternal and Child Health Research (Zvitambo) in Zimbabwe; Zambart at the University of Zambia (Zambart-UNZA) in Zambia; or the Centre for Innovative Drug Development and Therapeutic Trials for Africa at Addis Ababa University (CDT-AAU) in Ethiopia.

In an attempt to promote equity, the Programme set out to recruit and support an equal number of fellows from the African partner countries (Uganda, The Gambia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia) to undertake a PhD. UK recruited fellows are paired with the African PhD fellows in the same country where they will be based, to create a blended north-south cohort of fellows. All Programme fellows, regardless of their source of recruitment, will be able to access a large supervisory pool, training and mentorship offered by the Programme. The African fellows are integrally considered to be part of the CREATE PhD Programme.

All fellows will be encouraged to develop interdisciplinary projects for their PhD focused on the health needs of people in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### *Note about African fellows:*

The African fellows are not funded through the Wellcome Programme but through a combination of commitments from UKIs and philanthropic funding.

African fellows do not need to be a health professional but must have appropriate experience in the health field, nor do they need to be researching the same topic as their UK match. African fellows register either at one of the UKIs or at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in their country. Some UKIs have waived fees for African CREATE fellows, while others offer reduced fees and have pledged funding for African CREATE fellows. Funding for African CREATE fellows comes from different sources and the first 10 fellows have been funded by a combination of philanthropic and UKI funding. The available funding covers registration fees (if needed), a monthly stipend for 36 months, some travel and limited research costs.

## Appointment of fellows

Up to 5 UK fellowships are available each year. We appoint on excellence and potential for a future clinical academic career, rather than clinical discipline or choice of home institution. The application process for UK fellows has two stages. Applications for stage 1 usually opens at the beginning of September with deadline of submission in mid-November. Stage 1 assesses the applicants' suitability for the scheme and asks for a 200-word project outline. Some applicants (especially those who are applying for the second time) may have already identified their supervisory team and/or are working on their project proposal, but candidates are not required to have identified a supervisor at this stage. Details of the application process and information on how to fill the form are available on the [CREATE website](#) and are discussed at a dedicated webinar usually scheduled in mid-October.

Following assessment of eligibility, stage 1 applications are scored by a minimum of three senior academics. The highest scoring applicants (usually 12-15) are shortlisted and invited to submit a stage 2 application. The Stage 2 application mainly assesses the scientific merit of the project and the strength of the supervisory team. The stage 2 application requires a full project proposal, a detailed budget with justification and a data management and public engagement plan. If supervisors were named in Stage 1, the applicant can change these for their stage 2 application.

Each stage 2 applicant is assigned to a UKI and API co-director (members of the CREATE Programme Management Group) to facilitate identification of possible supervisors (if required) and to provide guidance on budgets and sponsors. The co-directors are not involved in writing the proposal (unless they are part of the supervisory team) or drafting of the budget; their role is to signpost applicants and their supervisory team to appropriate resources and support. Stage 2 applicants are invited to a webinar, usually scheduled in late January/early February. The webinar outlines the application process, provide timelines and provides an opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the application process.

It is important that the fieldwork is based at and supported by the respective API and hence the majority of the work is expected to be carried out in the country the API is based. Applicants need to discuss their research proposal with the API team they plan to be affiliated with. To ensure equitable partnerships, research projects need to fit into the research priorities and portfolio of the API where the research will be based. Multi-country research projects are permitted but feasibility within the allocated research costs (maximum GBP £110,000) needs to be demonstrated. Fellows are expected to spend a minimum of 18 months and a maximum of 24 months in the African country.

All stage 2 applications undergo external peer review (including review by a topic expert) before the applicants are interviewed (usually in May). The interview panel consists of a multidisciplinary team of senior academics from UK and African HEI and research organisations. Fellowship offers are usually made within 2 weeks of the interview (May or June). All fellows are expected to start their PhD within 12 months of accepting the offer.

Following appointment of UK fellows matched API fellows are recruited. The application process is organised by the respective API and some APIs may decide to mirror the UK process (i.e. two stages) or recruit through a one stage process. It is each API's decision whether or not the API prefers to register their African fellows in a national HEI or at the matched UK HEI. Equally the research project and the composition of supervisory team is at the discretion of the API. However, each matched African fellow requires a minimum of one UK and African supervisor. The primary supervisor has to be a staff member of the HEI the fellow is registered with. Separate guidance on the African fellow recruitment process is available.

## Supervisory team

All UK fellows require a primary supervisor is employed at the UK HEI where their PhD will be registered. In addition, stage 2 applicants need to identify a second co-primary supervisor based in the country they are conducting their work (either affiliated to the API, or another research organisation/HEI in-country) and the two supervisors will be jointly responsible for guiding the PhD. Supervisors need to sign a form confirming that they agree to supervise the student and undertake **mandatory training** (see Supervisor Training) required by the Programme of all its supervisors. The form is submitted together with the stage 2 application. Most fellows also have an advisory team, which may change during the course of the PhD dependent on method and topic expertise the student needs.

For API fellows the primary supervisor needs to be based at the HEI the fellow is registered for his/her PhD. Students registered at an African HEI will have a primary supervisor from the African HEI, while those registered at a UK HEI will have a primary supervisor based at the UK HEI. Similar to UK fellows, African fellows are supervised by a African/UK pair of supervisors. Hence dependent on the primary supervisor, the second supervisor needs to be either based at the UK-matched HEI or in the African country the fellow is based at. Fellows may have a third supervisor dependent on the rules and regulations of the HEI they are registered and fellows may have a team of advisors.

A supervisor may be able to act as either the in-country African or the UK supervisor depending on their affiliations. For examples, many supervisors may have a primary UKI appointment but be based in Africa and have an additional or honorary appointment at an API or an African HEI. Similarly, a supervisor may have a primary appointment at an API and have an honorary or additional appointment at a UKI. A supervisor cannot serve as both a UK and African supervisor for an individual fellow. Primary supervisors should have substantial appointment at the HEI they are supervising at. It is important that the supervisor arrangement is aligned with the rules and regulations of the HEI the fellow is registered with and we strongly encourage supervisors and fellows to check with the respective institution. Most institutions have research degree administrators and coordinators who can provide information and advice. Rules and regulations are also laid out in documents, guidelines and the student handbook at the respective HEI.

Each fellow is also encouraged to participate in a mentorship scheme; information can be found here - <https://www.create-phd.org/supervisors> If they are interested, a mentor is assigned to the fellow and mentor and fellows are meant to meet a minimum of three times per year. The mentorship arrangement is reviewed annually and mentors and fellows can decide to continue or discontinue the mentoring. Mentors are independent of supervisors and are often professionals outside the specialist area of the PhD project. Their role is provide overall guidance and support on the fellow's academic career.

## Supervisor training

All primary and co-primary supervisors are required to complete mandatory training in Supervision, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Microaggression. Most HEIs mandate supervisors to conduct supervisor training at their respective institutions. While supervisors may be able to access training on EDI and Microaggression at their own institutions, the CREATE programme will offer bespoke training run by LSHTM.

In addition the CREATE programme offers a supervisor induction session to orientate supervisors to the programme and answer any questions.

The CREATE programme also offers bespoke face-to-face supervisor training. The first face-to-face training was conducted in Lusaka in January 2024 at the biennial Fellows meeting, and bespoke trainings will be available on the basis of needs and interest.

Additionally interested supervisors will be able to enrol in the Crest short course (<https://www0.sun.ac.za/crest/dies-crest-online-training-course/>), which is run every year and provides a certification after successful completion. Interested supervisors can get in contact with the CREATE programme management team for financial support to participate in this programme..

## **Supervisor responsibilities in relation to the CREATE programme**

Applicants require support from their both their the UK and African supervisor during the stage 2 application process to prepare a strong and feasible proposal and secondly to prepare a realistic budget. Given that stage 2 project proposals are often the first research proposal fellows have written, substantial input and time is required from supervisors to ensure the proposed research is high quality and feasible within the timeline and funding.

Applicants are often not familiar with the administrative and financial processes at the respective UKI and API. The supervisors needs to signpost the applicant to the relevant administration and finance colleagues at the UKI and the API where the applicant's fellowship will be based, and ensure that the budget is approved by both institutions. The stage 2 application requires confirmation of budget approval from both the UKI and the API. This is clearly laid out in the detailed guidance for the stage 2 proposal which can be found at <https://www.create-phd.org/how-to-apply>

For the matched API fellowships (which are advertised projects with named supervisors), academics at an API may bid for projects on a project bid form; projects that are selected by the CREATE programme will ask the supervisor with the successful bid to shortlist applicants and participate in the interview panel.

UK fellows spend substantial amounts of time in the African country, away from home and sometimes need practical and/or pastoral support during this time. Given that the African supervisor is physically at the same place as the student, it is anticipated that the Africa-based supervisor to provide such support. Equally, the UK-based supervisor is expected to support the African fellow find to navigate the registration process at UK HEIs (if they are registering at a UK HEI) – which may require an English language test, an in-person registration visit to the UK and an admission interview, distinct from the CREATE fellowship interview Also organising a visit to the UK from abroad can be challenging including obtaining a visa in time, finding accommodation and navigating the transport system. Logistic and pastoral support from the UK supervisor can make an enormous difference.

The CREATE programme expects that the main academic supervision in line with the institutional guidance of the HEI the fellows is registered with.

## **Becoming a supervisor**

We ask for an expression of interest, a copy of your CV, as well as completion of a basic profile to be featured on the CREATE DTP website for Fellows to browse. Please visit <https://www.create-phd.org/supervisors> for the criteria a potential supervisor would be expected to meet.

## Progress monitoring of fellows

All HEIs have systems for progress monitoring of research degrees. Fellows are expected to adhere to these processes. While the CREATE programme does not duplicate these processes, we do track progress and capture training and outputs of our fellows. Each fellow's progress is reviewed annually by the CREATE Programme Management Group. In the run up to this review fellows are asked to submit a progress log, an example of which can be found here <https://www.create-phd.org/resources-1>

## Contacts

The Programme Manager, Katherine Barrett is the first point of contact for any queries relating to all aspects of the programme. The programme manager can advise fellows and supervisors as well as deal with the administrative challenges associated with a doctoral training partnership across multiple institutions and work closely with colleagues in finance, HR and postgraduate administration.

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