



Wellcome / Health Research Board

ICAT
Irish Clinical Academic Training

Application information



FORUM OF IRISH POSTGRADUATE
MEDICAL TRAINING BODIES





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Information for applicants

Summary:

The ICAT Programme combines clinical and academic training, leading to BOTH a PhD and CCST/CCT. Therefore, only candidates who are successful in securing a place on a Higher Specialist Training programme or an approved run-through Basic Specialist Training – Higher Specialist Training programme can enrol in the ICAT Programme. Candidates applying to ICAT must either be enrolled in the early stages of Higher Specialist Training, be enrolled on an approved run-through Basic Specialist Training – Higher Specialist Training programme or have applied for entry onto an approved Higher Specialist Training programme.

Trainees who are interested in the ICAT Programme should contact their respective Training Bodies in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) or Deaneries (NIMDTA) in Northern Ireland (NI) to discuss their clinical training needs.

While previous research experience is considered important in the assessment process for the ICAT Programme, outstanding candidates with little/no research experience may still apply.

Successful applicants who are appointed to the ICAT Programme will receive the following supports:

1. Salary support for the full duration of their involvement in the ICAT Programme .
2. PhD registration fees at a participating ICAT Programme partner institution.
3. Contribution towards research consumables.
4. Academic appointment as a Clinical Lecturer (RoI) / ICAT Fellow (NI) or equivalent (exact title may vary by institution) at a participating ICAT Programme partner institution.



Eligibility criteria:

Qualifications:

1. MB BS, MB BCh or equivalent medical qualification.
2. Successful completion of relevant College/Faculty Membership exam or part thereof (e.g. MRCP (UK) or MRCPI (RoI)) or equivalent relevant postgraduate certifications necessary for participation in the relevant specialist training programme.
3. Candidates should not be registered as a PhD student at the time of application to the ICAT Programme.
4. The ICAT Programme will not provide funding to students who wish to extend a Masters or MD to PhD – applicants must be eligible for and commit to the complete ICAT Programme.

Medical registration:

1. (a) Eligible for full or limited registration with the Irish Medical Council (IMC) or General Medical Council (GMC) at time of application with the necessary license to practice;
or
(b) Full or limited registration at time of appointment with the IMC (for fellows intending to work in the RoI), or with the GMC (for fellows intending to work in NI), with the necessary license to practice.
2. Documented evidence from the relevant training body (e.g. GMC, IMC, RCPI or equivalent) of achievement of appropriate competencies for stage of training by time of appointment in line with relevant national regulatory requirements (including satisfactory outcome at ARCP (NI)).
3. Eligibility to work in the Republic of Ireland or United Kingdom at time of application.
4. Satisfactory completion of relevant Vetting/Barring Scheme.
5. Hold a current medical indemnity policy that is valid in the jurisdiction where training will occur.
6. Either (a) hold a National Training Number in a GMC approved UK Specialty Training programme at ST3 level or above (ST1 or above for General Practice trainees) (NI);
or
(b) Be eligible to apply or already be appointed to a recognised Higher Specialist Training Scheme or approved 'run through' Specialist Training programme overseen by an approved training body (RoI).
7. Hold a current fitness-to-practice certificate, registration with license to practice (or equivalent) from the relevant regulatory authority.

Points of entry onto the ICAT programme

The exact point of entry to the ICAT Programme varies between specialties due to the duration and structure of specific training schemes. However, all ICAT Fellows will work towards completion of specialist training (CCST – RoI; CCT – NI) and this is an important reference point. **At the completion of their PhD, ICAT Fellows should normally have 2 to 3 years of specialist training (with the exception of ICGP trainees) remaining before becoming CCST/CCT eligible.**

To calculate the clinical training period that will be required between the three PhD years and eligibility for CCT (NI)/CCST (RI), the applicant should take into account that the first year of ICAT clinical/academic training will be fully accredited. Normally up to one year of accreditation may be prospectively obtained from the training body for the 3-year PhD for trainees based in the RoI. For trainees based in NI (as part of the UK) typically a shorter period of training can be prospectively recognised as counting to CCT.

Further details on potential points of entry for a given postgraduate specialty are available from info@icatprogramme.org

Language skills:

All applicants must have demonstrable skills in written and spoken English, adequate to enable effective communication about medical topics with patients and colleagues; this could be demonstrated by one of the following:

- a) that applicants have undertaken undergraduate medical training in English; or
- b) that applicants fulfil the criteria for 'effective communication skills' as set out by the relevant regulatory authority: GMC (NI) / IMC (RoI)– for details see <https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/Registration-Applications/First-Time-Applicants/English-Language.html>.

Health:

Meets professional health requirements (in line with GMC standards (NI)/Good Medical Practice or appropriate regulatory requirements).

Career experience:

Ability to provide complete details of employment history.

Responsibility of the applicant:

An ICAT Fellow:

- Must commit to a minimum of five years full-time (or less than full-time equivalent with prior approval), structured training.
- Must fully commit to joint clinical and academic mentoring throughout the ICAT Programme until award of CCST (RoI)/CCT (NI).
- Must fully commit to the ICAT academic programme, including attendance at annual ICAT retreats and peer-mentoring of junior ICAT Fellows.
- Will be expected to be collegiate and supportive of peers and future potential applicants.

Application process:

Applications are invited from postgraduate trainees associated with the following Training Bodies (RoI):

College of Anaesthetists
Advisory Committee in Emergency Medicine, RCSI & RCPI
Faculty of Occupational Medicine, RCPI
Faculty of Paediatrics, RCPI
Faculty of Pathology, RCPI
Faculty of Public Health Medicine, RCPI
Faculty of Radiologists, RCSI

Faculty of Sports & Exercise Medicine, CRSI & RCPI
Institute of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, RCPI
Irish College of General Practitioners
Irish College of Ophthalmologists
Irish Committee of Higher Medical Training, RCPI
Irish Committee of Higher Surgical Training, RCSI
Irish Psychiatric Training Committee
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
United Kingdom postgraduate deaneries e.g. Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NI)

Applicants will apply for the ICAT Programme by submitting a completed application prior to the deadline. Once eligibility criteria have been reviewed and confirmed, the selection committee will compile a shortlist and shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview.

Those applicants successful at interview will be informed and offered a place on the ICAT Programme after confirmation of their status on a relevant training programme scheme from the relevant training body. Where necessary, the ICAT Programme may allocate reserve places to candidates who were deemed appointable in the interview but who were not offered a place. These candidates may be offered a full place on the ICAT Programme should a vacancy arise or additional places become available. Indicative timelines are set out below:

1. Call for applications - September
2. Application deadline - end of October
3. Completion of eligibility checks - November
4. Shortlisting - December
5. Interview - January
6. Notification of final outcome - February
7. Commence ICAT Programme - July

The ICAT application process and deadlines are aligned with deadlines for applications to standard SpR (RoI)/StR (NI) Training Programmes so that applicants that are not recommended for the ICAT Programme may still participate in the standard SpR (RoI)/StR (NI) application/interview process.

The application will comprise completion of an application form including a copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae and two referee's reports. Application forms and referee report forms may be downloaded from the ICAT website (www.ICATprogramme.org.)

Applicants to the ICAT Programme **are not expected to have a defined research project prior to application or during the application process**, but are expected to have researched potential supervisors and institutions that align with their areas of interest. Applicants will be required to complete a section in the application form where they will select five potential supervisors for a PhD project. A list of approved ICAT supervisors along with details of their research backgrounds and potential PhD projects are available on the ICAT website (see www.ICATprogramme.org). Candidates can only choose supervisors from the available pool and are encouraged to contact prospective supervisors directly to discuss potential interest in research areas or projects. **Expressing interest in a supervisor / project at the stage of application does not commit the applicant to registering with a specific supervisor should they be accepted onto the ICAT Programme but this information may be used in the interview** and to help design the candidate's first programme year to ensure appropriate placement opportunities are provided. The final selection of supervisors and approval of PhD projects will take place during year 1 of the programme.

Whether existing or new applicants to a Higher Specialist Training Programme, applicants to the ICAT Programme should notify their relevant Training Body that they intend to apply to the ICAT Programme. Details of the relevant person to contact may be available on the relevant Training Body website or through contacting the relevant Training Body.

PLEASE NOTE. An application to the ICAT Programme does not include application to the relevant Higher Specialist Training programme or 'run through' Specialist Training programme. Any applicant who is **NOT CURRENTLY REGISTERED** on a Higher Specialist Training Programme or 'run through' Specialist Training Programme **MUST MAKE A SEPARATE APPLICATION** to that programme.

The deadline for applications will be advertised on the website: www.icatprogramme.org
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Selection Criteria:

Shortlisting:

Candidates will be selected on eligibility (see above) and merit, irrespective of gender, age, full/part time or country of origin.

Candidates will have completed and signed an eligibility checklist as part of their application (see eligibility criteria above) and may be required to provide documentary evidence to support their eligibility. Once eligibility criteria have been verified, completed applications will be shortlisted by the ICAT Programme Committee and shortlisted candidates invited to attend for interview.

Molecular Medicine Ireland (MMI) will coordinate the collation of all applications (as well as additional requested documentation to support eligibility) and eligible applications will be forwarded for review by the ICAT Selection Committee. This committee is formed from members of the ICAT Executive team, Steering Committee, Independent Advisory Board and other experts as required. Using pre-defined, transparent scoring criteria, a minimum of two members of the ICAT Selection Committee will score each application and sponsor the application for discussion at a Selection Committee meeting where the committee will agree on a shortlist of outstanding applicants who will be invited to interview.

All unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback on their applications.

Selection criteria will include:

1. Academic endeavour, evidenced by undergraduate achievements and awards and / or research electives, including peer-reviewed publications and / or conference presentations.
2. Demonstrated suitability to undertake postgraduate PhD research: intellectual capability, problem-solving skills, creativity, motivation and pursuit of excellence.
3. A personal statement outlining a clear vision for career progression within their specialty both during and after completion of the ICAT Programme, including a clear strategy to translate research to a clinical setting and an understanding of the requirements for progression to a senior academic clinical appointment.
4. Demonstrated understanding of the basic principles of audit, quality improvement, clinical risk management and evidence-based practice. Understanding of basic research principles, methodology & ethics, with potential to contribute to research commensurate with level of appointment.
5. Alignment of the candidate's interests with the postgraduate specialty and the participating academic institutions' areas of research excellence
6. Applicants are not expected to have a defined research project prior to application or during the application process, but are expected to have researched potential supervisors and institutions that align with their areas of interest. The final selection of supervisors and approval of PhD projects will take place during year 1 of the programme.
7. Evidence of contributing to both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching & learning.

Desirable Evidence (for application form)

- Evidence of relevant academic & research achievements, e.g. degrees, prizes, awards, distinctions, publications, presentations, other achievements.
- Evidence of active participation in audit or quality improvement projects and presentation of results.
- Evidence of participation in clinical / laboratory research (e.g. through student placements / electives).



- Undergraduate research experience (intercalated BSc or MSc, research electives) in a relevant subject area.
- Research training and experience as part of a primary degree (for those with postgraduate entry into medicine).
- Certificate in Education.
- Formal training e.g. Masters, Diploma, Certificate (especially in Good Clinical Practice), CPD course in research.

Interview:

Invited candidates will be required to attend for interview in person. The interview panel will comprise selected members of the ICAT Executive Team, the ICAT Steering Committee and the ICAT Independent Advisory Board.

Interviews will be 25-30 minutes in duration, including an 8-minute presentation by the candidate describing their background, research interests, their interest in ICAT and their career goals. The presentation will be followed by 20-25 minutes of questions from the panel.

Interviews will explore a candidate's merits, academic background, knowledge of the programme, research interests aligned with the supervisor pool and how the ICAT Programme will contribute to the candidate's overall career plans for a career in academic medicine. Candidates are expected to discuss their research interests but **are not expected to have a defined PhD project or to have chosen a PhD supervisor.**

The ICAT interview panel will make recommendations for appointment to the ICAT Programme. These recommendations will be discussed by the ICAT Executive Team, who will approve a list of candidates for inclusion onto the ICAT Programme. Candidates will be notified of the outcome of the interview process after the meeting of the ICAT Executive Team. All candidates will receive feedback on their interviews.

Post-interview training body:

Candidates successful at interview will be offered a place on the ICAT Programme contingent on verification by ICAT of their involvement in a relevant specialist training scheme. ICAT will discuss each successful candidate's status on an individual basis with the relevant training body and a full place will only be offered once all necessary requirements are met as outlined above (see 'Points of Entry onto the ICAT Programme').

PLEASE NOTE. We advise all potential applicants to notify their specialist training scheme that they are applying for the ICAT Programme. Being unsuccessful in an ICAT application at any stage does not prevent a candidate from applying for or continuing in Higher Specialist Training.



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