

Africa-Asia Health Research Training Programme



Stage 1 UK Fellowship Applications Webinar

Friday 9th October 2026

12:00 - 13:00 BST

This is an information session about the CREATE
PhD Programme Stage 1 UK fellowship
application process - currently open until Sunday
8th November 2026

Please note that this recruitment round is for UK
fellowships only

Panel:

Katharina Kranzer (Supervision lead) - LSHTM

Christina Albertsen (Programme Manager) – LSHTM

Gail Davey (EDI/Recruitment Lead) – BSMS

Sophie Kelly (current fellow) – LSHTM and BRTI

Fiona Beckerlegge (current fellow) – LSHTM and MRCU

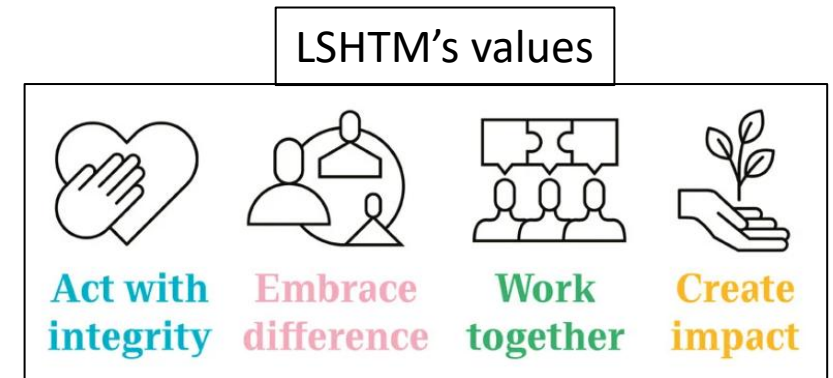
Presentations

- About the Programme and focus on Discovery research;
- Eligibility criteria, application process, fellowship lifecycle;
- How to submit a quality application;
- Perspectives from two current fellows.

A moderated Q&A – around 15 minutes

Housekeeping:

- This session will be recorded and will be made available afterwards on the CREATE website
- Only nominated panelists can be seen, heard, or screen share
- The audiences' mics and videos are turned off
- The Q&A function is available in this session:
please ensure messages are respectful and in line with LSHTM's values
- Questions will be answered after all panelists' presentations



Presentation:

Katharina Kranzer:

- The CREATE PhD programme
- Focus on Discovery research

Africa-Asia Health Research Training Programme (CREATE)

A transformative PhD programme that nurtures a new generation of world-class scientists addressing **critical Global Health challenges** through **interdisciplinary discovery research**, with **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)** as foundational principles



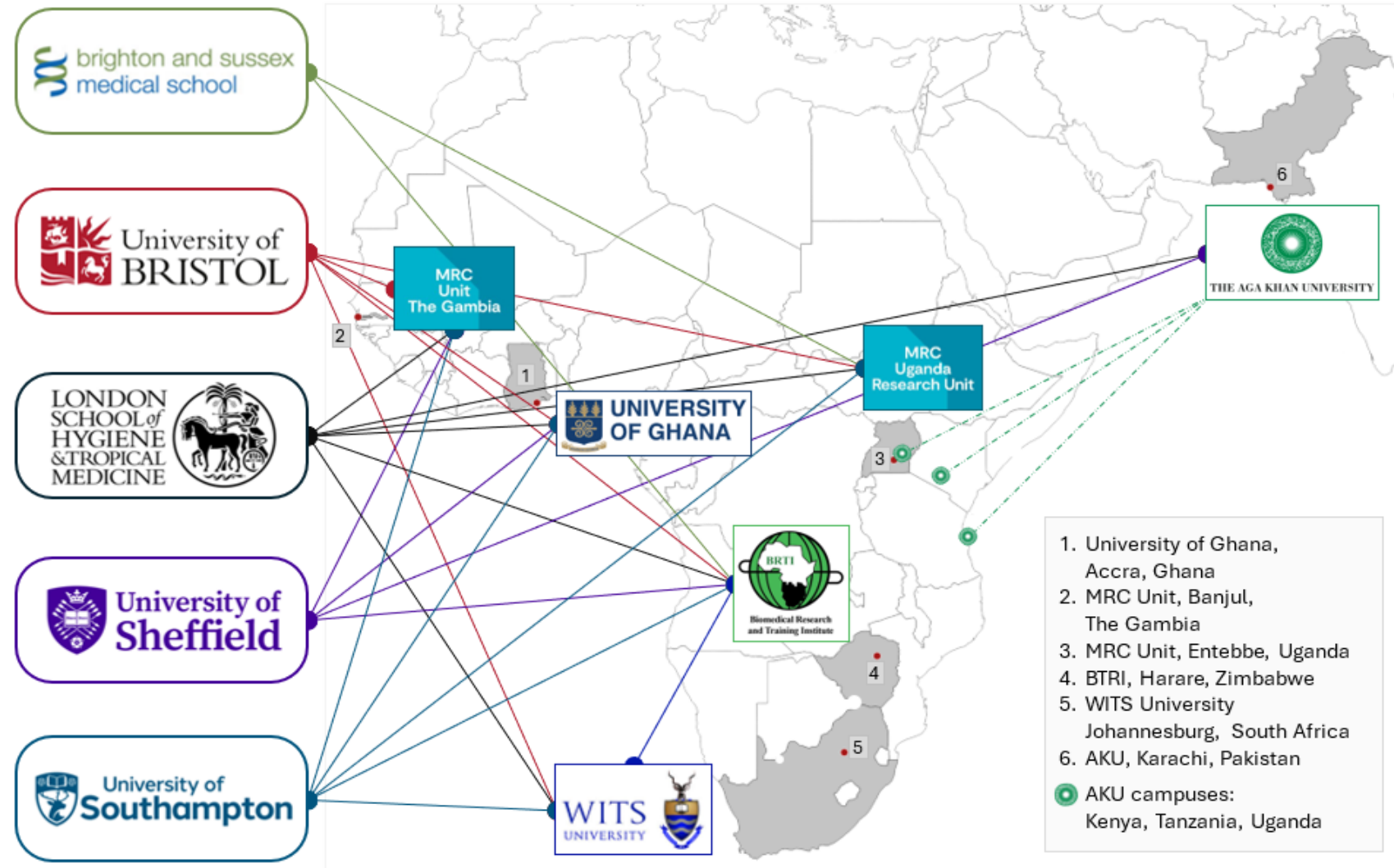
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY



Biomedical
Research and
Training Institute



Our partners for
this Programme
are:



Funded by Wellcome :

- Funding is for 3 years, full-time (or LTFT equivalent)
- Funding includes salary, PhD fees at home/UK rate, overseas allowances, and research costs
- Register your PhD at one of the 5 UK universities, with your research being undertaken at one of our 6 overseas partners
- Focus on Discovery Research
- Joint primary supervision from both institutions
- Spend a minimum of 18 months overseas at chosen institution
- Digital Global Health Academy
- Mentorship programme
- Annual progress monitoring
- Funding from Wellcome for post-doctoral transition – new for this Programme

What Wellcome defines as Discovery Research:

Discovery Research is a Wellcome programme that funds studies that lead to new knowledge of human life, health and wellbeing. Discovery Research projects can be in a wide range of fields and disciplines.

What we do and don't fund in different research areas

We fund research into the:

- fundamental processes that underpin biology, to understand more about how human life works
- complexities of human health and disease, including clinical and population-based approaches
- burden of disease and its determinants, where this brings new knowledge or a significant shift in understanding
- development of methodologies, conceptual frameworks, technologies, tools or techniques that could benefit health-related research
- needs, values and priorities of the people and communities affected by disease and health inequalities
- social, ethical, cultural, political, economic and historical contexts of human health and disease
- ways in which health systems operate and are experienced by patients

Our Discovery Research programme supports research in any field or discipline (or combination of disciplines). Research can involve observational, experimental or theoretical approaches. It can be done in the laboratory, office, clinic, gallery, library, archive, museum or field. While research could be in a wide range of disciplines, it must either:

- have a direct relationship to human life, health and wellbeing
- give us a deeper understanding of human biology, health and disease

We do not fund research without a clearly defined link to human life, health and wellbeing. For example, we wouldn't fund a project on how to increase plant yields and produce more food. In this case, there isn't a direct link to human health and the focus is on agriculture.

We encourage anyone whose work advances our understanding of life, health and wellbeing to apply. Funded researchers have included biochemists, molecular scientists, cell biologists, immunologists, neuroscientists, social scientists, humanities scholars, clinicians and allied health professionals, population health researchers, engineers and physical scientists. The focus is on the research ambition rather than the specific discipline.



Morag Foreman
Interim Director of Open Mode Awards
Wellcome

Presentation:

Christina Albertsen:

- Application process
- Fellowship lifecycle

Two-stage application process:

Stage one

- Online application form – what is your research experience, what is your idea for a PhD project, what makes you a good candidate for this Programme, what kind of experience do you have working overseas with low- and middle-resource countries, etc.
- Equal opportunities form and academic reference is submitted to HR separately – please reference with the job code so your application and additional documents can be matched
- The Stage one application process is administered by LSHTM as the lead institution for the Programme – your fellowship would be at your chosen UK partner
- If you have a preference, choose which organisations you would like to be based at – UK and overseas
- Contacting potential supervisors is not strictly necessary at this stage
- We encourage you to make contact with past and current fellows for advice
- Closing date is Sunday 8th November
- Any questions – please send to create-phd@lshtm.ac.uk
- Successful applicants invited to stage two are notified mid-December
- Detailed feedback is not available if you are not selected to go forward to stage two

Stage two

- Full PhD application – project and budget
- Work with your intended supervisors, colleagues, and administrators at both your chosen institutions on both project and budget
- I, as Programme Manager can also give budget advice and support
- Have almost 3 months to work on your application – please take your time but don't leave everything until the last week!
- Institutional approvals may need to be obtained – these can take time
- Closing date is Tuesday 16th March – application form, budget spreadsheet, institutional authorisation form, any letters of support or recommendation can also be attached
- Mock interviews can be arranged to prepare you for the real interview
- Feedback from reviewers given before interview in mid-May
- Individual feedback is given to unsuccessful applicants
- Unsuccessful applicants may apply to the Programme only twice – please seek feedback before re-applying

Fellowship life cycle

- PhD registration and enrollment at your chosen UK university
- Onboarding process – Department/Faculty, Registry, and CREATE
- Meet with primary UK supervisor, and supervisory team – discuss your work plan, make any adjustments as needed. Changes are normal and not a cause for concern!
- Meet department/group administrators or managers of your fellowship at your institution
- Familiarise yourself with institutional processes – applying for ethics, claiming expenses, ordering consumables, making travel arrangements, etc.
- Enquire about arrangements for living and working overseas – even if you already have experience of this, every country is different – medical insurance, travel insurance, visas, claiming allowances, etc.
- Arrange scoping visit, if applicable – you can meet your collaborators, supervisors, colleagues, other PhD fellows, and also arrange visas, look for accommodation when you're going to be there for your research, etc.
- Find out about upgrading process – if applicable as not all institutions have this, or might refer to it as something else – generally around 9 to 18 months after starting, depending on your project and experience

Presentation:

Gail Davey: How to submit a quality application.

Top Tips

- Check eligibility before starting –
 - Health professional with a relevant undergraduate degree
 - Health professional registered with a national professional regulatory body in the UK/RoI
 - Minimum of 2 years of clinical practice following qualifying as a health care professional
 - Eligible to work in the UK with no restrictions
 - Qualify for home/UK fees
 - Nurses, midwives and allied health professionals must have a Masters in a relevant subject
 - Medical graduates must be registered on a UK/Republic of Ireland post-foundation training programme or be a registered GP. Those who are on a specialty training programme will have a minimum 12 months left to complete their CCT in their chosen specialty by the time the PhD is awarded

Top Tips -2

- Read through the entire application and understand what each question requires before starting to complete the form.
- Answer clearly and with examples from your training and work to date, and your life beyond where relevant.
- Be positive and ‘sell yourself’ – within the bounds of truth.
- Be explicit about how your research idea fits within Discovery Research. Don’t worry if you’ve not identified supervisors yet – the PMG can help with this – the important thing is that your RQ or objectives are clear.

Presentation

Sophie Kelly, and Fiona Beckerlegge - perspectives from current fellows.

Stage 1

- WHO you are:
 - Show case your ability to meet the person specification

Essential:

- **Commitment** to research in global health and a career in global health
- *Ability to develop an appropriate PhD project proposal (stage 2)*

Desirable (not essential):

- Previous research experience
- Previous research training
- Experience of working in Africa and / or a multicultural environment
- Published articles
- Other relevant experience e.g., teaching, quality improvement, public engagement

Includes policy
briefs/other publications;
not just journal

My experience

2015: Intercalated project about schistosomiasis in Kenya (went nowhere, learnt a lot)

2016: Small coding project published in a neurosurgery journal

2020: Academic Foundation Programme – COVID

1 paper as second author; 1 case report

2021: DTMH and 3 months in Zambia

2020-2023: Internal Medicine training London – no academic component

2022: Applied LSHTM and Cambridge ACFs

In process reached out to Rashida re projects

2023: Didn't get the LSHTM ACF; did get Cambridge

.... Told a lot of times that my CV wouldn't be good enough to get PhD funding ...



2024: Used some of my academic time to visit Zimbabwe for 3 months

- Did an audit in a local HIV clinic
- Spent lots of time chatting to people

2024: Published a review on HIV and CNS disease

2024: Locally funded GH Fellowship linking Cambridge and Zimbabwe



Used the audit and experience to develop a plan for a PhD

2024: Stage 1 application in Nov

2025: Jan – March developing the project

- lots of calls
- Lots of time
- balance with clinical work was **hard**

2025: Published data analysis from 2022 project

2025: Stage 2 interview in May



My tips

- CREATE is looking for more than loads of publications
 - If you meet the person specification apply
 - Commitment/experience in global health is as/more important
- Don't be shy and talk to lots of people
 - I had an amazing amount of response to cold emails
 - Academics very generous with their time
 - Explaining what I was planning, really helped to turn it from an idea to a proposal
 - Managed to build a team for my work
- Find good supervisors
 - Encourages you; will review your work; open their contact book
 - It's a lot of work preparing the application and you will need support

CREATE Fellow Perspective

Fiona Beckerlegge

Paediatric Physiotherapist

London School of Hygiene and Tropical
Medicine / MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda
Research Unit

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MRC/UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit



Medical
Research
Council



Uganda
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Research
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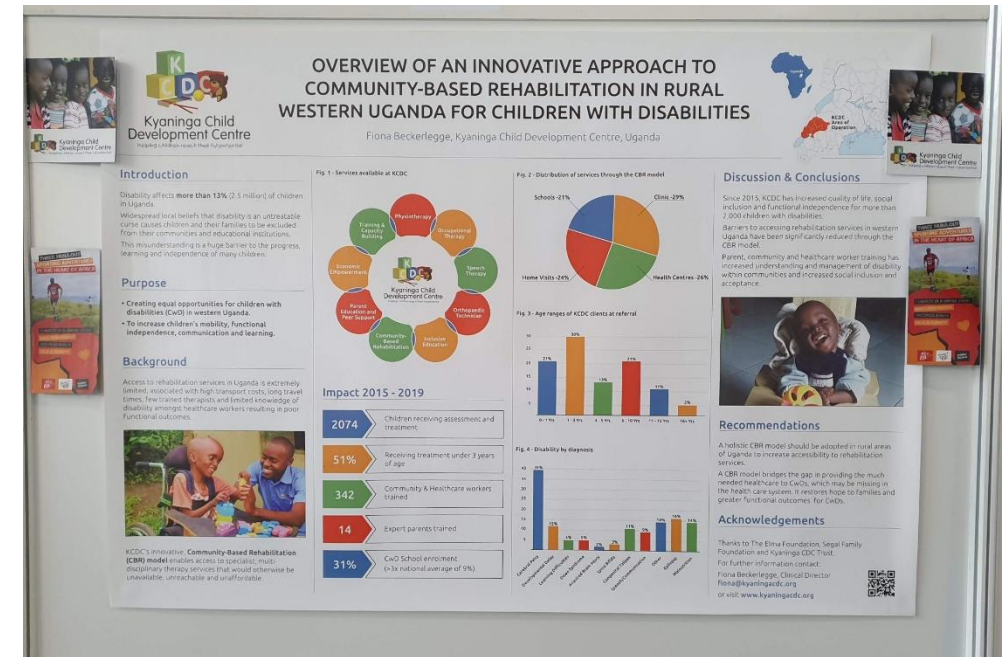
My background

- ✓ Paediatric physiotherapist
- ✓ Registered with HCPC
- ✓ 25 years of clinical practice (including 11 years in Uganda)
- ✓ MSc Global Public Health
- Very little research experience
- Didn't know anyone else doing a PhD
- Applied for CREATE in 2023/24 and 2024/25
- Useful feedback incorporated into 2nd application
- Started in January 2026



What to consider now - person

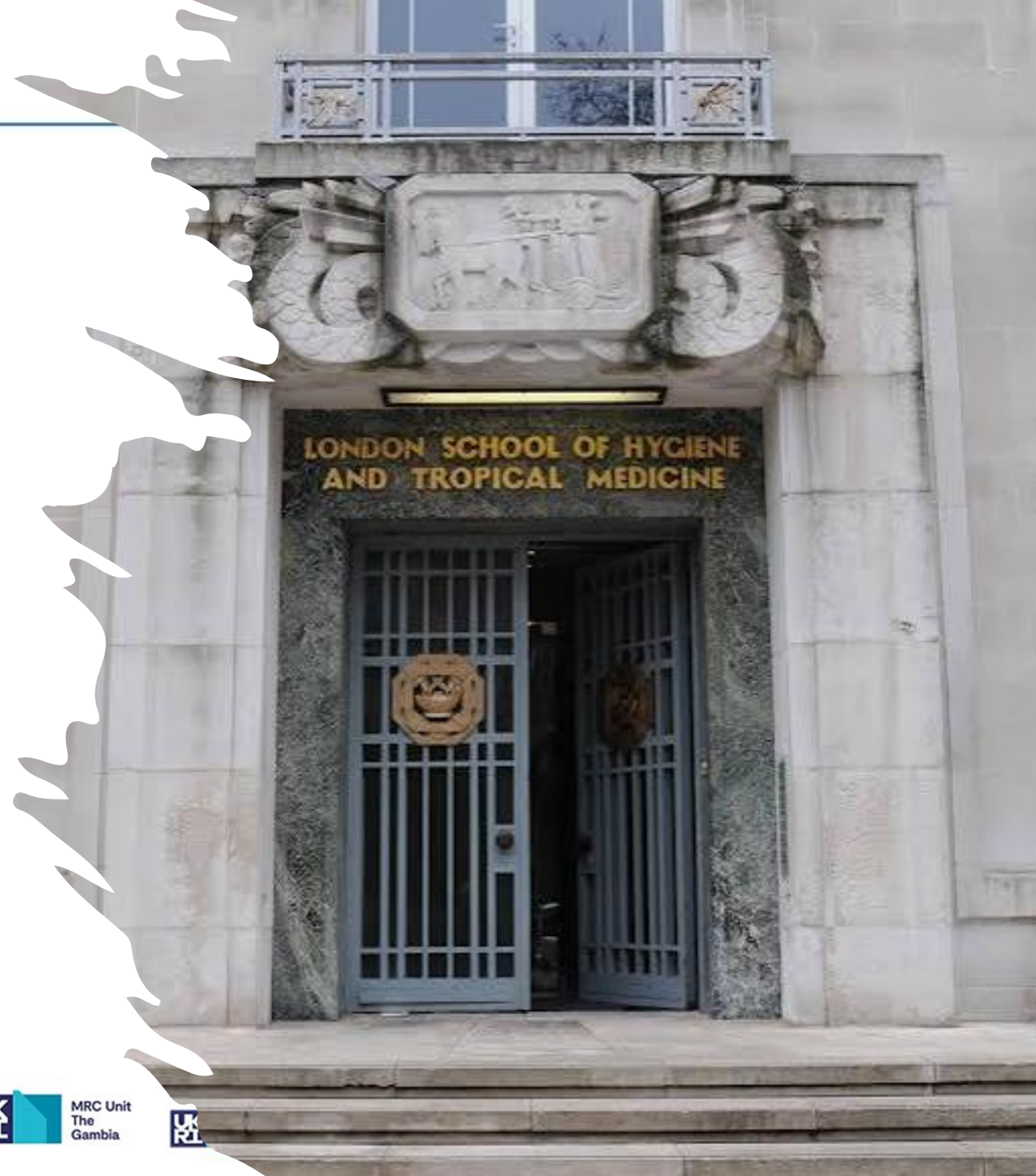
- Do you meet the criteria?
- Do you have the time?
 - For the application?
 - For the programme?
- Don't doubt yourself; Be confident about why you, why now
- Not only academic publications count: conference abstracts and presentations, small grants or awards, voluntary or committee positions outside of usual work, leadership or teaching / mentorship



What to consider now

- place

- Which UK institution should you register with?
- Who should you have as supervisors
- Living abroad for 18+ months
- Location is important to consider – for you and your family
 - Uganda, The Gambia, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and South Africa
- Talk to others who have done research there or lived there.
 - What is it really like?



What to consider now - project

- Don't need a clear project outline for stage 1; this comes at stage 2
- Something that you are truly interested in and curious to know more about – it will take up most of your time for the next few years
- Be prepared for things to change – focus, methodology



Moderated Q&A:

Please ask your questions in the Q&A function.

We will aim to answer all the questions but may run out of time, or questions may need an individual or more detailed answer.

Thank you for attending

Please send any questions for the panel afterwards to create-phd@lshtm.ac.uk

These may be unanswered questions, ones you would like more clarification on, or new questions.

This webinar will be available for viewing on the CREATE website after this event – www.create-phd.org



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