

Clinical Academic Pathways

Combining Research and Clinical Practice

Grainne Sheill PhD, MSc, BSc

Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist, Cancer Rehabilitation
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Trinity College Dublin

Winter Course in Clinical Research, December 2025

ST JAMES'S
HOSPITAL



Career Development

Academic Experience

BSc Physiotherapy, Trinity College Dublin (2011)

MSc, MSK Physiotherapy, UCD (2012)

Clinical Experience

Staff Grade Physiotherapist, St James's Hospital (2012-2018)

Career Development

Research Skills Developed

- Finding and using research in clinical practice
- Service developments: ability to ask a research question, collect data, interpret results
- Write an abstract and submit to conference
- Create a poster
- Ethics applications
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Career Development

Academic Experience

BSc Physiotherapy, Trinity College Dublin (2011)

MSc, MSK Physiotherapy, UCD (2012)

PhD, Trinity College Dublin (2014 - 2018)

Clinical Experience

Staff Grade Physiotherapist, St James's Hospital (2012)

Locum St Vincent's Private Hospital (2015-2018)

Career Development

Research Skills Developed

- Project management – multi-centre randomised controlled trial
- Research processes and procedures - Cancer Trials Ireland
- Different research settings and types
- Data analysis – postgraduate cert completed
- Preparing and submitting manuscripts – related to study and PhD question
- Grant Applications – bringing collaborators together

Career Development

Academic Experience

0.5 WTE Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Trinity College
Dublin

- HRB funded RCT PRE-HIIT Study
- Irish Cancer Society Funded AHP Stimulus Award
2019 – *Cancer Survivorship Feasibility Study*
- Irish Cancer Society Allied Health Professional
Research Leadership Award – 18 months research
funding in head and neck cancer

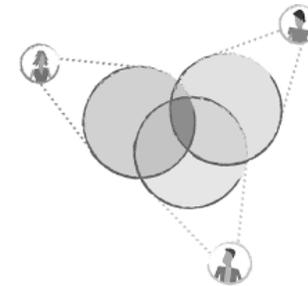
Clinical Experience

0.5 WTE Senior Physiotherapist in Cardio-thoracics, St James's
Hospital

- Established the St James's Hospital Surgical Oncology
Prehabilitation Service (2018)
- Established the St James's Hospital **Cancer Rehabilitation**
Service (2021)
- Permanent NCCP Funding 2022

Towards an Evidence-Based and Stakeholder Informed Model of Rehabilitation for People with Haematological Cancer

HRB Emerging Clinician Scientist Award



Study Team

Collaborators

1. Trinity St James's Patient Representative Group
2. Haematology Clinical Lead
Dr Nina Orfali
3. Haematology Nursing ANP
Carmel Ann Galligan
4. Psycho-Oncology
Dr Sonya Collier
5. National Cancer Control Programme
Louise Mullen



Lead Applicant
Dr Grainne Sheill

Mentor

Dr Rose Galvin

Host Institution Mentor

Dr Emer Guinan

Co-Applicant

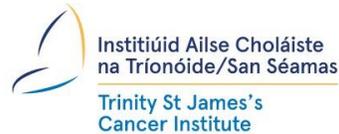
Prof Kristin Campbell
Professor of Physiotherapy



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Co-Applicant

Prof Cathal Walsh
Biostatistician



Co-Applicant

Prof Paul Browne
Professor and Consultant
Haematologist

Co-Applicant

Ms Elsa Moran
Patient Representative

Co-Applicant

Dr Elaine Toomey
Implementation Scientist

Collaborators

6. National Cancer Charity
Dr Claire Kilty
7. Professor and Consultant in Haematology
Prof Ruth Clifford
8. Expert in Qualitative Research
Prof Katie Robinson
9. International Exercise Oncology Expertise
Dr Orla McCourt
10. Health Economics
Dr James O Mahony

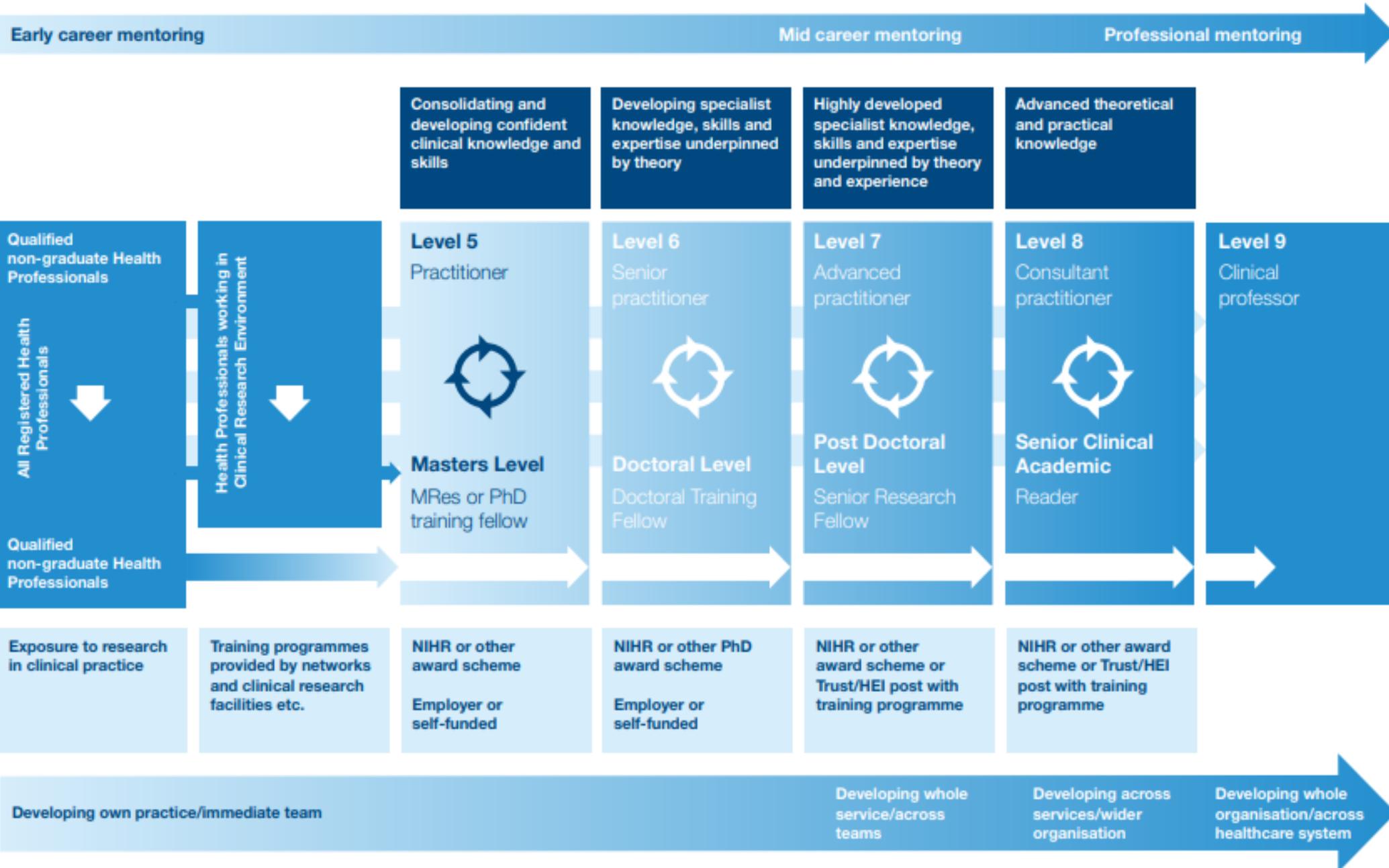


Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Submit proposal for patient representative group meeting • Correct Article Proofs 	Clinical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-service • Staff grade training • Outpatients • Psycho-oncology talk • Lunchtime Class 	Clinical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haem/Oncology Ops Meeting • Outpatients 	Clinical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage List • Outpatients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Europe Cancer Physiotherapy Group Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient Presentation for Study • Create Survey for head and neck study – send for trial 	Clinical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient recruitment at clinic and follow up • Data Entry 	Clinical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient representative group meeting

Career Development

Challenges

- Separate employers/job descriptions/role profiles
- Support needed from management at all levels – need for good understanding of dual roles
- Difficulties with time/schedule management – volume and timing
- $0.5+0.5$ WTE \neq 1 FTE
- No long term security



Organisational Benefits of Research Clinical Academic Roles



Engaging in Research

- Join national or international networks or create local ones
- Reach out to an experienced academic/researcher
- Find a topic/project that you are really interested in
- Look for funding to support postgraduate research e.g Health Research Board, Irish Research Council, Professional Groups/Patient Organisations
- New initiatives eg. professional doctorate

Thank you

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Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

References

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- Newington, L., Alexander, C.M. and Wells, M., 2022. What is a clinical academic? Qualitative interviews with healthcare managers, research-active nurses and other research-active healthcare professionals outside medicine. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 31(3-4), pp.378-389.
- Trusson, D., Rowley, E. and Bramley, L., 2019. A mixed-methods study of challenges and benefits of clinical academic careers for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. *BMJ open*, 9(10), p.e030595.
- Cowley, A., Diver, C., Edgley, A. *et al.* Capitalising on the transformational opportunities of early clinical academic career training for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. *BMC Med Educ* **20**, 418 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-020-02348-2>
- [Developing the Role of the Clinical Academic Researcher in the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91222/developing-the-role-of-the-clinical-academic-researcher-in-the-nursing-midwifery-and-allied-health-professions.pdf)
- Olive, P., Maxton, F., Bell, C.A., Bench, S., Tinkler, L., Jones, S. and Kenkre, J., 2022. Clinical academic research internships: What works for nurses and the wider nursing, midwifery and allied health professional workforce. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 31(3-4), pp.318-328.