

British Heart Foundation Multidisciplinary PhD Programme

CHAIN (Connecting Hearts And mINDs) Consortium:

The University of Manchester, The University of Bristol and The University of
Liverpool

FAQs

Eligibility

Can international students apply?

You must be eligible for Home Tuition Fee status to be considered for this programme in the academic year 2026-27. If there are any changes to the standard eligibility criteria for future intakes, these will be published on our webpages.

What is meant by Home Fee students?

UK universities charge different rates depending on whether students are classed as Home or Overseas. The classification is largely determined by Immigration status and residence history. If you are unsure of your fee status, you should refer to the information published by the university you wish to apply for:

- [Tuition fee status | The University of Manchester](#)
- [Definition of a home student Definition of a home student- Student Administration - University of Liverpool](#)
- [Fee status | Study at Bristol | University of Bristol](#)

What qualifications are required for this programme?

Postgraduate researchers will be selected in open competition on merit, with a minimum requirement of a good upper-second class BSc. If your choice of host institution has any additional requirements for a place on an academic programme, you must meet these too.

Can I apply again if I am not successful this year?

Yes, you are welcome to apply for this programme again in future if you meet the standard eligibility criteria published on our webpages.

Do I need to provide evidence of English Language proficiency if my previous qualifications were conducted in English?

Please refer to the English language requirements published by the university you wish to apply to. Please note, for the academic year 2026-27, applicants who are not eligible for Home Tuition Fee status will not be considered for a place on this programme.

- [English language requirements | International | The University of Manchester](#)
- [English language requirements | International students | University of Liverpool](#)
- [English language requirements | Study at Bristol | University of Bristol](#)

Are applications open for candidates of different academic backgrounds?

We are interested in receiving applications from a variety of different scientific, academic backgrounds, even if the connections are not completely obvious. One of the main aims of the programme is fostering cross-disciplinary research to deepen our understanding, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease, so this is absolutely encouraged. Please note, there is a minimum requirement of a good upper-second class BSc for this programme.

Programme and Programme Structure

How many studentships are available?

There are ten studentships available across the consortium per year. Four of these will be hosted at The University of Manchester, another four will be hosted at The University of Bristol, and two will be hosted at The University of Liverpool.

Will this programme run in future years?

We anticipate four intakes in total for this Multidisciplinary PhD Programme. Ten studentships will start every October between 2026-2030.

Can you tell us more about the first year of the programme?

Core training will take place over the first nine months of programme, including in person seminars, workshops, student led activities, and online learning modules. Successful applicants will undertake three mini-project rotations across the consortium and across disciplines. They will join a lab or research group and undertake 12-week research project to gain knowledge, skills, join lab activities and capitalise on research networks. PGRs will write a short report at the end of each mini-

project and present this to their peers. After the rotations, PGRs will choose a main supervisor from their host institution aligned to research interest. The PhD will be co-designed between the PGRs and their primary supervisor, and a supervisory team will be built, including one co-supervisor from another university in the consortium.

How will mini-project rotations be selected?

Each institution will offer mini-projects from a large pool of supervisors (~30-40 per institution) and PGRs will choose three projects in total.

Does the programme offer accommodations in place for students with mobility or health limitations, such as flexible attendance or virtual lab meetings?

Flexibility in the first-year structure and PhD project components of the programme may be possible for PGRs who have registered with their host university's disability advice and support services. Working in collaboration with the partner universities' disability services teams, reasonable, practical adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Successful applicants are encouraged to register with their host institution's disability services at their earliest convenience.

What equipment and software would I need for this programme?

This would depend on the nature of the project co-designed between PGRs and their supervisory teams. Each studentship will include a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), which will be managed by the PGR's primary supervisor, to cover the cost of the project, including research consumables and PGR training.

Are there opportunities for internships or industry placements?

Placements might be offered to postgraduate researchers on this programme. More information on these opportunities will follow in due course. It is not guaranteed that this will be available to every PGR.

How much time would I dedicate to this programme?

This is a four-year programme of study with a notional 35 hour week working pattern, which includes time spent on the research project and time for personal and professional development. Actual hours and research patterns may vary for various reasons, but it is recommended that they do not exceed 1800 hours annually.

Does the PhD cover the cost of air travel and visas?

International applicants are not eligible for this PhD programme at present. If this changes in the future, a new eligibility criteria will be published on our webpages. If, in the future, international candidates can apply for a place on this programme, visa costs, health surcharge and flights to the UK will not be covered by the studentship.

Applications

What should prospective applicants consider when choosing a host university?

All three universities in this consortium are excellent research organisations with a broad range of disciplines covered, but prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to consider each university's areas of research strength before making a decision. There are also non-academic factors to think about, including living environment, as postgraduate researchers will be spending at least one rotation and the duration of the PhD project in the city of their host institution.

What do I need to submit as part of my application?

Eligible applicants should submit an application for a place on an academic programme at their choice of host university, i.e. The University of Manchester, The University of Bristol or The University of Liverpool. This will include referee details, degree certificates and final/interim transcripts, and official English language certificates (if applicable). In addition, an anonymised CV form must be completed and submitted by the application deadline. Shortlisting for interview will be based on anonymised CV responses. An application and an anonymised CV must be submitted by the deadline (13 April 2026) to be considered for this programme.

Can I apply for more than one host University?

You can only apply to one of the host universities, i.e. The University of Manchester, The University of Bristol or The University of Liverpool. If you apply to multiple host universities, you will be contacted and asked to choose one institution before your anonymised CV response is shared with the Programme Management Board for shortlisting.

Do I need to identify a Primary Supervisor in advance?

Applicants are not expected to identify or contact prospective supervisors at application stage. During the first year of the programme, postgraduate researchers will

match with a prospective supervisory team at their host university (including on co-supervisor from another university in the consortium).

Will there be an interview?

The Programme Management Board will shortlist candidates based on merit. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an individual, online interview.

What can applicants expect from the interview stage?

Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by a panel consisting of members of the Programme Management Board. Applicants will be scored based on their responses to a series of questions and any tasks which they may be asked to complete during or prior to the interview. The University of Manchester's Careers Service has published some top tips on preparing for interviews for postgraduate study: [Interviews for postgraduate study \(The University of Manchester\)](#).