

**HDR UK Turing Wellcome PhD Programme
in Health Data Science**

FAQ

2021-22 entry

Contents

Eligibility	4
I am a clinician, am I eligible to apply for the PhD programme?	4
Can EU students apply?	4
Can international students apply?	4
Can HDR UK sponsor a visa?	4
Do you accept self-funded students?	5
Do I need to do an English test if I have a degree from a UK University?	5
I have a PhD already, can I still apply?	5
Application Guidance	6
How do I apply?	6
How many studentships are available?	6
What is the difference between a 'core studentship' and a 'co-funded' studentship?	6
A core studentship is offered at one of the 7 partnership universities. Students will be asked to select a research project at the end of their first year, in conjunction with an appropriate supervisor from a partner university and subject to programme approval.	6
Can I apply for more than one university?	6
What if I am limited in my university selection due to personal reasons?	6
Do I also need to apply to my chosen university/universities?	6
When should I apply to partner universities?	6
Which university PhD programme should I apply to?	7
Where can I find out more details about the PhD programmes on offer by the universities, and how do I apply?	7
How will spaces be allocated across universities?	7
Will I be offered my first choice of university? Can I change my university after receiving an offer?	8
What if my application to my university is successful but I am not offered a studentship?	8
Can I request feedback if my application is unsuccessful?	8
How can I request reasonable adjustments to the application process?	8
Do I need to choose a supervisor?	8
Do I need to supply references?	9
Will HDR UK cover travel and expenses to attend an interview?	9
Is it possible to attend the interview remotely?	9
Can I submit a CV as part of my application?	9
About the programme	10

Who is running this programme?	10
Is it possible to join the programme at a different time of the year?	10
What is the duration of the studentship?.....	10
Are there requirements for progression at the end of the foundation year?	10
How will my progress be monitored?	10
What support will I get?.....	10
What happens at the end of the foundation year?	10
What opportunities are there for part-time study and/or flexible working in the foundation year?	11
What opportunities are there for part-time study and/or flexible working in the 2nd - 4th years?11	
Are students based in London?	11
How much travel is there in the first year and what support is available?	11

Eligibility

What skills is the programme looking for? What counts as an ‘allied discipline’?

The programme is looking for applicants with skills in mathematics, statistics and computer science. Applicants should hold or expect to hold a UK bachelor’s degree in Statistics, Mathematics, Computer Science, Physics, or an allied discipline described below.

Examples of allied disciplines are Engineering, Machine Learning, (Health) Data Science, Robotics, Systems Biology, Bioinformatics/biostatistics, and Epidemiology.

Applicants with a bachelor’s degree in other disciplines may also be eligible if they can demonstrate their suitability through additional qualifications or research experience in Mathematics, Statistics or Computer Science.

I am a clinician, am I eligible to apply for the PhD programme?

Active or currently registered clinicians are not eligible to apply.

Can EU students apply?

Yes, EU students are eligible to apply, however following the changes to EU student funding recently announced by the government, the award does not cover the provision to pay fees at the EU rate.

EU applicants will be required to secure an additional scholarship to cover the difference between Home and EU fees. We recommend students should look for scholarship options at our partner universities. We expect competition for these scholarships to be highly competitive next year and also advise that application deadlines for scholarship places may be much earlier in the year.

Can international students apply?

There are no nationality restrictions and international students are able to apply. Students are advised the award only covers fees at the UK/Home level.

International students will be required to secure an additional scholarship to cover the difference between Home and Overseas fees. We recommend students should look for scholarship options at our partner universities. We expect competition for these scholarships to be highly competitive next year and also advise that application deadlines for scholarship places may be much earlier in the year.

Can HDR UK sponsor a visa?

Applicants must be able to remain and study legally in the UK for the duration of the studentship and are responsible for applying for any visas where relevant. Your home university will be able to provide you with advice and guidance on the visa application process and will support your application. HDR UK cannot take any responsibility for applying for a visa on your behalf, however we can provide letters confirming the details of your studentship including stipend amount.

Do you accept self-funded students?

We do not accept self-funded students or partially self-funded students . This includes the difference between Home/EU and International fees. We also do not accept students with external third party funding except university scholarships .

Do I need to do an English test if I have a degree from a UK University?

Students are required to meet the entry requirements of their home university including any English language requirements. Please check with your chosen university for details.

I have a PhD already, can I still apply?

Yes, you can. There is no eligibility criterion against having a PhD already.

Application Guidance

How do I apply?

Applicants apply through our [Flexigrant application system](#). The application form will ask for details of your experience and why you are interested in applying to the programme.

You will also need to submit the following:

- Details of two referees (who will be invited to submit a reference through the system)

The deadline for applications is Tuesday 1st December 2020 at 12:00pm GMT.

Applicants must also separately apply to the partner university they wish to attend. All offers will be conditional on applicants gaining admission to the relevant partner university.

How many studentships are available?

We expect to offer 7-10 studentships for our second cohort entry in academic year 2021-22.

What is the difference between a 'core studentship' and a 'co-funded' studentship?

A core studentship is offered at one of the 7 partnership universities. Students will be asked to select a research project at the end of their first year, in conjunction with an appropriate supervisor from a partner university and subject to programme approval.

Can I apply for more than one university?

Yes, there is space on the application form to select which universities you would be interested in. However, please note you may not be offered one of your preferred choices. We would encourage applicants to consider being open in their selection of universities and willing to work at multiple partners across the network. If successful your offer will be tied to a specific university and degree programme.

What if I am limited in my university selection due to personal reasons?

We encourage applicants to let us know any important information regarding your university selection, eg caring responsibilities, personal circumstances or disabilities or additional needs that require a certain location. There is a space on the application form to provide this information regarding your selection of university. This information will be reviewed by the recruitment team but not used to assess your application.

Do I also need to apply to my chosen university/universities?

Yes, all applicants must also apply to their chosen partner university. The programme application will not count as an application to your chosen university.

When should I apply to partner universities?

You can choose to do this before or after you hear the outcome of your programme application, although we advise checking deadlines at chosen partner university as some application deadlines will close earlier in the year. If you are applying for an

international or EU fees scholarship we strongly recommend applying early as deadlines for additional funding are often earlier than course deadlines.

Which university PhD programme should I apply to?

If you choose to apply before receiving a Studentship offer, we recommend *applying for the following programmes:

University	Course Name	Named supervisor
University of Birmingham	PhD Cancer and Genomic Studies	Prof Georgios Gkoutos
University of Cambridge	PhD MRC Biostatistics Unit PhD Public Health and Primary Care	Prof Sylvia Richardson Dr Angela Wood
University of Edinburgh	PhD Medical Informatics PhD Genetics and Molecular Medicine	Dr Miguel Bernabeu Dr Catalina Vallejos
University of Manchester	HDR UK/Turing PhD Programme	Prof Niels Peek
University of Oxford	DPhil in Health Data Science (HDR UK/Turing Wellcome) *Please note: Applications will be invited after an offer from the HDR UK/Turing PhD Programme	Dr Ben Cairns
Queen's University Belfast	PhD Medicine	Prof Mark Lawler
University College London	PhD in Health Informatics PhD in Statistical Science	Prof Paul Taylor Dr Ioanna Manolopolou

Please be aware you may need to reapply or request to change courses or supervisor if you receive a successful offer for a studentship.

Any offer of a studentship will be conditional on the student receiving an offer (either conditional or unconditional) from the University and degree programme specified in their offer letter. The deadline for confirmed university offers is usually 1st June 2021, so we recommend applying well in advance of this date.

Where can I find out more details about the PhD programmes on offer by the universities, and how do I apply?

To find out more about the PhD Programmes at our partner universities we suggest students look at the information available on university websites. We would also suggest contacting the relevant academic lead of the postgraduate admissions team at the university in question.

How will spaces be allocated across universities?

There are seven home universities in our programme (Queen's University Belfast, University of Birmingham, University of Cambridge, University College London,

University of Edinburgh, University of Manchester, University of Oxford) and we expect to distribute students across our partners.

Will I be offered my first choice of university? Can I change my university after receiving an offer?

Students may not be offered their first choice of preference. All offers will be tied to a specific partner university.

What if my application to my university is successful but I am not offered a studentship?

If you are not offered the studentship you will not be able to participate in this programme. There may be other programmes or funding sources available to you. We recommend contacting your university or looking on their funding pages for other available options.

Can I request feedback if my application is unsuccessful?

Applicants who are invited to interview may request feedback. Please note that feedback will only be available to unsuccessful applicants for up to 6 months after their application. Unfortunately, given the volume of applications we are not able to give feedback to those applicants who are not invited to interview.

If I am unsuccessful in my application can I apply again in the next round?

Yes, applicants who were previously unsuccessful may apply again.

Will you be holding a reserve list of candidates?

If you are not offered a studentship following interview, we may hold your name on a reserve list and let you know should a position or opportunity become available.

How can I request reasonable adjustments to the application process?

HDR UK is committed to creating an environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated fairly. We encourage applicants to let us know about any reasonable adjustments they may require. You may already know what you would like to request, or you may like to have a general discussion of your options.

We will treat any information you disclose to us as sensitive and will handle it in line with the **Data Protection Act**. Information will only be used to arrange reasonable adjustments and will not be used to assess your application.

To discuss an adjustment to the application process, please contact our team directly at phd@hdruk.ac.uk or on +44 (0)20 3862 3345.

Do I need to choose a supervisor?

Candidates will be allocated a supervisor who will act as a personal tutor for their first year of study from the relevant faculty at their home university. The first year supervisor will support your training and development and help you to decide what you would like to select for your research project. The research supervisory team in Years 2-4 will be agreed as part of your research project selection.

Whilst an applicant might have an idea of what they are interested in working on for their PhD, this does not have to be confirmed during the application stage. We

expect the subject of the PhD to be decided by the end of the first year, and hope students enter the programme with an open mind.

Do I need to supply references?

Yes, you will need to supply the details of two referees as part of the assessment process. Your referee should be someone who knows you in a formal context, eg a supervisor, employer, or volunteer manager. All referees must be invited using a workplace or professional email address.

Will HDR UK cover travel and expenses to attend an interview?

HDR UK will cover the cost of your travel expenses (up to a maximum amount, which you will be informed about if invited to interview). You (the student) will need to cover the cost of any visa requirements.

Is it possible to attend the interview remotely?

Where possible we do recommend face-to-face interviews but are able to offer the option of remote interviews to applicants. Any face-to-face interviews will be held in London.

Would the recruitment process be affected by Covid-19?

If necessary, we will hold all interviews remotely.

Can I submit a CV as part of my application?

We do not accept CVs or Resumes. There is no facility on the application form system to upload documents as part of the application. You can add your academic and professional experience on the application form. There are also free text boxes for you to add additional information in support of your application.

About the programme

Who is running this programme?

This programme is led by Health Data Research UK and funded by the Wellcome Trust. The Alan Turing Institute is a programme partner, as are seven world leading universities: University of Birmingham, University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh, University of Manchester, University of Oxford, Queen's University Belfast, and University College London.

This programme is not connected to the Alan Turing Doctoral Studentships, which are no longer running.

Is it possible to join the programme at a different time of the year?

Our programme begins in October. We are unable to accept students at other times of the year.

What is the duration of the studentship?

The duration of the studentship is 4 years full time.

Are there requirements for progression at the end of the foundation year?

For the foundational training year students will be expected to meet programme progression requirements, which will include an interview and written report. Students will also be required to meet the progression requirements of their home university to continue to the PhD research project. The foundational training year will involve substantial programmed activity spread throughout the country, led by various institutions. Students will be asked to produce a first year progress report. Students may also be required to complete courses at their home university.

How will my progress be monitored?

During their first year each student will be invited to a review meeting to discuss their progress. In addition, each student will be asked to provide a research project report at the end of the foundation year and to create and regularly update their ORCID profile.

Doctoral students must also conform to their home university's assessment and engagement requirements.

What support will I get?

Throughout your first year you will be supported by a personal tutor who will guide your learning and development. You will also belong to a cohort of students based around the UK who will join you at training events.

As a registered student you will have access to all the facilities available at your home university. The HDR UK-Turing Health Data Science PhD Programme team will also be on hand to advise on any matters related to your participation in the programme.

What happens at the end of the foundation year?

Students will explore a range of health data research topics selecting a three-year research project at the end of the foundation year. Projects could be proposed by students or selected from a list of proposals by potential supervisors. In some cases,

students may need to apply to move university of department, subject to approval by the Programme Directors and support will be provided in doing this.

Students on co-funded studentships will need to select a research project in accordance with the specific terms of their studentship.

What opportunities are there for part-time study and/or flexible working in the foundation year?

The first year of study is available on a full-time basis only.

What opportunities are there for part-time study and/or flexible working in the 2nd - 4th years?

Students may apply to participate in years two to four of their studentship on a part-time basis. Students on a full-time studentship are expected to submit their doctoral thesis by the end of the 4th year of study. For students on a part-time basis the expectation is to submit their doctoral thesis within the limits of their university PhD course requirements.

We recommend you contact the recruitment team to discuss your options if you are interested in a mixed mode studentship. Any conversation will be treated confidentially and not used to assess any future applications you may make.

Any offer of a mixed mode of study will be conditional on acceptance to the chosen university on an appropriate course eg part time.

Are students based in London?

Students will be based at their home university. Only one of the seven partner universities is based in London. Students will travel to foundational training activities at partner institutions throughout their foundation year.

Students will not have access to or be based in HDR UK, other than for specific activities.

How much travel is there in the first year and what support is available?

The foundational year of study will involve a combination of different types of training with a significant proportion led at our partner organisations around the UK and including residential events of up to one weeks' duration

Travel and accommodation expenses for attending training events will be provided, as will help finding suitable accommodation. Reasonable adjustments will be made for any applicants who require them.