Applications are invited for the post of **NIHR Research Methods Fellow in Medical Statistics** starting **1st October 2012** in the **Department of Health Sciences** at the **University of Leicester**.

Based within the **Biostatistics Group** in the Department of Health Sciences at the University of Leicester (and in collaboration with colleagues in the section of Health Economics and Decision Science [HEDS], School of Health and Related Research [ScHARR], University of Sheffield) the fellowship will provide an excellent opportunity for the successful candidate to receive high quality structured training in medical statistics (and health-related research and research methods generally) within a supportive and dynamic research and teaching environment. Specifically the fellowship will provide:

- **2 year salaried position** based at the University of Leicester
- Funding to undertake an **MSc in Medical Statistics** at the University of Leicester
- Undertake a **research project** on the evaluation of methods for dealing with ‘treatment switching’ in clinical trials (mainly in cancer and cardiovascular disease)
- Experience **multi-disciplinary health-related research** through their research project (Clinical Epidemiology, Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Biostatistics & Health Economics)
- Undertake **generic training** in health-related research and research methods
- Opportunity to develop a **PhD proposal**, and submit it for an NIHR Doctoral Training Fellowship
- Experience of **supervising a 2-month NIHR Research Methods Internship**

**Further Information**

Applicants should have a good honours degree (2:1 or higher) with a substantial mathematics or statistics content, as well as good IT skills, and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively both in writing and orally.

Informal enquiries are welcome and should be made to Professor Keith Abrams, e-mail keith.abrams@le.ac.uk, Tel 0116 229 7266.

To apply on-line, please visit our website: [http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/personnel](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/personnel) and search for post Ref MBP00627.

The closing date for this post is Midnight on Monday 9th July 2012, and interviews are likely to be on Tuesday 17th July 2012.

**Background**

**Environment**

The Biostatistics Group has 8 academic staff, 4 training fellows/RAs, 7 PhD students and 24 MSc students, and has a strong record of obtaining grant income and publishing. It provides a stimulating and supportive environment for the training and development of future biostatisticians. Previous training fellows and PhD students in Biostatistics have gone on to established academic posts in other universities within the UK. There is a lively seminar series and journal club which all Fellows and PhD students participate in, as well as being encouraged to attend and present their work at national and international conferences, for which resources are made available. Further details can be found at;

[http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/health-sciences/research/biostats](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/health-sciences/research/biostats)

**Training, Professional  & Personal Development**

The Fellow will undertake the MSc in Medical Statistics at the University of Leicester on a full-time basis during the first year of the fellowship. This is a long standing and highly respected Masters Programme – the only one based exclusively within a Medical School, and provides a thorough grounding in both the principles and practical aspects of bio-medical statistics. The taught component of the course lasts from October to June during which time students attend 10 core modules and 2 optional modules, together with undertaking two mini-projects centred on real clinical problems. Following the taught component of the
course students complete a 3 month project on which they write a dissertation. The MSc typically has 15+ full-time and 5 part-time students in each cohort so classes are relatively small and interactive. Further details can be found at; http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/health-sciences/PG/pgt/msc-

When the Fellow finishes the MSc, they will be able to access a large range of generic courses and training opportunities via the Staff Development Unit at the University of Leicester.

Research Project

The fellow will undertake a research project on the evaluation and development of statistical methods for analysing clinical trials (mainly in cancer and cardiovascular disease) when patients ‘switch’ from the treatment that were originally assigned to. Treatment switching is a particular challenge to the National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) when trying to make decisions as to whether pharmaceuticals should be used within the National Health Service (NHS) from both a clinical and cost-effectiveness perspective [Tappenden et al, European Journal of Cancer. 2006 ;42(17):2867-2875]. More specifically the project will involve reviewing methods that have been proposed and used in practice in submissions to NICE. In particular, the potential use of Bayesian and predictive methods (using external data sources) will be explored. The evaluation of the methods will involve applying them to both case studies and within a simulation study.

The fellow will be supervised by Professor Keith Abrams and Dr Paul Lambert (Reader in Medical Statistics) at the University of Leicester, who both have extensive experience of supervising PhD students and research associates in this and related research areas, and will collaborate with Dr Allan Wailoo and Nick Latimer (both in the section of Health Economics and Decision Science [HEDS], School of Health and Related Research [ScHARR], University of Sheffield). Prof Abrams, Dr Lambert, Dr Wailoo and Nick Latimer have all collaborated previously on two previous projects (funded by NICE and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry [ABPI]) investigating non-Bayesian/non-predictive methods for dealing with treatment switching [Morden et al, BMC Medical Research Methodology. 2011;11(1):4], and have extensive links with both NICE and a number of major pharmaceutical companies which will enable access to potential case studies and associated data.

In addition to skills in statistical methodology, the Fellow will also increase their understanding in other aspects of applied medical research such as research ethics, data protection, research governance, writing for publication in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at scientific meetings.