

Employment-based PhD Scholarships Programme Health Science Professionals

Guidelines 2026

The Employment-based PhD Scholarship Programme for Health Science Professionals provides an opportunity for Health Science Professionals to conduct research whilst in employment. In line with [UCC's Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#), and the Missions of [Graduate Studies in CoMH](#), the remit of the Employment-based PhD Scholarships Programme for Health Science Professionals is to enhance and sustain excellence in graduate education in healthcare and health sciences, to deepen collaboration between researchers, clinicians, and healthcare and health science partners, to increase PhD enrolment numbers and to develop pathways to widen access to programmes. Projects will align with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), and will be anchored in or across one of the primary [UCC Futures](#) research themes in CoMH: Food Microbiome and Health, Children, Ageing and Brain Science, Medicines, Future of Health (Population Health, Health Services Research, Implementation Science), Cancer Research@UCC. The Scholarship Programme is open to those who are in full-time or part-time employment, who are excited by research and have a strong desire to enhance health research.

Scholarships will be offered on a competitive basis.

- Scholarships will fund **annual PhD registration fees *PLUS* €5,000 per annum if full time or €2,500 per annum if part time** for associated research costs, over a maximum of 4 years (full-time) or 6 years (part-time).
- **Two** scholarships are sponsored by the [College of Medicine and Health](#)
- **Three** scholarships are sponsored by the Office of the Regional Director of Nursing & Midwifery HSE Southwest
- The PhD candidate will remain a salaried employee and will concurrently register as a PhD student at UCC for the duration of the PhD project¹.

Eligibility

Employer

- A public sector healthcare or health sciences organisation.
- Willing to provide supports such as facilities and/or dedicated research time relevant to the PhD project.
- Willing to provide a mentor/supervisor for the PhD candidate and work with supervisors at UCC.

¹ PhD students and supervisors will abide by the [UCC Policy on the Supervision of Research Students](#).

Applicant

An employee (full time/part time) employed as a health sciences or healthcare professional in a public sector organisation external to UCC.

- Have obtained a standard of at least Second Class Honours, Grade I, in an approved primary degree, or other such evidence under the University's policy for [Recognition of Prior Learning for Admission to Research Degrees](#).
 - Applicants who hold a Masters by Research should hold an honours level degree (NFQ level 8) with a minimum of a 2H2 (second class honours, grade 2).
- Meet the [English language requirements for admission onto postgraduate programmes](#) in UCC.
NOTE: International applicants are advised to access the [International Office website](#) for information on studying at UCC.

Supervisory team¹

- Must include two members of UCC academic or research staff as per UCC policy on the [Supervision of Research Students](#). The lead supervisor must be a member of academic staff in CoMH for the duration of the project.
- Should host a research programme relevant to the area in the proposed PhD study.
- Should include a co-supervisor from a distinct discipline to the lead supervisor to enhance multidisciplinary research (desirable).
- Additional co-supervisors external to UCC are permitted and must abide by the supervision principles of UCC.
- Should include an early career researcher (desirable).
- Have agreed the scholarship and proposed study with the applicant's employer.

How to Apply

Prior to applying for a PhD Scholarship for Health Science Professionals, the applicant must arrange the following:

- Identify a lead supervisor from a School/Department/Research Centre or Institute in the College of Medicine and Health at UCC, and an employment mentor/supervisor from the place of employment.
 - The lead supervisor will identify additional supervisors in consultation with the candidate to ensure that the relevant expertise is in place for the proposed PhD project.
- Consult with the supervisory team and employment mentor/supervisor to identify a research project of priority to the area of employment and relevant to a research programme aligned with the UCC Futures research themes in the CoMH.

Once the employer confirms support, a supervisory team has been established, and a project agreed, a candidate may apply for the PhD Scholarship.

- The application form can be downloaded [here](#).
 - Part A should be completed by the applicant in consultation with the supervisory team and employment supervisor/mentor.
 - Part B should be completed by the supervisory team.
- A letter of support from the employer should be submitted with the application with reference to:
 - Relevance of the research area to the employment organisation.

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- The type of support that will be provided: e.g. facilities to conduct the research project in the workplace, provision of training events, percentage of protected time for the research, any additional funding that may be available to the applicant during the PhD project.
- The availability of a mentor/supervisor from the organisation who will work with the UCC supervisory team for the duration of the PhD project.
- Evidence of qualifications and final examination grades must be submitted with the application.
- The completed application form together with the Letter of Support and evidence of qualifications should be compiled as **one document in pdf format** and emailed to gradschoolmh@ucc.ie
- Applications that do not adhere to these requirements will not be considered.

The deadline for submission of the application is **5pm on Tuesday 2nd June 2026.**

Selection

Applications will be assessed by the CoMH Graduate Studies Committee based on the following:

- Scientific excellence and impact of the PhD project (0-50 marks).
 - justification for the study in line with the relevant UCC Futures research themes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, hypothesis, aims, research design and methods, impact, contribution to knowledge, societal gain from the research project and benefits of the project to the employment organisation
- Workplace and research experience of the applicant relevant to the proposed PhD (0-10 marks).
 - workplace role relevant to conducting a PhD, any previous research conducted, publications, conference presentations, research awards, patents, audits, reports, policy or guidance documents
- Applicant personal statement (0-10 marks).
 - desire to pursue a PhD, statement of suitability for the proposed research field, capability to successfully complete a PhD
- Supervisory team (0-10 marks).
 - supervisor(s) experience and related areas of research [publications, collaborations, research awards, patents, funding], multidisciplinary skill mix, inclusion of early career researcher. Priority will be given to supervisory teams who have not previously been funded by the scheme.
- PhD training and support structures (0-10 marks).
 - structured training activities/events, transferable/career skills, national/international conference/networking, access to scholars relevant to the proposed PhD research area, employment-based training
 - facilities/resources/training/protected time available to support the applicant conduct the project in the place of employment
- Partnership with employment organisation (0-10 marks).
 - added value of the scholarship to initiating collaborations or strengthening existing collaborations between the UCC supervisory team and the employment organisation. Benefits to the employment organisation

Enquiries

General enquiries about the scholarships may be directed to Professor Elaine Lehane, Vice Head of Graduate Studies, College of Medicine and Health at gradschoolmh@ucc.ie

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Enquiries to:

- **Future Ageing and Brain Science**: Professor Aideen Sullivan a.sullivan@ucc.ie
- **Children**: Professor Geraldine Boylan G.Boylan@ucc.ie
- **Food, Microbiome and Health**: Professor Paul Ross p.ross@ucc.ie and Dr Lorraine Draper l.draper@ucc.ie
- **Future Medicines**: Professor Caitriona O’Driscoll caitriona.odriscoll@ucc.ie
- **Future of Health**: Professor John Browne J.Browne@ucc.ie
- **Cancer Research@UCC**: Professor Róisín Connolly roisin.connolly@ucc.ie
- **School of Clinical Therapies**
 - Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy- Dr Eithne Hunt e.hunt@ucc.ie
 - Speech and Language Therapy – Dr Pauline Frizelle p.frizelle@ucc.ie
 - Physiotherapy- Professor Joe McVeigh joseph.mcveigh@ucc.ie
- **School of Dentistry**
 - Professor Richeal Ni Riordan richeal.niriordain@ucc.ie
- **School of Nursing & Midwifery**
 - Dr Vera Mc Carthy v.mccarthy@ucc.ie
- **School of Pharmacy**
 - Dr Katie Ryan Katie.Ryan@ucc.ie
- **School of Public Health**
 - Professor Janas Harrington j.harrington@ucc.ie
- **School of Medicine** -General enquiries - RPAC@ucc.ie or Dr Aislinn Joy a.joy@ucc.ie
 - **Anatomy & Neuroscience** – Professor Olivia O’Leary o.oleary@ucc.ie
 - **General Practice** – Professor Emma Wallace EWallace@ucc.ie
 - **Medical Education Unit** – Professor Deirdre Bennett d.bennett@ucc.ie
 - **Medicine** – Dr Aileen Houston A.Houston@ucc.ie
 - **Obstetrics & Gynaecology** – Professor Brian Walsh brianhenry.walsh@ucc.ie
 - **Paediatrics & Child Health** – Professor Brian Walsh brianhenry.walsh@ucc.ie
 - **Pathology** – Dr Collette Hand c.hand@ucc.ie
 - **Pharmacology & Therapeutics** – Dr Orla Barry o.barry@ucc.ie
 - **Psychiatry** – Professor Gerard Clarke g.clarke@ucc.ie
 - **Physiology** – Professor Niall Hyland n.hyland@ucc.ie
 - **Surgery** – Dr Cathriona Foley CFoley@ucc.ie

Key dates

Deadline for applications to gradschoolmh@ucc.ie	2 nd June 2026
Call outcome	July 2026
Scholarship Start date	September/October 2026

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