



# Equity in Doctoral Education through Partnership and Innovation

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Committed to tackling persistent inequalities in healthcare and education.

# About EDEPI

The UK is a world-leading provider of research programmes, yet the demographic of PhD researchers is far from a true reflection of our diverse population.



Individuals from racially minoritised groups continue to face significant difficulties in accessing doctoral-level degrees. As a result, crucial voices aren't heard: without equity in doctoral research, we lack the potential for innovation and for research that breaks the mould to facilitate real social change.

EDEPI – Equity in Doctoral Education through Partnership and Innovation – is devoted to changing this. Our aim is to resolve this equity problem and increase the access and participation of NHS staff from racially minoritised groups in doctoral education.

We are one of **13 projects** funded by Research England and the Office for Students, bringing together Nottingham Trent University, Sheffield Hallam University, and Liverpool John Moores University, alongside colleagues from participating NHS trusts.

## What is doctoral education?

Doctoral education covers a number of research-based higher degree programmes that earn the individual the title of Doctor, including courses such as the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) and DProf (practice-based Professional Doctorate). Not only are doctoral degrees the highest degree qualification achievable, they are also an opportunity for individuals to reach their potential as researchers and become an expert in their chosen fields.

A PhD consists of a focused period of study on a specialised subject, providing a novel contribution to knowledge and culminating in a written thesis. PhD candidates often share their research in academic publications, at conferences, via media outlets, or work with industry partners to disseminate findings.

# Why is it important?

Doctoral education enables in depth exploration of: an unanswered question, an understudied area, or a social issue. A doctoral research project must at its heart be unique and original, allowing doctoral researchers to be trailblazers, who invite change and challenge the status quo.

Doctoral education is more than just research: it's a chance to develop skills in academic writing, presenting, and instructing or teaching, as well as opportunities to develop your professional profile.

A PhD is a platform to highlight an area that's important to you, that allows you to channel your passion and knowledge with the potential to make a difference.

## Our Doctoral opportunities

Across the UK, talented individuals from racially minoritised backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in doctoral education. The EDEPI project aims to change this. We have partnered with the NHS to provide support, fee waivers and ring-fenced, protected time to enable talented individuals to explore the PhD opportunities available at Nottingham Trent University, Sheffield Hallam University and Liverpool John Moores University, alongside their current role. The opportunity is open to those in both clinical and non-clinical roles.

We offer a **pre-doctoral programme** which is comprises a series of workshops for NHS staff from racially minoritised groups. These workshops are designed to demystify doctoral research and help attendees to begin to develop their ideas for a possible PhD project, offering support with the application process itself.

Participants can then apply for a part-time PhD at one of the three universities involved. Successful candidates will receive a fee waiver provided by EDEPI, to work on their doctoral research.



# What does this mean for you?

If you are a UK resident from a racially minoritised group who works for one of our NHS partners, and is eligible for home student fees you might want to consider the EDEPI project.

Our EDEPI PhD programme facilitates NHS staff from racially minoritised groups to set a new research agenda relevant to their experiences: PhD study is not only a chance to undertake important research with the potential for real-world change but an opportunity for unique professional development that can broaden your possibilities for career advancement. Diversity in leadership is crucial for the future of the NHS, particularly in light of the need to implement the **NHS Long-Term Plan**, which promotes greater staff diversity at all levels and expresses the need for transformational change across health services.

By creating these specialised PhD opportunities, the EDEPI project hopes to begin dismantling processes, policies, and unconscious biases within both the research sector and the NHS that have harmed and hindered racially minoritised groups both as staff and patients. The purpose of the project is to bring marginalised voices and perspectives to the forefront, illuminating areas of knowledge where gaps have been identified with diverse perspectives. By embracing equality, we work to build a better future for everyone

## How is it funded?

The cost of higher degrees is one of the most significant barriers to doctoral education. This is why successful EDEPI candidates will receive a **fee waiver** for their PhD in addition to the **ring-fenced, protected paid time at work**. This means that you will have **no tuition fees to pay**.



# Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the funding and support offered via the EDEPI programme you must meet all the following criteria:

- From a **racially minoritised group**.

When we use the term 'racially minoritised', which is a term which can be used interchangeably with ethnic minority, we are referring to anyone who is considered a minority in the UK based on their race or ethnicity – and because of this, may be impacted by discrimination, disadvantage or marginalisation. Examples of racially minoritised groups in the UK include individuals from African, Caribbean, South Asian, Arab, Chinese descent.

- A **UK resident**, eligible for **home student fees**.
- A **graduate**, with an undergraduate degree at 2:1 or above, or equivalent if gained outside of the UK.
- **Working for one of our NHS partners:**

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust  
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust  
Health Education England  
NHS R&D North West  
Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust  
MerseyCare NHS Foundation Trust  
Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust  
Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust  
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

# How will it work?

- You will be based at one of the three partner universities: either Nottingham Trent University, Sheffield Hallam University, or Liverpool John Moores University.
- You will work towards a specific research project, supported by your supervisors (established researchers at the university who are experienced in the field of study) who offer support and guidance throughout your PhD.
- You will undertake your research part-time alongside your job within the NHS, with protected paid study time, away from your NHS role.
- Each PhD project is unique, but your studies might include: reading, writing, editing, undertaking fieldwork or archival visits, analysing data, collaborating with peers and colleagues, attending training and community events, supervisory meetings, research events and conferences.
- You will produce a thesis: an original piece of academic work that is the culmination of the project's motivation, findings, and outcomes.
- After submitting your thesis, the final stage will require you to sit your 'Viva Voce': a verbal exam, where a researcher from another institution with a recognised specialism in your research topic is invited to assess the academic rigour of your thesis and its merits.
- Once you have passed your Viva, you will be recognised as an expert in your field and officially granted the title of Doctor!



# Our workshops

The next set of pre-application workshops will be running in early 2025:

## **Workshop 1**

Building your team and research idea  
**February 6th 2025**

## **Workshop 2**

Preparing for application  
**March 27th 2025**

## How can I learn more?

To find out if PhD study is for you and to sign up for our pre-application workshops, please complete our e-learning module:





## Connect with EDEPI

**Website:** <http://www.ntu.ac.uk/edepi>

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