



For immediate release

New website launched to promote value of clinical academic careers

The Clinical Academic Training Forum (CATF) has launched a new website to promote the role of clinical academics and support health professionals beginning their clinical academic journey. [CATCH](#), the Clinical Academic Training & Careers Hub, aims to be a one stop shop for information on academic careers.

Clinical academics are qualified healthcare professionals who also work in academia, typically in research, teaching, or both. They balance their time between treating patients, conducting research and training the next generation of clinicians. As their role is often split between working in universities and the NHS, clinical academics are able to align cutting edge research with real-time patient care. This results in an NHS that delivers evidence-based healthcare and aspires to the highest standards of excellence, a key principle of the health service.

Clinical academics are also essential to the UK's science and research performance, an area in which the UK currently excels, with 54% of its output considered world leading. The impact of this can be seen in the UK's scientific response to the coronavirus pandemic. From the development of vaccines to new therapeutics and technologies, the UK is leading the global recovery effort. Clinical academics form an important part of the research workforce and if the UK is to maintain its position as a scientific global leader then, as highlighted in the Government's R&D Roadmap, it must "[attract, retain and develop the talented, diverse people and teams who are essential to delivering our vision.](#)"

However, despite their fundamental role and importance the number of clinical academics is falling. Recruitment into clinical academia has not matched the rate of academics retiring, leading to a 'leaking' pipeline of an essential workforce. It is therefore vital that the sector works together to promote the unique opportunities available through clinical academia and to inspire talented individuals to embark on an academic career.

CATCH is an initiative that hopes to help address this issue. A scoping exercise led by CATF concluded that there was no resource available that contained all relevant information for clinical academic trainees in a single site and that there was a paucity of information for trainees from other clinical backgrounds such as dentistry and nursing. It is hoped that the launch of CATCH can begin to remedy this and help early career researchers and any health professional interested in academia navigate what is often perceived as a complicated career path.

The development of CATCH has been led by Professor Jane Norman, Dean for the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Bristol and Chair of the Medical Schools Council Research Committee. Of its launch, Professor Norman said

"We are really excited to be able to launch CATCH, our new online clinical academic careers resource. This is the result of an extensive consultation with clinical researchers and educators across the UK. Our hope is that it will showcase the vast array of career options in clinical academia, across many professional disciplines, and the unique set of challenges and rewards they bring.

“We look forward to working with stakeholders and users to further develop the resource and ensure that finding the right information is not considered a barrier for anyone interested in learning about a clinical academic career.”

Professor Paul Stewart, Chair of the Clinical Academic Training Forum and Vice President (Clinical) of the Academy of Medical Sciences, said

“The UK is renowned for its ability to attract and develop brilliant researchers and it is fundamental that we tap into this talent pool and promote the value of clinical academia and its benefits to society. Recovery from the pandemic will not be an easy task and we will rely on the fresh perspectives of the new workforce to help rebuild and improve our delivery of healthcare and drive improvements in patient care.

“CATCH is a fantastic new resource for individuals interested in a clinical academic career. I hope that those visiting the site take away the exciting opportunities and career progression available in clinical academia.”

Inspiring and building the clinical academic workforce of the future will require collaboration across organisations, from universities, NHS trusts, funding bodies, research charities, Government and many more. The development of CATCH was a collaborative effort and the site is endorsed by the following organisations:

- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
- Academy of Medical Sciences
- Association of Medical Research Charities
- British Medical Association
- Medical Academic Staff Committee (BMA)
- Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans
- Council of Deans of Health
- Dental Schools Council
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Health and Care Research Wales
- Health Education and Improvement Wales
- Health Education England
- Medical Research Council
- Medical Schools Council
- National Institute for Health Research
- NHS Education for Scotland
- Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
- University Hospital Association
- Wellcome Trust

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Notes to editors:

1. The Clinical Academic Training & Careers Hub (CATCH) can be accessed at www.catch.ac.uk.
2. The Clinical Academic Training Forum (CATF) is a UK-wide multi-stakeholder group that works to provide strategic coordination of UK clinical academic training pathways.

3. The Medical Schools Council is the representative body for UK medical schools. The council is made of the heads of UK medical schools and meets in order to shape the future of medical education in the UK. The Medical Schools Council is a member of CATF. For more information on the Medical Schools Council, visit www.medschools.ac.uk.
4. For more information on this statement, please contact Fahmida Yasmin, Senior Communications Officer, on 02074195430 or email press@medschools.ac.uk.