

## NIHR INSIGHT Programme North West: Chairs Report

Applications to Round 1 of the INSIGHT Programme: Academic year 2024/2025

### Introduction

The NIHR INSIGHT Programme North West (NIP-NW) is a collaboration of four of the region's research intensive higher education institutions (HEIs), and over thirty health and social care partner organisations. Led by the University of Central Lancashire, the programme supports the training of newly qualified and early career health and social care professionals (excluding doctors and dentists) with aspirations of undertaking a clinical academic career. This is achieved through innovative engagement activities and fully funded research masters training, including funding for fees and stipend.

### INSIGHT Programme North West Round 1 (2024)

The programme was officially launched on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and the call for applications closed on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Sixty-five applications were screened, with 21 (32%) rejected as ineligible. Interviews were held online with forty-four applicants, and the recruitment target of thirty awarded studentships was met.

### Observations and advice for prospective applicants

The NIP-NW recruitment panel consisted of the Programme Lead, Programme Manager, HEI Leads, and Course Leads. The panel agreed that Round 1 was competitive, and the number and quality of applications was deemed a positive reflection of the increasing support and awareness of clinical academic careers for health and social care professionals.

The panel have provided their observations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of applications received in Round 1, highlighting specific areas where future applicants may strengthen their applications. These are summarised below:

#### Eligibility

The number and reason(s) for rejection on grounds of eligibility are detailed below. The panel recommends applicants ensure they meet the eligibility criteria for both the INSIGHT programme and the research Master's course for which they wish to apply prior to submission. This information can be found on the NIP-NW [website](#).

- 13 (62%) More than five years experience
- 5 (24%) Not employed/working towards employment in a role regulated by one of the eligible Professional Bodies
- 2 (10%) Research master's course entry requirements not met
- 1 (5%) Late submission

#### Choice of HEI and Master's programme

Applicants were asked to provide a rationale for their choice of HEI and course. Those who provided their reasons for choosing the HEI, a detailed description of the course, and how these aligned with their personal aspirations were scored more favourably.

### **Motivation for application**

Applicants were asked to provide their reasons for which to pursue postgraduate research training at this time, and how this would impact their professional development if successful. Those who expressed a clear plan for the future, describing how research training could inform their future practice and career plans, were scored more favourably than those who demonstrated no vision regarding their personal career pathway.

### **Previous experience**

Applicants were asked to describe their previous experience, both in practice and in research, to demonstrate their suitability for postgraduate study. Those who described their previous experience of research, including specific knowledge and skills acquired, were scored more favourably.

### **Conclusion**

The above summary is provided as a guide for future applicants to the NIP-NW. If an applicant applied in Round 1 and is considering submitting an application in the future, they should ensure that the above observations are addressed in their re-application, where relevant and appropriate.

For more information regarding Round 2, opening in spring 2025, visit our [website](#).