

PhD Scholarships in Non-Communicable Diseases in South Asia

A Centre for IMPACT collaboration between the University of York, UK and Khyber Medical University, Pakistan (Reference: Centre for IMPACT PhD 2023)

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The Department of Health Sciences, University of York, UK and Khyber Medical University (KMU), Pakistan are inviting applications for fully funded PhD scholarships in the field of applied health research in non-communicable diseases (NCD) and mental health in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These are off-site collaborative scholarships, based at either the KMU Peshawar or Islamabad campus. They are available on a full-time basis to start in October 2023 for 3 years. **Scholarship holders who successfully complete their PhD shall be awarded a PhD from York and their degree certificate shall not refer to KMU or the fact that they were primarily studying away from York.**

This collaborative PhD scholarship programme is funded by a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Global Health Centre award and by the University of York. [The NIHR Centre for Improving Mental and Physical Health Together](#) (IMPACT) is a research and capacity building collaboration between three UK universities and seven institutions in Afghanistan and Pakistan).

Successful candidates will be enrolled in the Department of Health Sciences' PhD programme at the University of York, UK. They will be geographically based at the Institute of Public Health and Social Sciences (IPH&SS) (Peshawar or Islamabad campus) KMU, Pakistan, for the majority of the PhD enrolment period. Students will have full access to the usual postgraduate training facilities, including library and IT services at York and KMU. They will also have the opportunity to visit York on short-term placements. They will be part of an early career researcher training programme run by the Centre for IMPACT and will be members of the NIHR Academy..

Students will be supervised by senior academics from the NIHR Centre for IMPACT and collaborators. They will have the opportunity, depending on their area of interest, to gain experience in applied health research, including, for example: multimorbidity research, evidence synthesis, qualitative research, participatory learning approaches, policy evaluation, economic modelling, community and public involvement, randomised controlled trials and implementation science. Students will also benefit from being based in a lively and supportive research and learning environment. Training in research methods at York will be supported where possible by giving students access to relevant content on the Virtual Learning Environment. However hybrid or video based training is currently not included in the postgraduate training offer in Health Sciences at York.

The Centre for IMPACT

[The Centre for IMPACT](#) aims to promote mental and physical health in Afghanistan and Pakistan by reducing premature deaths and disabilities caused by NCDs. The Centre focuses on three of the four key NCDs: common mental disorders (depression and anxiety), heart conditions, and diabetes.

NCDs such as heart disease, depression, and diabetes, are rapidly increasing, and are now responsible for most deaths and disabilities globally. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, countries with limited resources and affected by recent conflicts, NCDs risk crippling fragile health systems and economies. In response, health systems and policies are evolving and diversifying, e.g., non-specialist healthcare workers are sharing tasks usually delivered by specialists; and non-state and private-sector organisations are increasingly providing health coverage.

There is a knowledge gap, however, on interventions that are effective and can be delivered at scale in low-resource, conflict-affected settings. This provides timely opportunities to develop, test and embed evidence-based affordable approaches to address NCDs and also a time-critical need to strengthen capacity in discovering, evaluating and implementing effective solutions.

The Centre will therefore evaluate approaches to prevent and treat NCDs, targeting those most at risk, and –uniquely– giving mental health parity alongside physical health. The Centre will also train researchers, particularly women scholars, to become tomorrow’s research leaders. Trainees will include Master’s, doctoral (including these collaborative PhD scholarships), post-doctoral scholars. The Centre’s participating institutions will create competitive faculty positions to retain these scholars beyond the funding period.

Funding

Scholarships are available on a full-time basis and provide:

- University of York tuition fees at the overseas rate for 3 years
- A stipend per annum, for 3 years will be paid by York at a rate of £10,000 for the academic year 2022/23. The rate for 2023/24 will be confirmed in due course.
- A research training support budget of up to £15000 is available over 3 years, to cover travel and subsistence to attend training, supervision and examinations in the UK.
- Visa arrangements will be the responsibility of students.

Essential and desirable requirements

Scholarships are open to applicants from low- and middle-income countries eligible to live and study in Pakistan. Applicants will need to hold, or expect to gain, at least an upper second class honours (2:1) degree or equivalent. A Masters degree in a health/medical sciences related subject is highly desirable, or alternatively, equivalent research experience in a relevant subject.

For students whose first language is not English there is a minimum requirement of an IELTS score of at least 6.5 in each component of the test, and an overall score of at least 7 (or equivalent on other [tests approved by the University of York](#)).

Process for application

Please follow the link for a [step by step guide to the application process](#).

Applicants are required to submit a short research proposal (up to 2000 words, excluding references). Proposals should complement the research programme of the NIHR [Centre for IMPACT](#). Applications will not be considered if a research proposal is not submitted. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact potential supervisors to discuss ideas and get support for their proposal before applying. Please see the [list of potential supervisors and their contact details below](#).

Applications should be made using the Department of Health Sciences [on-line application form](#).

Please include Reference: ‘Centre for IMPACT PhD 2023’ in your application.

In the section ‘Additional Details’, in response to the question ‘How do you intend to finance your studies?’ please choose the option “Other” and please specify: ‘Centre for IMPACT 2023 Scholarship.’

You will need to complete the application using the link above. You can see a [PDF of the questions in the form here](#).

Applications should be received no later than Friday 5th May 2023 before 16:00h UTC.

Shortlisting and interviews

Shortlisting will take place as soon as possible after the closing date and shortlisted applicants will be notified promptly. Individuals with the strongest qualifications, academic record, experience, and research proposal ideas will be shortlisted jointly by a panel including senior academics from the University of York and KMU.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview. Interviews are expected to take place in July 2023, and will be conducted face-to-face or via Zoom or similar communication tools, if required. Applicants will be scored at shortlisting and interview stages against the criteria described in the [Step by Step Guide](#) to application.

Start date: October 2023.

Informal enquiries

For informal enquiries please contact

Professor Najma Siddiqi (Najma.siddiqi@york.ac.uk)

Professor Zia Ul-Haq (drzia@kmu.edu.pk) or

Professor Kamran Siddiqi (Kamran.siddiqi@york.ac.uk)

POTENTIAL SUPERVISORS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Prof. Catherine Hewitt (catherine.hewitt@york.ac.uk)

Prof Catriona McDaid (catriona.mcdaid@york.ac.uk)

Dr. Gerardo Zavala (g.zavala@york.ac.uk)

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Prof. Najma Siddiqi (najma.siddiqi@york.ac.uk)

Dr. Omara Dogar (omara.dogar@york.ac.uk)

Prof. [Patrick Doherty](mailto:patrick.doherty@york.ac.uk)(patrick.doherty@york.ac.uk)

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Department of Health Sciences

The Department of Health Sciences includes over 280 academics, teachers, researchers and support staff engaged in delivering research, professional development, education and training. Our core aim is excellence in research and teaching, while contributing to improving health and healthcare through the application of our research to policy and practice. We are a multidisciplinary department, involving clinicians from a range of health professions including medicine, nursing and midwifery alongside disciplines such as statistics, health economics, health services research, psychology, sociology and epidemiology. In the most recent assessment of research quality in the UK (the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, Health Sciences was ranked 6th in the UK for research power, with over 92% of our research rated as world-leading (4*) for impact.

Our research activity is organised around six core themes: mental health and addiction; trials and statistics; public health and society; cancer epidemiology; cardiovascular health; and health services and policy <http://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/research/>. The successful candidate will join a vibrant community of over 200 postgraduate students in our Graduate School, including over 50 PhD students. Our PhD students are embedded in one of our research groups and have the flexibility to tailor their studies to pursue their own research interests. A bespoke training programme is designed in conjunction with the supervisory team to support the development of essential subject-specific and transferable skills for their future careers.

The University of York

The University of York is one of the foremost Universities in the UK and a member of the Russell Group of leading UK Universities. It has an outstanding record of research, teaching, and training across a full range of disciplines. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, the University of York moved into the top 10 universities in the UK. The University has a particular strength in health-related research. The main campus is a 200-acre landscaped park, with colleges and academic buildings within walking distance of each other. Proximity to the historic city of York makes the University a popular choice and provides a pleasant working environment. Transport connections to York are fast and effective.

Further information on postgraduate studies at the University can be found on the University of York Graduate Research School website: <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/>.

Khyber Medical University, Pakistan

Khyber Medical University is the only public sector medical university in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). It was established in 2007 under the Khyber Medical University Act, 2006. It has technical and territorial jurisdiction throughout KP and Merged Tribal Districts. All undergraduate and postgraduate public and private sector medical and allied health institutes/colleges/programmes in KP are either affiliated with KMU or its constituent bodies. The Health Department KP is the administrative department of KMU and its attached constituent institutes.

The Institute of Public Health & Social Sciences (IPH&SS) is the first institute of KMU, established in December 2008 under the Faculty of Public Health & Social Sciences.

IPH&SS has the highest number of PhD (Public Health) qualified faculty (6) in Pakistan. These faculty members have received doctorates from among the highest ranking universities in the UK, Austria, Germany and USA. They are engaged in epidemiological research, clinical research, preventive services and human resource development.

IPH&SS is amongst only three institutes in Pakistan that have been given a 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan for the PhD (Public Health) programme.

IPH&SS enjoys excellent working relationships and collaborations with a wide range of international and national organisations, including funding bodies, government departments, policymakers and academic institutions. These includes WHO, HEC-Pakistan, NIHR, MRC, DFID, University of York, Johns Hopkin University, USA, Agha Khan University, Karachi, Department of Health KP, Ex FATA Health directorate Peshawar, Population Welfare department KP and Ministry of Health, Islamabad.

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