**Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) in Endocrinology and Diabetes**

This is an exciting opportunity for those doctors interested in combining a clinical and research career. The ACF programme was developed as a result of the Walport report (2005), which highlighted the need for integrated clinical and research training pathways for doctors during their ST years. The ACF in Endocrinology and Diabetes combines clinical training (ST3) within the North East Thames SpR rotation with research training at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry (Queen Mary University of London) and has been a successful and popular scheme since its inception in 2006.

**How does the ACF work?**

The ACF lasts for 3 years, 25% of which is dedicated to research training, and 75% to clinical work (ST3 onwards). At Barts and the London, the research time is arranged in protected blocks of 3-6 months. The ACF is provides an excellent opportunity to identify research supervisors, develop preliminary research skills, ideas and methodology within a supportive academic environment. During this time, the Academic Clinical Fellow is expected to gain preliminary data with which to apply for a PhD/MD fellowship from funding bodies (e.g. MRC, Wellcome, Diabetes UK).

**Why do your ACF at Barts and the London?**

* High quality research

The results of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) ranked Barts and the London one of the top 4 medical schools in the UK for the quality of its research, with its William Harvey Research Institute and Institute of Cell and Molecular Science rated as amongst the best UK medical research institutes. The School has a successful history of supporting clinical academics in translational research through its close integration with Barts and the London NHS trust, exemplified by the interface between Clinical Endocrinology at Barts and the William Harvey Research Institute which has brought about high-quality scientific research with direct patient benefit for many years.

* Supportive research environment

As a trainee starting a research career, it is vital that you have a supportive and stimulating environment to work in. The ACF programme includes a tailor-made research skills methodology course at which ACFs across all specialities are taught, providing a friendly and informal opportunity to get to know other ACFs and senior researchers within the School. Research supervision is well-regarded within the school with many levels of support within and across the various departments and institutes. Currently, ACFs are eligible to apply for start-up funding from the Barts and the London Charity, providing approximately £5000 per year to cover lab consumables and study budget.

* Wide choice of research projects

An ACF is an invaluable opportunity to explore your own research interests and ideas, and find an academic environment that suits you. The clinical training programme director (Dr. Will Drake) and ACF programme director (Dr. Simon Coppack) will direct the ACF to potential research supervisors, which include those within the William Harvey Research Institute (Endocrinology) and Institute of Cell and Molecular Science (Diabetes and Metabolic Medicine) and beyond. The ACF may then spend time exploring these potential projects and deciding which they wish to pursue during their protected research time.

The potential research projects on offer are wide-ranging, benefitting from translational links with the Clinical Endocrinology department and its patients, and Diabetes Local Research Network-supported research which incorporates all aspects of diabetes research within the ethnically-diverse local population.

* Successful track record of research trainees

Clinical trainees on the Barts rotation have a successful history of peer-review publication, postgraduate prizes, presentations, obtaining research fellowships/grants, and becoming independent researchers. New Clinical Lectureships are also on offer at Barts and the London, and these will provide an excellent opportunity for ACFs to continue their clinical academic training after their PhD.

* Individually-tailored programme

The supportive environment of the clinical training programme in North-East Thames has significant benefits to those wishing to start their clinical academic training with an ACF at Barts and the London. The clinical rotation is small and close-knit, and its individual approach is invaluable to academic trainees as they get to grips with the both clinical and research training requirements and plan for a higher research degree.

**References and useful information**

London Deanery academic training website: <http://www.londondeanery.ac.uk/var/recruitment/academic-training>

Walport Report: [www.nccrcd.nhs.uk/intetacatrain/index\_html/copy\_of\_Medically\_and\_Dentally-qualified\_Academic\_Staff\_Report.pdf](http://www.nccrcd.nhs.uk/intetacatrain/index_html/copy_of_Medically_and_Dentally-qualified_Academic_Staff_Report.pdf)

Academy of Medical Sciences, academic careers website: [www.acmedsci.ac.uk/p25.html](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/p25.html)

Barts and the London RAE rating: [www.qmul.ac.uk/docs/smd\_rae.pdf](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/docs/smd_rae.pdf)

William Harvey Research Institute: [www.whri.qmul.ac.uk](http://www.whri.qmul.ac.uk)

Institute of Cell and Molecular Science: [www.icms.qmul.ac.uk](http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk)

Diabetes Local Research Network (North-East Thames): [www.ukdrn.org/lrn\_nelondon.html](http://www.ukdrn.org/lrn_nelondon.html)