

and Public Health Genomics



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

www.le.ac.uk

COLLEGE OF LIFE SCIENCES

Genomic Epidemiology and Public Health Genomics

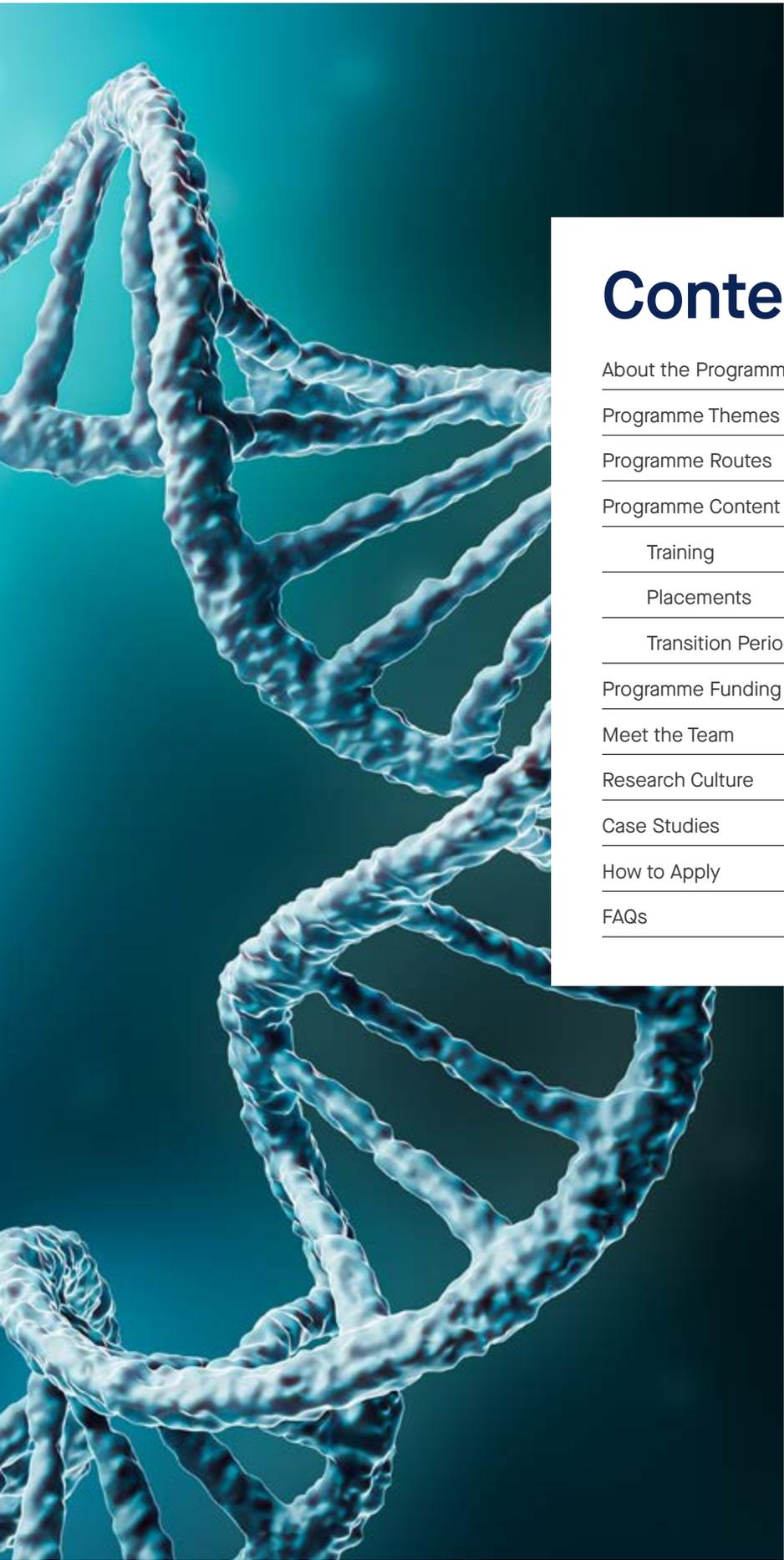
Doctoral Training Programme

COLLEGE OF LIFE SCIENCES

Genomic Epidemiology







Contents

About the Programme	5
Programme Themes	6
Programme Routes	8
Programme Content	10
Training	10
Placements	11
Transition Period	11
Programme Funding	12
Meet the Team	14
Research Culture	16
Case Studies	18
How to Apply	24
FAQs	26

Contact:

Sarah Robinson, Programme Co-ordinator:
genomicsphd@leicester.ac.uk

Martin Tobin, Programme Director:
martin.tobin@leicester.ac.uk



**We are
Citizens
of Change**

About the programme



About the programme

This 4-year interdisciplinary PhD Programme at the University of Leicester, with support from the Wellcome Trust, will fund five intakes of students, with the first having started their PhDs in September 2020. For each of the five years, eight students will be recruited to the Programme.

Via four themes, the Programme will train professionals to address research needs to better understand the health of the population and the role of genetic factors in determining health and disease.

Opportunities for skills development will be principally in priority areas of statistics, data science, computer programming, epidemiology, genomics and social science, medical law and ethics, and public health.

There are a number of projects on offer each year, to which prospective students can apply. Each project is linked to at least one of four Programme Themes (see page 7).

There will be unique opportunities to undertake research placements with our industry partners, and to work with partners in low and middle income countries. This is a flexible trainee centred Programme with a wide range of skills development, both subject specific and career enhancing.

There are two routes available on this Programme, which are outlined in more detail in this prospectus.

- 4-year PhD (which can also be offered part-time)
- 1-year MSc followed by a 4-year PhD

There will be unique opportunities to undertake research placements with our industry partners.

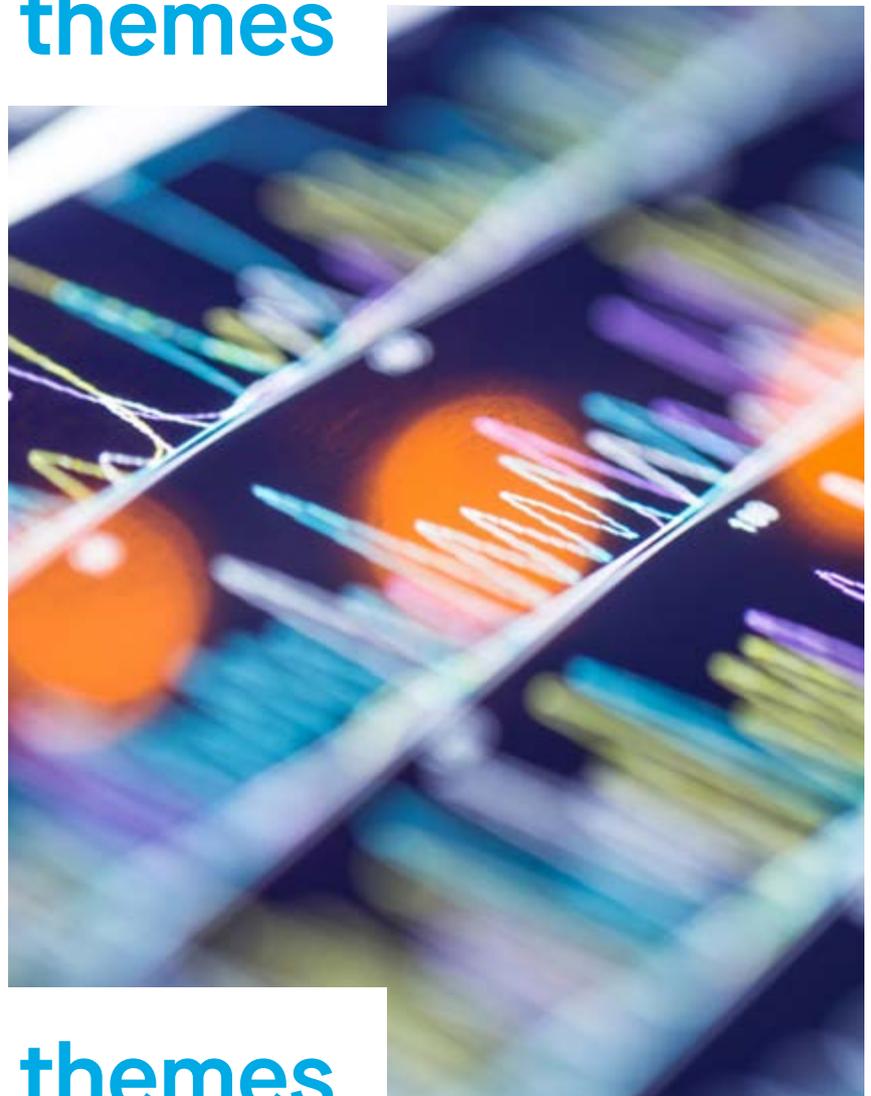
Programme themes



MAGNIFIED VIRUS

There are a number of projects on offer each year, to which prospective students can apply.

Programme themes



Programme themes



Theme 1: Genomics for Drug Development and Pharmacogenetics

Drug target discovery, target validation, drug repurposing, enabled with established partnerships with leading pharmaceuticals.

Theme Lead: Professor Louise Wain

Projects currently being studied in this theme include:

- The genetic epidemiology of lung scarring
- Understanding the genetic basis of radiotherapy toxicity
- Assess the contribution of common and rare short tandem repeats (STRs) to the risk of developing Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis

Theme 2: Genomics for Precision Medicine in Underserved Populations

Unique opportunities for novel research with our collaborators in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Brazil and India.

Theme Lead: Professor Martin Tobin

Projects currently being studied in this theme include:

- Individual and combined effects of genomic variation and environment on lung function and COPD in African populations
- Understanding the relationship between human genetic ancestry, the gut microbiome and of their modulation of chronic infection in Cape Verde

Theme 3: Genetically Informed Causal Inference and Risk Prediction

Methods exploiting genetic data to strengthen causal inference in observational research, and to predict individual risk of disease.

Theme Lead: Professor Frank Dudbridge

Projects currently being studied in this theme include:

- A genome wide association study (GWAS) of abdominal aortic aneurysm progression
- Simultaneous use of genetic and non-genetic information in the evaluation of screening and diagnostic testing pathways: Development of multiparameter evidence synthesis methodology

Theme 4: Ethical, Legal and Social Implications of Genomics and Genomic Epidemiology Studies

Bringing together our expertise in sociology, psychology, health services research, medical law, and ethics.

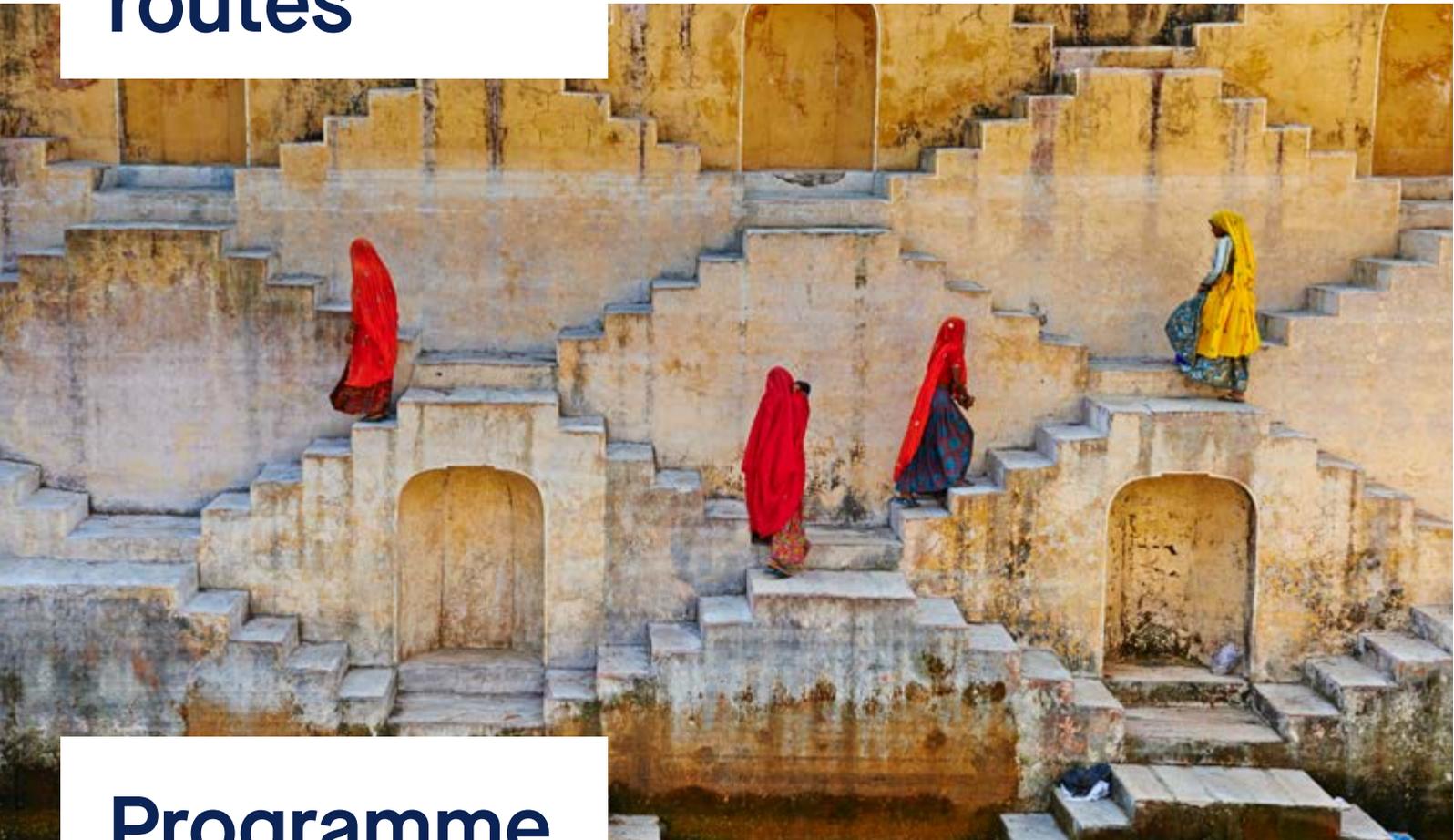
Theme Lead: Professor Natalie Armstrong

Projects currently being studied in this theme include:

- Must the relatives be told? Legal and ethical issues in relation to the non-disclosure of genetic information by healthcare professionals to relatives
- Representations of genomics and personalised medicine in UK broadcast media



Programme routes



Programme routes

The Programme offers two different routes to achieve a PhD

4-Year PhD

Each year, the Programme offers:

- At least four fully funded 4-year PhDs at UK rates
- Two fully funded 4-year PhDs for candidates from Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs)

Candidates wishing to apply for this route will have the opportunity to select an available project at the time of application, and can select up to three in order of preference.

Alternatively, candidates may propose their own project. In this case, it is essential that candidates have discussed their proposed project with the intended supervisor before submitting an application.

The 4-year PhD may also be undertaken on a part time basis for students who have family or other commitments (UK applicants only).

Students will receive a PhD fee waiver and a stipend for all four years (or part time equivalent) of the PhD.



1-Year MSc + 4-Year PhD

Each year, the Programme offers up to two candidates the option to study an MSc Programme for one year and then go on to study their PhD for the subsequent four years.

Candidates wishing to apply for this option should apply for the PhD, and make it clear in their application the wish to pursue this option. There is no requirement to choose a project at this stage, but rather a project will be defined under expert guidance during the course of the 1-year MSc.

MSc Programmes available include:

- MSc Medical Statistics (with optional specialisation in Genetic Epidemiology)
- MRes Applied Health Research
- MSc Quality and Safety in Healthcare
- MSc Health Data Science (from September 2022)

Students will receive a postgraduate tuition fee waiver for Year 1, a PhD fee waiver for Years 2-5 and a stipend for Years 2-5.

More detailed information on the funding available to students on this Programme can be found in the Funding section of this prospectus (page 12).



A flexible trainee centred Programme with a wide range of skills development.



Programme content



NAIROBI, KENYA

Programme content

Each PhD student on the Programme will be studying their own individual PhD project under their supervisory team, but will also have the benefit of additional training, cohort-building, placement opportunities and career coaching as part of the wider Doctoral Training Programme. Each student can tailor their own training pathway to meet their evolving needs and career goals.

Each student can tailor their own training pathway to meet their evolving needs and career goals.

Training

Training can be provided by:

- The Programme (specific to students on this Programme)
- The Doctoral College (to all postgraduate research students at the University of Leicester)
- Other University sources (e.g. the English Language Teaching Unit)
- External sources – students may find a relevant training course outside of the University that they may wish to attend, the costs of which can be covered by Programme funding

Subject-specific training can include:

- Social Science
- Medical Law and Ethics
- Interdisciplinary skills
- Computer Programming
- Statistics
- Data Science
- Epidemiology
- Genetic Epidemiology
- Methods Development
- Study Design
- Public Health
- Optional MSc modules

Workplace skills training can include:

- Good Research skills
- Project Management
- Leadership skills
- Teamwork skills
- Scientific Writing
- Public Engagement
- Science communication
- Patient and Public Involvement
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Effective communication
- Career pathways

HYDERABAD, INDIA



Placements

Students on the Programme can choose to undertake placements at any stage of the PhD, which will give students access to:

- Placement supervision or PhD co-supervision from one of our partner institutions
- Travel and subsistence expenses
- Funded placements at the end of the PhD to facilitate career transition

Placements are available through The Leicester Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS), and with our industry partners:

- AstraZeneca
- Genentech
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Pfizer

The Programme also allows capacity to build in projects addressing global challenges together with low and middle income country (LMIC) supervisors for both UK and LMIC trainees. Our partners include:

- University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa and AWI-GEN partner institutions, including:
 - The African Population and Health Research Centre, Nairobi, Kenya
 - Institut de Recherche en Sciences de la Sante, Clinical Research Unit of Nanoro, Burkina Faso
 - Navrongo Health Research Centre, Ghana.
- Laboratory of Genetics and Molecular Cardiology, University of São Paulo Medical School, São Paulo, Brazil
- SSIR Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, India

Transition period

This Programme will support a transition period at the end of the PhD to provide opportunities for in-depth career exploration and skills development. For example:

- Industry placements for research enabling drug development
- Internships in science communication
- Low and middle income country placements for global health research



SOUTH AFRICA

Funding

THREE FUNDING OPTIONS



Funding



FUNDING FOR TRAINING

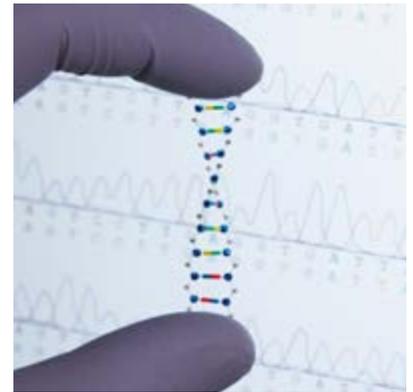
Funding

4-Year PhD (UK students)

- Postgraduate research fee waiver at standard College of Life Sciences UK rates for all four years of the PhD
- Wellcome Trust stipend for all four years of the PhD*
- Funding for training, research costs directly related to the studentship and a contribution towards project related travel
- A generous transition fund, focused on preparing students for their subsequent careers
 - this could for example provide for a student-driven choice of employment placement after submission of their PhD

4-Year PhD (LMIC students)

- Postgraduate research fee waiver at standard College of Life Sciences overseas rates for all four years of the PhD
- Wellcome Trust stipend for all four years of the PhD*
- Funding for training, research costs directly related to the studentship and a contribution towards project related travel
- A generous transition fund, focused on preparing students for their subsequent careers
 - this could for example provide for a student-driven choice of employment placement after submission of their PhD

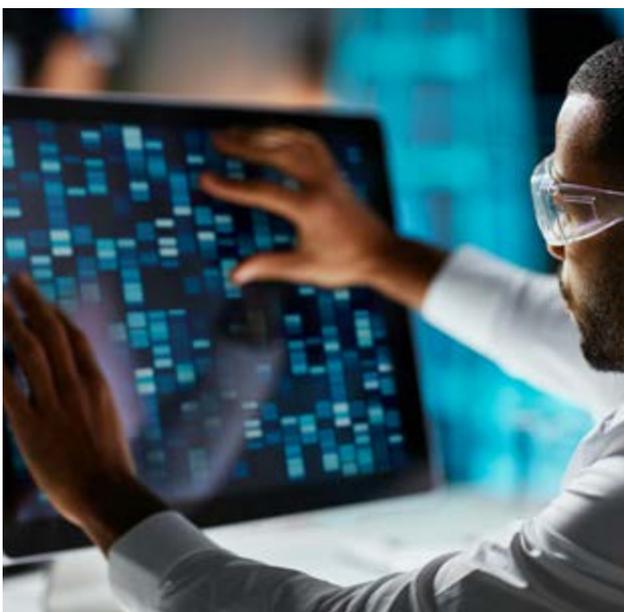


1-Year MSc + 4-Year PhD

- Postgraduate taught fee waiver for year 1. Postgraduate research fee waiver at standard College of Life Sciences UK rates for years 2-5 (PhD years)
- Wellcome Trust stipend for years 2-5 (PhD years)*
- Funding for training, research costs directly related to the studentship and a contribution towards project related travel
- A generous transition fund, focused on preparing students for their subsequent careers – this could for example provide for a student-driven choice of employment placement after submission of their PhD

*Wellcome Trust stipend rates are: Year 1 £19,919; Year 2 £21,542; Year 3 £23,298; Year 4 £23,997.

EU students who wish to apply for this Programme should seek the most up to date guidance on tuition fee rates on the University of Leicester website.



Funding for training, research costs directly related to the studentship and a contribution towards project related travel.

Meet the team

The Programme's Leadership Team is comprised of four Theme Leads all of whom have management and leadership expertise, experience of supervision and examination of PhDs, mentorship, coaching and support of early career researcher development; and a Programme Co-ordinator who manages all administrative aspects of the Programme.



Martin Tobin, Programme Director and Theme 2 Lead

As the first person in my family to go to university, I found Leicester Medical School to be a diverse, welcoming and caring environment. After 10 years of clinical work in different parts of the world, I rejoined the University of Leicester, where I was supported in my PhD in Genetic Epidemiology and in early, mid-career and senior Medical Research Council Fellowships before receiving a Wellcome Trust Senior Investigator Award. I love living in Leicester, which has a vibrant multi-ethnic community surrounded by beautiful, uncrowded countryside. At weekends, I make the most of the picturesque cycle routes on quiet roads, the scenic bridleways on a cyclocross bike, or peaceful family walks. All seem to involve coffee and cake at some point! I am passionate about training and career development – I serve on national career development funding panels and I am delighted to lead a research group that has facilitated the successful careers of many current staff and alumni.



Natalie Armstrong, Theme 4 Lead

I am a medical sociologist by background, and my work uses sociological ideas and methods to understand health and illness and to tackle problems in the delivery of high-quality healthcare. Following a PhD at the University of Nottingham and postdoctoral positions at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Warwick, I took up my first academic post in 2008 as Lecturer in Social Science Applied to Health at the University of Leicester. I have remained here ever since, being promoted to Senior Lecturer/ Associate Professor in 2014 and to Professor in 2017. I was the joint lead of the Social Science Applied to Healthcare Improvement Research (SAPPHIRE) Group from 2016-2018 and am currently Head of Department of Health Sciences. My work covers a number of healthcare topics, although I have a long-standing special interest in women's and children's health and in preventative healthcare.



Frank Dudbridge, Deputy Programme Director and Theme 3 Lead

I attended a comprehensive school and did my first degree in maths. My PhD led to many great opportunities, including the chance to work in the USA and Italy, to switch from engineering to medicine, and to interact with clinical, industrial and academic collaborators. I've worked at several universities and found Leicester to be the most friendly and progressive. I mainly work on statistical analysis of genetic studies, with interests in cancer, mental illness, and heart and lung diseases. For several years I have actively supported PhD students by organising networking events, generating travel funds and serving on selection panels for fellowships. When time allows I run marathons and play jazz piano.



Louise Wain, Theme 1 Lead

I joined the University of Leicester as a postdoctoral researcher in 2007 to conduct research into the genetic determinants of human health and disease. Since then, I have progressed to Lecturer and Associate Professor and I was awarded my Professorship in 2017. Looking back, it was the support that I received from my line managers, peers and the University that continues to inspire me to 'pay it back' and encourage the next generations of PhD students and early career researchers to pursue and achieve their career aspirations. In my spare time, I can usually be found enjoying the Derbyshire countryside with my horses, or out walking with my husband and our two rescue greyhounds.



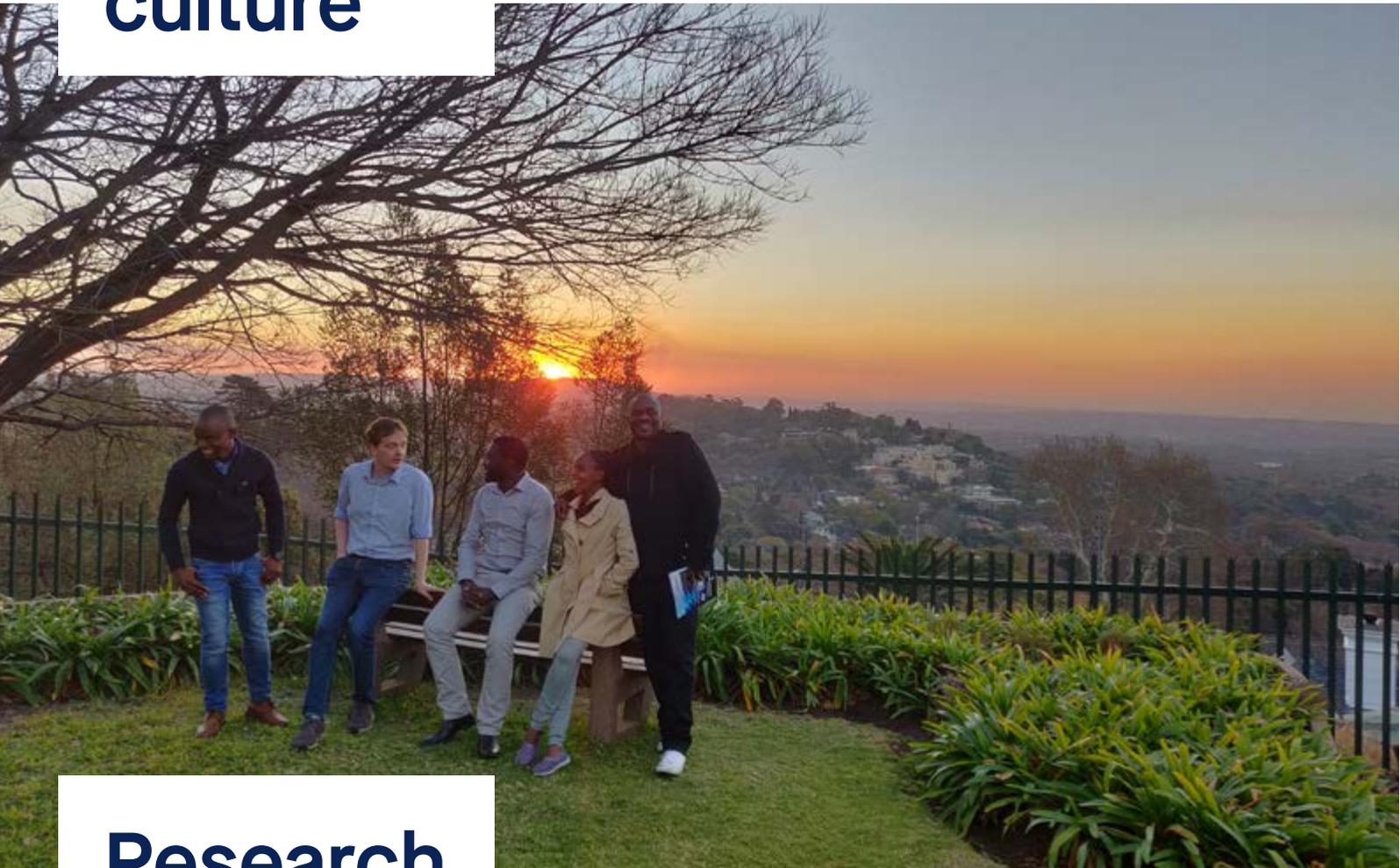
Sarah Robinson, Programme Coordinator

Having moved to this role in February 2020, I manage all administrative aspects of the Programme, both for prospective and current students. I have worked at the University of Leicester since 2011 (I even met my husband here!), I have an MA in the History of Medicine and I when I'm not at work, I can usually be found spending time with my family or incessantly reorganising my house.

The Programme's
Leadership Team is
comprised of four Theme
Leads all of whom
have management and
leadership expertise.



Research culture



Research culture

Students will join a cohort that facilitates the development of deep and lasting relationships that will create a sense of belonging, peer and professional support and signposting to professional networks to enable effective career planning.

An annual Trainee, Alumni and Supervisor Jamboree will provide a structured forum for developing relationships and professional networks, and for contiguous training and cohort-building specifically for trainees. Students would be involved in shared experiences, including media training, public engagement and social events. Students on the Programme will be encouraged to regularly interact both within and across cohorts.

Students on the Programme will be encouraged to regularly interact both within and across cohorts.

Leicester PhD trainees following this Programme will have access to staff services for mental health and wellbeing. We facilitate deep career exploration and preparation, incorporating unique placements alongside a Programme of career coaching designed to enhance diversity in biomedical careers.

Our Doctoral College aims to develop rigorous and intrepid researchers, with world-class capabilities in the leadership, communication, and impact of research, and prepared for both academic and non-academic careers across the globe.

The University fully supports the Programme Leadership Team in delivering this training excellence and best research practice, and will support it to do so in an environment without discrimination, bullying or harassment. The University has transparent procedures including the UoL Dignity at Work Code of Practice and Research Code of Conduct, underpinned by our culture of respect, promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

OUR LIBRARY FACILITIES



HENRY WELLCOME BUILDING

Our Doctoral College aims to develop rigorous and intrepid researchers.



Case studies

See what some of the first cohort have to say about their experience of the Programme so far.



Katie Saxby – Year 1

“The training that we have received to date has been excellent and is preparing us well to be successful in our PhDs and also in a research career beyond this. Being part of the cohort means that I don’t feel as though I’m studying alone. We catch-up regularly and it’s a very supportive group. It’s also really inspiring to learn about each other’s research projects that overlap with our own. I have an excellent supervisory team to guide me through the next four years, and also know that the theme leads and course admin are there to support me every step of the way. I feel extremely privileged to be part of the Wellcome Trust cohort.”

Being part of the cohort means that I don’t feel as though I’m studying alone.



Jasmine Blow – Year 1

“My PhD project aims to critically analyse the legal and ethical implications for healthcare professionals, who choose to disclose their patient’s genetic information without consent, to the patient’s relatives. This project will question whether the duty of confidentiality owed to patients can be legally and ethically overridden, in favour of informing a patient’s relatives of their risk of inheriting a genetic disorder. In order to answer this question, the project will draw upon various concepts of autonomy in the context of confidentiality, genetics, and precision medicine. The Wellcome Trust Studentship Programme is not only an excellent funded opportunity to research a thought-provoking and impactful topic, but also a chance to build a strong support network with other students in the same funding cohort. Undertaking a PhD can be a socially isolating experience, however the engaging training offered throughout the Studentship Programme enables students to create a cross-disciplinary research community, building professional relationships and personal friendships.”



John Oketch – Year 1

“I am happy to have joined the Genomic Epidemiology and Public Health Genomics research group, at Leicester University. The kind of support and mentorship I have received from my supervisors, students (PhD Pals) and the whole team is exciting. The experience has helped me have any easy transition into my PhD. I look forward to the years to come and to meeting other PhD cohorts.”

Student and colleague experiences

See what others have to say about their experiences at Leicester.

Leicester is a wonderful place to live, it has so much to offer in terms of history, culture, sport and cuisine.

Anna Guyatt – University of Leicester

“I moved to Leicester in 2017 in order to start my first post-doctoral position in the Genetic Epidemiology Group. I had a brilliant time during my PhD (on another Wellcome scheme), and loved my many years at my alma mater, but wanted to get experience in more than one institution. Leicester seemed like it would be the perfect fit – and it was!

We’re a relatively small (but growing) group, and as soon as I joined I felt very at home; everyone was so approachable and welcoming. There’s a strong culture of teamwork and openness in our group, and we enjoy socialising together regularly as well.

In my two years here I have been given the opportunity to co-lead major consortium-based genetic association studies of lung function, and have recently been awarded two internal research fellowships. The support I have received from my supervisors has been instrumental to achieving this, and I’ve very much been encouraged to pursue and nurture my own research interests too.

Leicester is a wonderful place to live—whilst it’s not overwhelmingly big, it has so much to offer in terms of history, culture, sport and cuisine. It’s also very easy to find lovely countryside nearby, and Leicester is extremely well-connected and conveniently positioned for travel further afield. I’ve found it such a friendly place to be, and am really happy here.”



LEICESTER CITY TOWN HALL SQUARE

Student and colleague experiences

What first attracted me to Leicester was its reputation for research excellence and outstanding student support.

Kayesha Coley – University of Leicester

“In September, shortly after finishing my MSc in Genomic Medicine, I joined the Genetic Epidemiology Group at the University of Leicester. My PhD project will explore the genetic architecture of smoking behaviour using whole exome sequencing data which has been collected from 50,000 participants in the UK Biobank. As smoking is one of the leading risk factors of the top five causes of death globally, I am hoping my project will provide novel insights into this risk factor which is practiced by around 1 billion people worldwide.

What first attracted me to the University of Leicester was its reputation for research excellence and outstanding student support. Furthermore, the Genetic Epidemiology Group is well known for its valuable contributions to the genomics of complex respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Also, there will be many opportunities for me to develop a sophisticated skill-set related to my project through formal training, workshops and conferences, which will enable me to tackle the challenge of my PhD with confidence.

Having spent four years studying at the University of Sheffield, it was very daunting to move to a unfamiliar city and become part of a new research group. However, with the support from the Genetic Epidemiology Group, and the University as a whole, I have settled in very quickly - mainly because everyone has been so welcoming and friendly! Although my experience so far at the University of Leicester has been short, it has been extremely positive and I am very excited about the next few years here.”



Jack Bowden – University of Exeter

“I came to Leicester in 2004 to study for a PhD in Biostatistics under the supervision of John Thompson and Paul Burton, completing my studies in 2007. My project focused on the development of methods for bias adjusted inference, with applications across the fields of genetic epidemiology, meta-analysis and clinical trials. I received great support, benefitting immensely from a stimulating and collegiate academic atmosphere in the wider department. It ignited a passion for methodological research in me that and led to research positions in Cambridge, London and Bristol. In 2019 I was appointed Professor of Biomedical Data Science at the University of Exeter.

Over the last 12 years I have seen my old department go from strength to strength, expanding its faculty and extending its range of taught MSc and PhD programmes. I owe my career in research in large part to those formative years at the University of Leicester, and wholeheartedly recommend it to you too!”



Robyn Lotto – Liverpool John Moores University

“I have worked in healthcare for over twenty years; in a clinical capacity, as a nurse, specialising in cardiothoracic nursing, and subsequently in the research setting. Following a period working at the University of Leicester’s Cardiovascular Biomedical Research Unit, I applied for a joint grant with the SAPPHIRE (Social Science Applied to Healthcare Improvement Research) and TIMMS (The Infant Mortality and Morbidity Studies) research groups to undertake a PhD exploring reasons for the observed variations in neonatal and infant mortality between socioeconomic groups. Under the supervision of

Prof Natalie Armstrong and Dr Lucy Smith, I successfully completed the PhD, and uncovered a world of opportunity! I have subsequently been awarded a Florence Nightingale Fellowship in 2016/2017 and am currently a Senior Lecturer and Inspire Researcher at Liverpool’s John Moores University and the Liverpool Centre for Cardiovascular Sciences. I owe much of my success to the support, guidance and collegiality of my supervisors as well as the stimulating atmosphere of the wider department. Both the individuals and wider environment have been instrumental in my development and continued progression.”

Both the individuals and wider environment have been instrumental in my development and continued progression.

Alex Williams – University of Leicester

“I decided to do a PhD in the Genetic Epidemiology group at the University of Leicester due to the group’s world-leading research in respiratory disease genetics and its excellent track record for skill development of previous PhD students. Everyone in the group is friendly and always willing to answer questions, and with such a variety of backgrounds, there is always someone who can help. Of course, there is a social aspect as well. As a group, we have weekly coffee mornings, monthly lunches at restaurants and yearly Christmas meals, to name a few.

I have had the pleasure of collaborating with individuals in the pharmaceutical industry, which has been valuable and has afforded me the opportunity to see what life is like outside academia. Attending and presenting at conferences, local or international, is encouraged and offers a fantastic learning experience. I recently attended conferences in San Diego, California.

Science is my passion. After finishing my PhD, I would be keen to pursue a career in academia or otherwise that allows me to follow my passion. I enjoy working with people, so I would be interested in a career that also allows me to interact with individuals from a range of backgrounds often. In the future, I would definitely consider working abroad, perhaps in France, where I’ve lived previously, or somewhere further afield.”



Chiara Batini – University of Leicester

“Originally from Italy, I arrived in Leicester in 2010 as a post-doc joining the Human Evolutionary Genetics group in the Department of Genetics... and I have never left!

I immediately felt welcome! The city is the most multicultural place I have ever lived in, and this reflects in how people interact with others. Everybody is very friendly, helpful and understanding. In these ten years, I have learnt so much about different cultures and traditions and I have decided to make Leicester my home.

From a professional point of view, I have never stopped learning. I spent six years in Genetics to then moved to the Department of Health Sciences, where I currently hold a Research Fellowship. I have met many bright researchers and incredible mentors on the way, always willing to share their knowledge and to support my career choices. When I joined the Genetic Epidemiology group I was impressed by the collaborative spirit, the intellectual honesty, the research transparency, and the fun we have while working together.”

Maria Soler Artigas – Vall d’Hebron Research Institute (VHIR), Barcelona

“I lived in Leicester since 2009 until 2016. I started working as a research assistant at Prof. Martin Tobin’s group, I undertook my PhD part-time in the Genetic Epidemiology of Lung Function and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease while working, and after that I held a post-doc position for almost a year. Now I am starting my career as a senior researcher at Vall d’Hebron Research Institute (VHIR) in Barcelona. As the time passes I realise how important my experience at Leicester was and how much I learned from it, from an academic but also from a personal perspective. The work environment was always very friendly and very professional; I really admire how Martin and Louise managed the team with the right balance between exposure to new challenges and support. I really enjoyed working in a multidisciplinary environment, where we could all learn from each other. I had great professional opportunities, from undertaking high profile analysis leading to high impact publications, to being part of international consortia, giving talks in international conferences, and attending the all training necessary to meet my needs. Overall, I really enjoyed my time at Leicester and would recommend it to anyone looking to start a career in science!”



Amadou Gaye – National Human Genome Research Institute USA

“My time at the University of Leicester was great in many ways.

The work environment was one of the best if not the best I have had throughout my education, thanks to the quality of the mentorship and nice fellows I had.

I realised more how good the training I received there was after leaving. Everywhere I have been since I found myself competitive because the solid foundation I got in Leicester provided me with the tools required to develop, acquire new skills more easily and adapt to new research environments.

Really proud and happy of my time at Leicester. My memories are filled with the good moments spent with staff and fellow students who I am still in touch with.”



PERCY GEE BUILDING

Kath Fawcett – University of Leicester

“I joined the Genetic Epidemiology Group at the University of Leicester in 2017 for my third post-doctoral position. Prior to this I had worked in a number of different academic research environments – at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, UCL and Oxford – and taken an 18-month career break to raise young children. Returning to the world of science at Leicester has been one of the best decisions I ever made.

Here I’ve had the opportunity to lead on two fascinating, impactful genetic epidemiology projects and to gain experience of teaching and outreach. My supervisors have encouraged me to apply for fellowships, something I had never felt able to do before, and I have now been offered a career development award. The supportive environment within the group and the

Department of Health Sciences was key to me seeking greater independence. The group is very friendly and collaborative and we have regular social events.

For family reasons, I live in Warwickshire and commute to Leicester by train, but would have been happy to live in Leicester otherwise. It is a vibrant, multicultural city and there are good public transport connections to other parts of the country.”

The supportive environment within the group and the Department of Health Sciences was key to me seeking greater independence.

A. Mesut Erzurumluoglu, MRC Epidemiology Unit, University of Cambridge

“I worked in the Wain and Tobin team for over three years and had the opportunity to publish quite a few papers in very respectable journals. But the two things that will stay with me most will be the loyalty and care shown by Martin and Louise to their PhD students and Postdocs, and the camaraderie between the team members. I enjoyed every second of my time here – and I would highly recommend it to anyone thinking of doing a PhD.”



DAVID WILSON LIBRARY



How to apply

Applications will only be considered during open recruitment rounds. All applications must be submitted via the University of Leicester application system, which can be accessed via the [Funded Opportunities page](#).

When each recruitment round opens, the website will clearly state how many places are being offered and whether these places are funded at UK and/or overseas level. For each recruitment round, the Programme will advertise a selection of projects under the Programme Themes.

Entry requirements

- Candidates applying to the 4-year PhD should have, or be working towards, an undergraduate degree or a Master's degree in a relevant subject
- Candidates applying to the 1-year MSc + 4-year PhD should have, or be working towards, an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject
- Candidates who do not meet these entry requirements, but feel they have relevant experience should describe this clearly in the applicant statement
- University of Leicester English language requirements apply

- Applicants should note that this Programme is not intended for medically qualified candidates who wish to remain clinically active

Widening participation

This Programme strongly welcomes applications from those from underrepresented groups, including minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.

4-year PhDs as part of this Programme may be undertaken on a part time basis, particularly for students who have family or other commitments, but please note that due to University regulations, this option is only available to UK students.

The University of Leicester has a strong Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, with the overall view to ensure everyone has the opportunity to flourish in an inclusive environment.

Application notes (all applicants)

In addition to the documentation detailed on the online application portal, candidates will need to have prepared and uploaded a current CV and an applicant statement. All applicants should enter **“Wellcome Trust DTP”** in the Funding section of the online application form. It is advisable that candidates approach the supervisor(s) of their proposed project(s) prior to submitting their application.

The applicant statement must:

- Be of 700 words or less
- Explain why the candidate is planning to undertake study at PhD level
- Explain why the candidate should be considered for a PhD studentship within the Genomic Epidemiology and Public Health Genomics Doctoral Training Programme at the University of Leicester

Additional Application Notes (specific routes)

- Applicants to the 4-year route within Themes 1-3 only should list three advertised projects in order of first, second and third preference as part of the applicant statement
- Applicants to the 4-year route within Theme 4 only should clearly identify preferred project(s), and in order of preference where applicable, as part of the applicant statement



STATEMENT MUST BE OF
700 WORDS OR LESS

- Applicants to the 1+4 route only are not required to identify preferred project(s) at the time of application, but should identify any preferred Themes. Candidates must also clearly specify their preferred Master's course(s) and the relevance to future research
- Applicants who wish to propose original projects should upload a separate 1-page project description in addition to the applicant statement. It is essential that candidates have discussed their proposed project with the intended supervisor before submitting an application. We will be unable to shortlist projects that have not been initially discussed with an appropriate academic.

Interviews

All successfully shortlisted candidates will be invited to a 30-minute interview.



30-MINUTE INTERVIEWS

It is advisable that candidates approach the supervisor(s) of their proposed project(s) prior to submitting their application.



DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAMME | 25



Frequently asked questions

Why study as part of a Doctoral Training Programme?

Working towards a PhD as part of a Doctoral Training Programme means that students not only receive support from their supervisory team, but also become part of a wider community of research students who can provide valuable support on a peer-to-peer level. Students will undertake activities at Programme-level to encourage strong collaboration both within and across cohorts. This Programme offers projects across a number of different academic departments and specialities (including health sciences, genetics and genome biology, law, and the social sciences), allowing students to share their own unique perspectives as part of the wider field of study.

Why is the Programme duration 4 years rather than 3 years?

Having four funded years to complete the PhD means that our students can have much more flexibility to undertake placements and additional training they feel would be beneficial to both themselves and their research.

When does recruitment take place?

Recruitment opens in mid-October, with the deadline usually falling in early December. On occasion, we may also open recruitment in spring – please check the website for additional recruitment rounds.

Can candidates who already hold a postgraduate qualification apply for the 1+4 route?

Candidates wishing to apply for the 1+4 route must demonstrate why their preferred postgraduate qualification would be relevant and beneficial to subsequent four years of the Programme. Candidates may therefore already hold a postgraduate qualification prior to applying for this route, provided they demonstrate this information at application.

Can overseas candidates apply for the 1+4 route?

The 1+4 route only offers a tuition fee waiver for the MSc year at UK rates, and there is no stipend for this year included. Overseas candidates who are interested in this route must therefore clearly demonstrate that they would be able to financially support themselves for the first year, and also make up the difference between overseas and UK Postgraduate Taught tuition fee rates.

Can overseas candidates from countries not included on the LMIC list apply for this Programme?

Our overseas fee waivers are designated for candidates from LMIC countries. Overseas candidates from countries other than those on the LMIC list may still apply but may be asked to demonstrate their ability to cover the difference between overseas and UK tuition fee rates for all four years of the Programme.

Is there a minimum grade required at undergraduate or postgraduate level in order to be eligible?

All entrants to the Programme are expected to have a degree in a relevant subject. There is no minimum grade stated in the entry requirements as information provided at the time of application will be considered as a whole for each candidate.

Are medically qualified candidates eligible to apply to this Programme?

Clinically qualified applicants (i.e. medics, dentists, vets and other health professionals) who are seeking to balance academic and clinical careers are not eligible to apply to this Programme. For these applicants, the Wellcome Trust offers a number of PhD Training Fellowships for Clinicians. Applicants who have ceased practicing in a clinical field will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is recommended that such applicants contact the Programme team in the first instance to discuss their application.

Are overseas candidates expected to attend an interview in person?

Shortlisted overseas candidates will be given the option to attend an interview by video-conference.



NAIROBI, KENYA

When does each cohort start the Programme?

The Programme begins in late September/early October each year from 2020 to 2024, inclusive.

In which academic departments are students based?

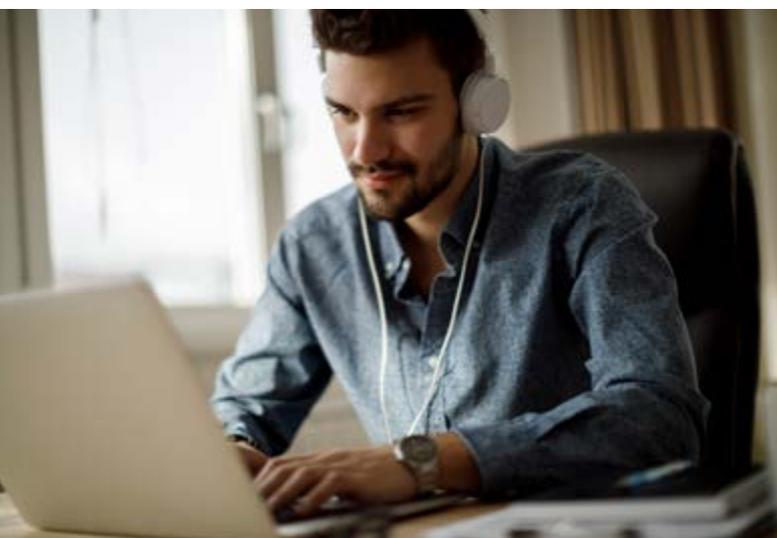
Each individual student is based in the same department as their primary supervisor. The interdisciplinary nature of the projects available as part of the Programme means that students in our current cohort are based in Health Sciences, Cardiovascular Sciences, Genetics and Genome Biology, Leicester Law School, and Molecular and Cell Biology. The Programme is administratively registered in the College of Life Sciences.

Can placements be organised outside of those specified in this prospectus?

We are able to provide guidance on placements throughout the PhD. Alternatively, students may suggest their own placements throughout their PhD, subject to supervisor and overall Programme approval. Placements may be directly relevant to their research or intended to enhance transferable skills.

How will this Programme equip students for a career beyond the PhD?

Students on this Programme are encouraged to begin exploring different career destinations from an early stage, with the help of our specially developed Career Coaching Programme. Multiple options for industry placements and collaborative work with our LMIC partners also allow our students to discover different career paths, with the encouragement of our supportive supervisory teams and Programme Leads. As part of the funding for this Programme, a transition fund is available to all students to support their career transitions and to enable them to explore potential career opportunities while receiving Programme funding.





University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK

e: genomicsphd@leicester.ac.uk
e: martin.tobin@leicester.ac.uk
w: le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/funded-opportunities/wellcome-trust-2020

This brochure was published in March 2021. The University of Leicester endeavours to ensure that the content of its prospectus, programme specification, website content and all other materials are complete and accurate. On occasion it may be necessary to make some alterations to particular aspects of a course or module, and where these are minor, for example altering the lecture timetable or location, then we will ensure that you have as much notice as possible of the change to ensure that the disruption to your studies is minimised. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for the University to cancel or change a programme or part of the specification more substantially. For example, due to the unavailability of key teaching staff, changes or developments in knowledge or teaching methods, the way in which assessment is carried out, or where a course or part of it is over-subscribed to the extent that the quality of teaching would be affected to the detriment of students. In these circumstances, we will contact you as soon as possible and in any event will give you 25 days written notice before the relevant change is due to take place. Where this occurs, we will also and in consultation with you, offer you an alternative course or programme (as appropriate) or the opportunity to cancel your contract with the University and obtain a refund of any advance payments that you have made. Full Terms and Conditions and Senate Regulations governing our teaching programmes can be found here: www.le.ac.uk/offer-terms