Director of the Oxford Medical Research Council Doctoral Training Partnership

We are seeking to appoint a highly motivated individual to the role of Director of the Oxford-MRC Doctoral Training Partnership (MRC DTP) with effect from 1 September 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter. This is a new position, following a re-organisation of leadership responsibilities within the Medical Sciences Graduate School. The role of Director of the MRC DTP is tenable for three years in the first instance.

Overview of the role

The appointee will be a senior academic in the medical sciences, with appropriate experience and institutional standing, who will lead the delivery of the Oxford-MRC DTP. The Director will also lead the University’s preparation of future bids for MRC DTP funding (including any allocations of iCASE studentship funding, to be determined during 2017). The appointee will be an experienced supervisor of MRC-funded research students with a thorough understanding of the MRC’s expectations for postgraduate training and their priorities for skills provision. S/he will ideally have experience of MRC grant funding, coupled with knowledge of research policy, strategy and funding in the medical sciences. S/he will have highly effective negotiating skills and experience in the delivery of collaborative activity. S/he will also have experience of, and enthusiasm for, skills development.

The Director of the MRC DTP will be a member of a small Executive Group for the Graduate School. This group is led by and supports the Director of the Graduate School in matters relating to graduate studies in the Medical Sciences Division. The other members of the group are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Division’s Graduate School Committee (GSC) and the Director of Skills Training and Researcher Development.

The Graduate School Office, under the direction of the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School), David Hyland, and with the support of the Graduate School Officer, Tessa Finlayson-Gray who is secretary to the MRC DTP Steering Group, provides advice and support for the Director of the MRC DTP. No secretarial support or office space is provided for the Director and as such s/he will be expected to manage their own secretarial needs and to carry out their duties from their existing place of work.

How to apply

The role is available to internal applicants only. The Director of the MRC DTP is accountable to the Director of the Graduate School for the performance of his/her duties. A responsibility allowance is available in recognition of the additional duties attached to the Directorship. The terms of the appointment will be agreed between the Head of Division and the appointee, after discussion with the appointee’s Head of Department.

Queries about the role may be addressed either to jane.dale@medsci.ox.ac.uk (tel. 01865 289540), or to david.hyland@medsci.ox.ac.uk (tel. 01865 289546). All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence; they will not form part of the selection decision.

Expressions of interest (including a short CV and contact details of two referees), should be emailed to gillian.morris@medsci.ox.ac.uk not later than 12.00 noon on Monday 5 June 2017.
Responsibilities/duties

- chair the Oxford-MRC DTP Steering Group;
- advise the Division on MRC studentship funding policy and requirements;
- lead on applications to the MRC for renewal and expansion of the DTP
- lead on applications for allocations of iCASE studentship funding;
- have oversight and management of the Oxford MRC-DTP (potentially including any future iCASE allocations);
- liaise with the MRC, and with MRC DTPs at other institutions;
- lead on all aspects of the Oxford MRC-DTP programme, including cohort building, training events, induction events and annual symposia;
- keep DTP policy and activities under review, and lead on proposals for new developments;
- contribute to the strategic development of the Graduate School, supporting the Director of the Graduate School in the formulation of a strategy for 2017-2020 and beyond, particularly with regard to Oxford’s relationship with the MRC.

About the Oxford MRC DTP

The Oxford MRC Doctoral Training Partnership provides comprehensive support for graduate students undertaking medical research. This includes generous funding and access to outstanding training opportunities. All MRC-funded students and Clinical Training Fellows at Oxford University and its partners MRC Harwell and Diamond Light Source are members of the partnership. A key feature of the partnership is its flexibility. DTP-funded students can undertake one of several different types of PhD/DPhil course on offer in any area within the remit of the Medical Research Council. Approximately 25 new PhD/DPhil students are funded each year through the partnership, undertaking projects in a wide range of areas, with a particular focus on four areas: infection and immunology; neuroscience; cancer; and population health, genomics and genes.

The MRC is the single largest funder of doctoral training in the Medical Sciences Division. The current Oxford-MRC DTP provides in excess of £1.5m p.a. studentship funding which covers three cohorts of students (starting in 2016, 2017 and 2018). This is allocated by the Division as part of the Graduate School Studentship Competition, which awards over £7m p.a. in total by combining a variety of funding sources to ensure that the Division’s studentship funds are awarded to the best applicants. It is anticipated that the MRC will invite bids for future DTPs in early 2018, for cohorts starting in 2019; alternatively, Oxford may be invited to request to extend its DTP for a further period. Oxford also receives supplementary MRC DTP funding (ca. £300k p.a.) which is used to make awards to support skills and partnership training for MRC-funded students and early career researchers, administered through a separate, lighter-touch competition.

In addition, the MRC has very recently (March 2017) announced changes to its industrial CASE studentship scheme, and an application is currently in preparation from the Oxford-MRC DTP for an allocation of iCASE funds for student intakes in 2018 and 2019 (see https://www.mrc.ac.uk/news/browse/change-to-case-studentships-scheme/).