



Candidate Information

Position:	Lead Clinical Trials Specialist (Optometrist)
School/Department:	School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences
Reference:	24/111938
Closing Date:	Monday 10 June 2024
Salary:	Salary will be commensurate with Agenda for Change Grade 8A.
Anticipated Interview Date:	Thursday 27 June 2024
Duration:	Permanent

JOB PURPOSE:

To lead and manage the Ophthalmology/Vision Science team within the NI Clinical Research Facility (NICRF), providing high level research skills across multiple research projects/trials (herein termed trials) especially those related to visual function and ocular imaging/phenotyping of patients enrolled in trials.

As part of the leadership team of NICRF, contribute to the development and implementation of strategies and plans to grow and deliver excellence in clinical trials and support the transition (including the operational relocation) of NICRF to iReach Health by 2026/7.

Information about NICRF/iReach Health

NICRF represents a key hub which will catalyse the growth in clinical trials in key areas, including Ophthalmology/Vision Science, setting new benchmarks for when iREACH Health is set to open in 2026.

iREACH Health provides the platform to create a patient-centred, pro-innovation and digitally enabled clinical research environment. It is an exciting new project for healthcare in Northern Ireland, the outcome of creative collaboration between academia, industry, the NHS, and public sector/government stakeholders to drive UK science and innovation and is focused on modernising our research infrastructure.

Due to be operational in 2026/7, iREACH Health will drive continuous improvement in patient care and outcomes through innovation by integrating the activities of clinicians, life scientists and data scientists with industry partners to identify and develop new diagnostic tests, treatments, and health related technologies.

The post will initially be based in NICRF but will be relocated to NICRF within iREACH Health Building at Belfast City Hospital site.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Support strategic development and leadership of NICRF alongside other clinical and academic leaders to ensure expansion and the successful delivery of clinical vision science research within NI Ecosystem (iREACH Health).
2. Lead on the development and delivery of a strategy to support clinical trial growth in ophthalmology/vision Science clinical trials at the NICRF.
3. Engage with key external and internal stakeholders to encourage professional engagement with clinical research and develop the clinical trial portfolio relating to ophthalmology/vision research in the NICRF and iREACH Health. (Stakeholders include those from HSC, Industry and Charity; Principal Investigators across a range of research professions and specialities and other staff as appropriate).
4. Inform and contribute to strategic decision making both locally, regionally, and nationally on clinical trial growth within ophthalmology/vision science. Provide leadership, as part of NICRF management team, across the clinical ecosystem to attract and deliver trials within NICRF/iREACH Health.

5. Lead and supervise NICRF multi-disciplinary clinical ophthalmology/vision science research staff to ensure the delivery of high quality participant care and deliver multiple trials in the agreed NICRF research programme on time and within budget. Where capacity is limited, the postholder may need to be operational and deliver comprehensive clinical care to patients recruited to NICRF adopted clinical research.
6. Lead and support teams to devise, develop and adhere to relevant clinical protocols and best practice, and to provide planning, project co-ordination, participant screening, recruitment, and follow-up as necessary in accordance with study protocols. Lead the design, development, and refinement of new ophthalmology/vision science research protocols, e.g. practicalities of design, ethical issues, feasibility, and patient selection.
7. Work as an effective leader as part of the senior management team, to build the capacity, capability and strong research culture of the NICRF. Carry out effective recruitment and induction of new staff and manage and support the development and professional support of own team members.
8. Lead the preparation of high quality and timely plans, reports, policies, operating procedures, and other documents as required to support management decisions and meet governance requirements. Lead in the coordination and management of any relevant audits.
9. Undertake delegated teaching and training of ophthalmology/vision science, medical, nursing, and clinical science staff and support placements as requested. Train appropriate staff within the NICRF in visual assessment techniques, to include induction of new NICRF users and ensure compliance of relevant mandatory training in line with policies.
10. Build own professional practice and esteem, and develop clinical research portfolio at regional, national and international levels. This may include conference presentation and participation, publication of research, development of research proposals and being invited as expert contributor or NICRF representative to relevant prestigious fora. Participate in continuing education and training as required by the relevant professional body.
11. Deputise for more senior managers and represent NICRF as required. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade and development of the role.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. BSc (Hons) Optometry.
2. Current relevant professional registration.
3. Minimum 6 years post qualifying experience.
4. 3 years' experience in the delivery of clinical vision science research.
5. 3 years' relevant staff management experience and/or project management that includes people management.
6. Experience teaching and/or training clinical professionals.
7. Sufficient breadth and depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques to work within established research programmes.
8. Demonstrable understanding of how to assess, evaluate and manage patients presenting to clinical research studies.
9. Knowledge of Good Clinical Practice and research governance with the ability to disseminate the knowledge and information.
10. A demonstrable understanding of how to lead in attract, plan, coordinate and deliver clinical research services.
11. Demonstrable ability to plan, manage and deliver complex/multiple projects.
12. Excellent written and oral communication skills, including preparation and delivery of reports and presentations.
13. Ability to build contacts and participate in internal and external networks.
14. Ability to provide effective leadership, motivate a team and work well in a team setting.
15. Highly motivated with the ability to influence and inspire others.
16. Demonstrable intellectual ability.
17. Ability to assess and organise resources.
18. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Records check.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

1. Masters, PhD, or equivalent qualification in relevant subject.
2. Having, or in process of obtaining, an Independent Prescribing Qualification.
3. Experience of preparing, presenting, and publishing clinically relevant material.
4. Experience developing and delivering strategic plans.
5. Experience working as part of a multidisciplinary management team.
6. Experience managing resources and budgets.
7. Knowledge and experience of a wide range of clinical trial procedures.