

## WISE GP: ACADEMIC CAREERS

[Scholarship](#) is an integral part of the daily work of **every** GP.

Whether working with patients, or taking part in the extended roles that make up the portfolio of GP careers, your job requires you to “[think for a living](#)”. Every GP needs, and will benefit from, training in the skills of scholarship.

A proportion of GPs work within University settings as academic GPs. ‘Academic GP’ is a job title – one portfolio career option that is potentially open to all GPs. All academic GPs are, first and foremost, GPs. And all GPs are scholars.

### What does an academic GP do?

Academic GPs are clinicians with University contracts employed to deliver research and education that drives improvements in primary care. Academic GPs will usually spend most of their time on either education or research activities. Some will be based within departments or groups specialising in primary care research and education. Others will be integrated in to larger teaching or research groups covering a range of activities.

The discipline of Academic General Practice was established in University departments involved in teaching the clinical discipline. These departments flourished to form scholarly groupings delivering both teaching and research. Academic General Practice joined forces with other disciplines involved in the scholarly development and delivery of primary care. The discipline of Academic Primary Care was born. You can read more about the origins of the discipline in this [book](#).

### How do I get started?

There are many routes into academic General Practice.

Clinical and GP training programmes include options for academic training. You can apply for academic GP training placements during Foundation Training, and as part of your specialist GP training (so called Academic Clinical Fellowships). These fellowships can include both research and education elements.

There are a growing range of options for qualified GPs as well.

- National schemes include the NIHR In Practice Fellowship scheme. This is an ‘entry level’ scheme offering two years part-time training in research (including education research) for practising GPs who have had limited prior research training.
- Universities and medical schools around the UK offer undergraduate medical education posts which may support future opportunities for extended training.
- Getting involved with postgraduate education and Vocational Training Schemes offers a step in to further scholarship training.
- Innovative Fellowships and Portfolio roles are being offered by a variety of local schemes to support extended careers. These are increasingly being used to encourage people to consider new geographical areas to work in whilst offering opportunities to extend professional skills sets in an area of practice.

## **How do academic GP careers work?**

A University based academic career will require higher level academic training – a Masters degree and then usually a period of doctoral study too (whether research or education). The academic clinical career path is, in essence, the same as for primary healthcare scientists. For academic GP researchers, you will need a PhD, then a period of postdoctoral study, leading to Clinical Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professorial roles. Progression up an academic career ladder depends on reaching a series of goals, defined by the specific role and route that you take (eg education or research). In practice, the path is rarely a straight one. Most academic GPs have portfolio careers, but which place greater emphasis on/spend more time doing research or education activities than other portfolio options.

## **Where can I find out more?**

We have pulled together some resources for you to start your exploration of academic careers. Opportunities are changing all the time, so do see these as just a starting point. If you have questions, or can’t find what you’re looking for, then do also get in touch with your [SAPC Ambassador](#). They will be able to put you in touch with someone who can help.

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR): Integrated Academic Training for doctors.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/academy-programmes/integrated-academic-training.htm>

NIHR Career Development through research

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/health-and-care-professionals/career-development/>

Health Education England: Clinical Academic Careers

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/clinical-academic-careers>

Royal College of Physicians: Research Engagement Toolkit (how to get involved in research in a variety of ways)

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/guidelines-policy/research-engagement-toolkit#:~:text=The%20Research%20engagement%20toolkit%2C%20produced,in%20lots%20of%20different%20ways.>

Society for Academic Primary Care: Academic GP careers

<https://sapc.ac.uk/article/supporting-academic-general-practice>