

Job description

Job title:	Clinical Fellow for National Bowel Cancer Audit
Grade:	Pay scales for junior doctors in England up to ST5 (£40,257 to £51,017, plus London weighting) in a full-time position or from ST6 to ST8 (£58,298 pro rata plus London weighting) in a part-time position, depending on qualifications and experience.
Department:	Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU)
Responsible for:	n/a
Accountable to:	Audit's Lead Methodologist and ultimately the Director of Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU)

Job summary

The fellowship provides a unique opportunity to work at a new national centre of excellence to help strengthen NHS cancer services and reduce variation in care. The role is based at the National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN) within the Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU), jointly run by the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSEng) and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

The position would be suitable for a surgical or oncology trainee with an interest in colorectal cancer. The successful candidate will work within a multidisciplinary team, delivering the National Bowel Cancer Audit and carrying out research whilst developing advanced analysis and research skills.

Having large detailed linked datasets available to you to carry out research provides the potential to generate a large number of academic papers. The post-holder is expected to lead on the writing of journal articles and conference presentations and work towards either an MD or PhD with the support of senior colleagues at the CEU. The fees for an MD or PhD will be covered by the CEU.

The current post holder says "This clinical fellowship provides a fantastic opportunity to work first hand with national colorectal cancer data, and learn a wide range of research skills and techniques in order to undertake clinical research with 'big data'. The role is extremely well-supported from academics and clinicians at the forefront of their fields, and has provided me with invaluable opportunities to present at national and international conferences, teach surgical skills internationally, be involved with national audit processes and outcomes, and establish academic links. I cannot recommend this position highly enough. I am happy to be contacted with any further questions."



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Ms Nicola Fearnhead, Clinical Lead and Immediate Past President of the ACPGBI says “Research during surgical or oncology training provides a unique opportunity to do a deep dive. Immerse yourself. This is when we really understand the challenges facing both clinicians and researchers. Knowing the challenges brings us together to collate and interpret data in meaningful ways. It gives us the best chance of improving outcomes and experience for patients with colorectal cancer. Making a meaningful impact is what we at NBOCA do, and our next Research Fellow will be an integral part of our patient-focussed team.”

Watch Kate Walker, NBOCA’s Lead Methodologist and Associate Professor of Medical Statistics, explain more about the role of Clinical Fellow in NBOCA and the opportunities this brings [here](#)

Further details around the National Bowel Cancer Audit, National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre and the Clinical Effectiveness Unit are available at the bottom of the job description.

Specific duties and responsibilities

1. Further development of the National Bowel Cancer Audit

To work with the senior methodologists and other staff members of the CEU as well as with the senior project leaders in further developing the Audit. This work will include:

- With the support of analysts and methodologists, analysing the prospectively collected Audit data linked to national clinical databases
- Reporting the results of the Audit in annual State of the Nation reports, patient reports, quarterly reports and papers for peer-reviewed publications
- Presenting the findings of the Audit at national and international conferences.
- Supporting the delivery of NBOCA’s Quality Improvement Plan.

2. Collaboration with NCRAS, NHS England and Wales Cancer Network, NHS Wales Health Collaboration and other relevant organisations to improve quality and timeliness of data, and increase the engagement of staff within NHS hospitals.

- To liaise with NCRAS, NHS England and Wales Cancer Network, NHS Wales Health Collaboration in order to support the project management and data collection
- To liaise with staff in participating NHS hospitals in order to publicise the Audit and its findings and to respond to clinical queries
- To liaise with professional bodies involved in the management of patients with bowel cancer, and to represent the Audit at regional and national meetings.

3. Quality improvement and communication

- To contribute to developing and implementing plans for the Audit healthcare improvement activities including: improvement events, workshops and webinars
- To promote engagement with trainee networks and professional bodies
- To produce audit communications (newsletters, emails, social media, website)
- To contribute to the Audit’s communication strategy, and identify opportunities to improve quality of communications with commissioners and other stakeholders
- To support and facilitate communication with, and meetings of, the Audit Patient Panel.



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4. Other

- Undergoing further training in statistics and audit / research methodology
- Maintaining the confidentiality of data at all times and to ensure that the requirements of the Data Protection Act are met throughout the project
- Ensuring that the data collection, analysis and reporting of the study is carried out to the highest professional standards
- Carrying out other occasional duties within the Clinical Effectiveness Unit, e.g. contributing to training workshops

There will be no clinical duties or on-call commitments but there is flexibility to allow the post-holder to continue their clinical practice.

This job description will be subject to review in the light of changing circumstances and may include other duties and responsibilities as may be determined. It is not intended to be rigid or inflexible but should be regarded as providing guidelines within which the individual works.

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership / Fellowship of a relevant Royal College 	
Experience and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant clinical experience • Familiar with software for data management and statistical analysis • Good numeracy (e.g. good pass at A level or equivalent) • Good understanding of health-related research methods • Good understanding of basic statistical principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of research or clinical audit projects in a hospital setting • Evidence of peer-reviewed publications • Evidence of presenting research at professional conferences • Experience in analysing clinical data • Understanding of epidemiological research (study design, data collection and analysis) • Familiar with national audit programmes



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Financial management and business planning		
People and interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent verbal and written communication skills• Good organisational skills• Ability to think systematically and critically• Computer literate and proficient with office software• Ability to work independently• Ability to work in a small team	

The post holder will also need to demonstrate the following values:

Collaboration	We embrace our collective responsibilities working collaboratively and as one college.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We work together, using our collective expertise and experience to effect positive change• We are open, honest and transparent, straightforward in our language and actions, acting with sincerity and delivering on our commitments• We take our responsibilities to each other, to patient care and to the environment seriously and we act with this in mind across our work
Respect	We value every person we come into contact with at the College as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand and meet their physical and wellbeing needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We treat everyone we meet with kindness and integrity and we seek to promote these behaviours in others• We actively seek a range of views and experiences across our work, and we listen to, and make everyone feel, a valued part of the team



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Excellence	We aspire to excellence and success. We share learning from our experiences, apply feedback into practice, and commit to continual improvement.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We work hard to be the best at what we do, recognising and celebrating effort and achievement, and reflecting on our work, so we can learn and improve• We value and invest in research, education and training to drive excellence and put improvements in surgical practice, dentistry and patient care at the heart of our work• We always seek to learn and discover more, valuing knowledge and scientific evidence, basing our decisions on insights, fact and experience

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is an Equal Opportunities Employer. We are open to all talent and we actively ensure that all qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regards to race/ethnicity, nationality, religion, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age and disability.

National Bowel Cancer Audit

The National Bowel Cancer Audit began national reporting in 2002 with the aim of assessing the quality of care received by patients with bowel cancer in England and Wales. The latest audit report included over 30,000 patients diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2018-19. The Audit has historically focused primarily on bowel cancer patients who are treated surgically, with the majority of outcomes reported being short-term. Linkage to other national clinical datasets has allowed a broadening of the Audit to include non-surgical treatments and an evaluation of processes of care and outcomes further along the patient pathway, such as unplanned returns to theatre, stoma reversal of rectal cancer patients and chemotherapy and radiotherapy indicators. Linkages include the administrative databases (Hospital Episode Statistics database the Patient Episode Database for Wales), the Cancer Registry, the National Radiotherapy Dataset, the Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy Dataset, the National Emergency Laparotomy Audit, data from the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre (ICNARC) and the Cancer Patient Experience Survey (CPES), with more linkages on the way, such as genomic data and oncological complete response data.

The Audit publishes comparative results for regions of England and Wales and NHS trusts on mode of admission, processes of care, and outcomes of surgical treatment. From these results, in its 2022 report¹, the Audit identified regional and institutional variation in the following measures which should be monitored and investigated:

- Neo-adjuvant treatment in rectal cancer and adjuvant treatment in colon cancer
- Proportion of patients presenting with stage 1 or 2 disease
- Rectal surgery volume
- Two-year survival

¹ <https://www.nboca.org.uk/reports/>





Building on its successes, the Audit will continue to widen its scope to all patients diagnosed with bowel cancer, not just those treated surgically. This requires work to better understand the complexity of patients and care pathways, and to follow patients over the entire care pathway before, during and after diagnosis.

The linked data sources used for the Audit provide a wealth of information from which clinical and health services research questions can be answered and written up as academic papers.

In June 2023 NBOCA will move into the National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN) at the Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU), which will deliver all national cancer audits in the country. This move will bring strengths in cross-audit working and will allow further innovation. A major opportunity is that NBOCA will receive frequent extracts of Rapid Cancer Registration Data which will allow it to provide more timely, more frequent reporting. This is a major breakthrough in terms of how audit results can stimulate quality improvement.

National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN)

Evaluating and where necessary improving the treatment for cancer patients is a key priority for the NHS Cancer Programme, and the Quality Statement for Cancer Wales. The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, on behalf of NHS England and the Welsh Government, has commissioned the development and establishment of a new centre of excellence for national cancer audits.

NATCAN is part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP). NATCAN will deliver six new national cancer audits in breast cancer (primary and metastatic), ovarian, pancreatic, non-Hodgkin lymphoma and kidney cancer. It aims to:

1. Provide regular and timely evidence to cancer services of where patterns of care in England and Wales vary.
2. Support NHS services to identify the reasons for the variation in care in order to guide quality improvement initiatives.
3. Stimulate improvements in cancer detection, treatment and outcomes including survival.

NATCAN began on 1 October 2022 in the CEU at the RCSEng. The CEU is a collaboration between the RCSEng and the LSHTM and currently delivers clinical audits in [prostate](#), [lung](#), [gastro-oesophageal](#) and [bowel cancer](#), and recently completed an audit of [breast cancer in older patients](#).

NATCAN will collaborate closely with professional groups, clinicians and patient charities to ensure that all relevant stakeholders inform the quality improvement goals of each audit. NATCAN will have approximately 20 staff from a range of disciplines including statistics, data science, health services research, epidemiology, healthcare quality improvement and clinical audit management. It is led by Dr Julie Nossiter, Director of Operations, NATCAN; Prof David Cromwell, Director of the CEU and Professor of Health Services Research, LSHTM; Dr Kate Walker, Associate Professor of Medical Statistics, LSHTM; and Prof Jan van der Meulen, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, LSHTM.

NATCAN will be a key source of information that supports various quality assessment and improvement activities, both at a local level (by NHS trusts and boards, Cancer Alliances, Integrated care Systems) and at a national level (e.g., CQC inspection and regulatory work). The



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activities of NATCAN and the individual audits will drive quality improvement across the country aiming to help cancer services reach the highest standards possible.

Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU)

The [CEU](#) is a collaboration between The Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Department of Health Services Research and Policy of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

The objectives of the CEU are:

- to carry out national surgical audits
- to develop audit methodologies
- to produce evidence on clinical and cost effectiveness

Since its inception in 1998, the CEU has become a national centre of expertise in the methods, organisation, and logistics of large-scale studies of the quality of surgical care. It has fostered collaborative links with professional organisations, the Department of Health and other relevant bodies within the NHS.

The CEU has developed a strategy for its involvement in national audit projects. An essential element of this strategy is that it considers audit projects as epidemiological studies of the quality of surgical care. This implies that epidemiological methods should be used to generate high quality evidence on the processes and outcomes of surgical care as well as on their determinants. Another important feature of the CEU's strategy is the emphasis it gives to joint clinical and methodological leadership.

The CEU's audits and research have directly influenced clinical policy as well as audit practice in the UK. We have undertaken national projects on tonsillectomy, liver and heart / lung transplantation, urological cancer surgery, joint replacement, oesophagogastric cancer, bowel cancer, breast cancer, and treatment of children with a cleft lip or palate.

The CEU is a project-based organisation. The majority of its projects are externally funded. The CEU also receives a contribution from the College's research funds. The Unit has 15 staff members, of whom 6 are academic staff members of LSHTM. The background of the staff demonstrates the multidisciplinary character of the Unit (medicine, health services research, medical statistics, epidemiology and public health). The Unit's Director is David Cromwell, Professor in Health Services Research.



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