NIHR Research Training Fellow in Systematic Review
Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD)

Closing date: 28 May 2018
Interview date: 12 June 2018
Vacancy reference: 6585
INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Reviews and Dissemination has been awarded a prestigious NIHR funded Fellowship in Systematic Review. The fellowship provides an opportunity to undertake an MSc in applied health research and learn about systematic review methods through undertaking supervised project work.

CRD hosts an NIHR Technology Assessment Reviews (TAR) team, an NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research Evidence Synthesis Centre, a Cochrane Programme Grant, the Cochrane Common Mental Disorders Group, and partners in the Policy Research Programme Policy Reviews Facility. The Fellow will engage with these programmes, receive training and mentoring across a range of synthesis projects and will benefit from supported learning within associated multi-disciplinary project teams.

This fellowship will specialize in developing skills in individual participant data (IPD) synthesis and may therefore appeal to candidates with strong quantitative skills.

This is a training post that includes funding to undertake an MSc in Applied Health Research part-time over two years in the Department of Health Sciences. We encourage applications from academically outstanding and highly motivated graduates who have or expect to be awarded an upper second class degree or better, particularly those who wish to transition from another discipline to health research.

This position is open to UK and EU applicants.
Main purpose of the role

- To undertake a programme of learning and development in systematic review
- To contribute and provide support to CRD research projects

The Fellowship will combine:

- MSc tuition in applied health research methods
- Training in key research methods and core competencies of systematic review through project work
- Coaching and project work in IPD synthesis

The Fellow will gain expertise and experience through a combination of observation, 'shadowing' and active contribution to reviews being undertaken at CRD. Through this, they will be supported within multi-disciplinary research teams working in a range of areas and aspects of synthesis. This may include administrative tasks, data management, statistical analysis, qualitative synthesis, preparation of graphs and sections of research reports, as appropriate to each project.

The Fellow will specialise in and develop an understanding of methods used in IPD synthesis and be supervised by Professor Lesley Stewart and Dr Bob Phillips. IPD synthesis involves the collection and re-analysis of original study data sets rather than using aggregate data extracted from publications, as done in a standard systematic review. Use of individual level data supports in-depth scrutiny, detailed exploration of data and more flexible and powerful statistical analysis than is possible in reviews using published aggregate data. The MSc dissertation project will link to this specialism and will involve using an IPD dataset to build a risk prediction model, and to link this to intervention options for pregnant women who are at risk or preterm birth.

Key responsibilities

(Role holders will be required to undertake some or all of the duties below)

- To undertake a programme of development in systematic review/evidence synthesis.
- To undertake an MSc in Applied Health Research part-time over two years.
- To undertake assigned and supported tasks as part of multi-disciplinary research teams working in a range of areas and aspects of synthesis. This may include administrative tasks, data management, statistical analysis, qualitative synthesis, preparation of graphs and sections of research reports, as appropriate to each project.
- To contribute to the development of an MSc project and plan associated own activities.
- To document work appropriately and in accordance with research best practice.
- To assist in writing articles for publication in peer reviewed journals.
- To participate in the dissemination of research findings internally and externally at seminars, workshops and conferences.
- To consider public engagement and potential impact of research outputs and, with the support of the project supervisors, take appropriate steps to maximise these.
- To work collaboratively with other researchers and liaise with relevant external contacts and organisations, as needed.
- To undertake appropriate organisational and administrative activities as delegated by the research supervisors. Examples may include: organising meetings, conferences and workshops; developing promotional or educational material, including website materials.
- To prioritise tasks within an agreed work schedule to ensure that the project(s) are delivered on time.
## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree (upper second class or better)</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outstanding academic achievement in a science or social science subject</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Knowledge of a range of research techniques and methodologies and ability to apply them</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<th>Skills, abilities and competencies</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<td>Strong quantitative skills</td>
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<td>Excellent written and oral communication skills and ability to communicate effectively to a range of audiences</td>
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<td>Ability to develop research ideas and undertake academic research</td>
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<td>Ability to transfer knowledge and skills developed in other areas to enhance health research</td>
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<td>Ability to think creatively and strategically</td>
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<td>Ability to plan and organise own research activities to agreed deadlines and quality standards</td>
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<td>Excellent IT skills and knowledge of relevant software packages</td>
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<td>Ability to work as part of a team and also to work independently using own initiative</td>
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<th>Experience</th>
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<td>Experience of undertaking or contributing to a research project (e.g. undergraduate project)</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<th>Personal attributes</th>
<th>Essential / Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm and drive to build a career in health research</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>A passion for conducting high quality research</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Commitment to personal development and keeping knowledge and skills up to date</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Positive attitude and willingness to work collaboratively with colleagues</td>
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THE DEPARTMENT

Background

The Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (https://www.york.ac.uk/crd) is a research department that specialises in evidence synthesis. The world leading research undertaken by CRD and associated departments is recognised by the University of York’s ranking as equal 7th for Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care in the 2014 UK Research Excellence Framework and joint first for research environment. The results show that 83% of our research was rated as “world leading” or “internationally excellent”.

The Centre contributes to the University of York’s outstanding track record in delivering policy relevant health research that achieves significant national and international impact. We do this as part of a network of departments engaged in health research, including the Centre for Health Economics (CHE), the Department of Health Sciences, the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) and the Hull York Medical School (HYMS) – a broad, multi-disciplinary grouping that includes academic public health, primary care, and secondary health service expertise as well as strengths in epidemiology, trials, evidence synthesis, informatics, bioethics and social policy research.

CRD hosts an NIHR Technology Assessment Reviews (TAR) team, an NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research Evidence Synthesis Centre, a Cochrane Programme Grant, the Cochrane Common Mental Disorders Group, and partners in the Policy Research Programme Policy Reviews Facility.

CRD currently has 45 members of staff consisting of researchers, clinicians, information specialists, administrative staff and postgraduates, including NIHR Academic Clinical Fellows. We also host Visiting Academic Fellows. Our HTAs, systematic reviews and other synthesis projects are performed in multi-disciplinary teams involving health researchers, statisticians, health economists, information specialists and clinical and topic experts. We collaborate widely with colleagues in other University departments, with relevant groups in the UK and internationally, and have strong links with both Cochrane and Campbell and with the Society for Research Synthesis Methods.

Current areas of research

Our current research activity spans health technology assessment, public health and policy and service delivery and organisation, all underpinned by a programme of methodological development and knowledge translation activity, funded mainly by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Health Technology Assessment

Our largest programme is in health technology assessment. This includes Technology Assessment Reviews (TAR) funded by the NIHR Health Technology Assessment Programme, which
are undertaken in collaboration with CHE. We undertake systematic reviews, synthesis and decision modelling under the Multiple Technology Appraisal process and the Diagnostic Assessment Programme, and carry out critical reviews of manufacturer submissions under the Single Technology Appraisal, and Highly Specialised Technology processes, for NICE.

Outside of TAR, we undertake systematic reviews and economic evaluations of benefits, harms and costs of a range of healthcare interventions. Current work includes:

- NIHR Cochrane Programme of nutritional interventions to promote optimal growth and development in preterm infants
- NIHR Postdoctoral Fellowship to assess strategies to rationalise antibiotic use in children with cancer
- Patient-Centred Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funded IPD meta-analysis of progestogen for prevention of preterm birth
- NIHR funded systematic review of interventions for complex trauma
- NIHR HTA funded IPD meta-analysis of applied behavioural analysis (ABA) interventions in children with autism spectrum disorder
- NIHR HTA funded IPD meta-analysis of the use of co-enzyme Q10 in people with heart failure

Public health and policy

CRD has a track record of undertaking systematic reviews to address important public health questions. As a collaborator in the DH Policy Research Programme (PRP) funded Public Health Research Consortium we are undertaking a programme of work on multiple risk behaviours.

We work in partnership with the EPPI-Centre, London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to provide the Department of Health (DH) Policy Reviews Facility that supports national policy development and implementation, develops improved methods for evidence synthesis and promotes global awareness of the importance of reviews in decision-making.

Service Delivery and Organisation

CRD hosts one of the NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) Evidence Synthesis Centres. We provide timely and contextualised access to the best evidence on topics of key importance to the NHS, which inform the organisation and delivery of health services. We synthesise the evidence and summarise our evaluation of the quality and strength of findings, producing targeted outputs in appropriate formats that provide clear messages in complex areas. The programme is led by CRD in collaboration with SPRU and CHE.

Underpinning methods of synthesis

Methodological development underpins all of our research and we have particular interests in network meta-analysis and IPD synthesis including enhancement of statistical models, risk prediction and combining observational with experimental data. We are involved in developing approaches to utilise trial data and information increasingly being released under open data and data sharing initiatives and are defining methods and approaches to “rapid evidence synthesis” and “living systematic reviews”. We are active in producing methodological guidance and reporting guidelines including CRD’s handbook on undertaking systematic review and the PRISMA extensions for protocols and for systematic review and IPD meta-analysis, and with the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit at the University of Glasgow we are developing reporting guidelines on the methods of narrative synthesis.

Knowledge Translation

Active dissemination and knowledge transfer is integral to CRD research and we aim to communicate research findings in ways that maximise usefulness, uptake and use in practice. Effectiveness Matters is a CRD bulletin that provides concise summaries of reliable research evidence for practitioners and decision makers in the NHS and public health.

Cochrane Common Mental Disorders Review Group

CRD hosts the Common Mental Disorder (CMD) Group which is one of 52 Cochrane review groups worldwide. CMD is an international network of individuals and organisations committed to preparing and disseminating systematic reviews on the prevention and treatment of common mental disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, somatoform disorders and suicide. Cochrane systematic reviews are published in The Cochrane Library. Cochrane reviews are recognised as the gold standard in evidence-based health care.
The University of York opened in 1963 with just 230 students. In 2018 it is the home of more than 17,000 students across more than 30 academic departments and research centres. Since opening over fifty years ago, we have become one of the world's leading universities and a member of the prestigious Russell Group.

We are consistently recognised as one of the leading Higher Education Institutes and are ranked 16th in the Times & Sunday Times league table (2017). The University of York has won six Times Higher Education (THE) Awards and five Queen’s Anniversary Prizes.

The University is proud of its association with Athena SWAN, holding 12 awards in support of gender equality, representation and success for all, with gold awards for Chemistry and Biology and a University-wide bronze award.

Of 154 universities that took part in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, The University of York ranked 14th overall and 10th for the impact of our research. The University is consistently in the top ten UK research universities and attracts over £60m a year of funding from research alone.

Our vision is to make the University of York a world leader in the creation of knowledge through fundamental and applied research, the sharing of knowledge by teaching students from varied backgrounds and the application of knowledge for the health, prosperity and well-being of people and society.
Attractive workplace

Centred around the picturesque village of Heslington on the edge of the city of York, our colleges are set in an attractive landscaped campus. York enjoys a safe, friendly atmosphere with facilities including bars, shops, theatres and concert halls all within easy walking distance.

The University has undergone an unprecedented period of expansion and renewal since 2000. We have invested in twenty new buildings on the original campus and have completed the first and second phases of a £750m campus expansion. Our investment in new colleges, teaching and learning spaces, laboratories, research facilities and a new sports village mean there has never been a better time to join us.

During this period of change we’ve worked hard to retain our friendly, informal and collegiate atmosphere, which is important to our core values of inclusivity and interdisciplinarity.

We have a thriving international community and are committed to providing staff moving to York with as much support as possible through our Relocation Package and Welcome Officers.

The University is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive community - a place where we can all be ourselves and succeed on merit. We offer a range of family friendly, inclusive employment policies, flexible working arrangements, staff engagement forums, campus facilities and services to support staff from different backgrounds.

For further information please visit our employee benefit pages.
THE CITY AND THE REGION

The City of York

Internationally acclaimed for its rich heritage and historic architecture, York’s bustling streets are filled with visitors from all over the world. Within its medieval walls you will find the iconic gothic Minster, Clifford’s Tower and the Shambles - just a few of the many attractions.

But York isn’t just a great place to visit - it’s also a great place to live and work. While nourishing a vibrant cosmopolitan atmosphere, York still maintains the friendly sense of community unique to a small city.

Visit www.visityork.org for more information on the city of York.

Shopping, culture and entertainment

York boasts specialist and unique boutiques but also all the high street stores on its busy shopping streets. Alongside them you will find cinemas, theatres, an opera house, art galleries, a vast range of restaurants, live music venues and clubs. York is particularly renowned for its multitude of pubs and bars, from the modern to the medieval.

Housing and schools

Whether you choose to live close to the city, in one of the surrounding villages or further afield, you will find a wide range of housing within comfortable distance of York and the University. For families, the area has a range of excellent schools both in the state and independent sector.

Great location

York is one of Britain’s best-connected cities. Halfway between London and Edinburgh on the East Coast mainline, on intercity trains you can reach London King’s Cross in less than two hours and Edinburgh in two and a half hours. York is also well served by road links, and it is easily accessible from the A1, M1 and the M62.

For those travelling from overseas, Manchester Airport is two hours away and Heathrow Airport just three and a half. Flights from nearby Leeds Bradford Airport provide easy access to mainland Europe. By Eurostar from London St Pancras, Paris is just over six hours away.

Yorkshire

The Lonely Planet guide recently declared Yorkshire the third best region in the world to visit. There is something to cater to every taste, whether it be the rugged landscapes of the Moors or the Dales, the picturesque seaside towns of Scarborough and Robin Hoods Bay, the gothic architecture of Whitby or the vibrancy of cosmopolitan Leeds.
Apply online

- Go to https://jobs.york.ac.uk
- Find this job using reference 6585
- Complete the online application form

You will need to submit your completed application by midnight (GMT) on 28 May 2018.

What will I need?

We will ask you for details of:
- your employment history
- relevant qualifications
- two referees

You need to be ready to show us how you meet the requirements of the job, either in a written statement and/or by answering questions.

Help and assistance

Direct any informal queries to Lesley.stewart@york.ac.uk

If you have any questions about your application, contact the HR Services team:

recruitment@york.ac.uk
+44 (0)1904 324835