

ESRC Innogen Centre

ESRC COLLABORATIVE (CASE) STUDENTSHIP 2008

Innovation and Regulation Interactions in the Development of Clinical Stem Cell Therapies

Further particulars

Applications are invited for a 1+3-year PhD studentship, funded by ESRC, the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service and the Scottish Stem Cell Network Ltd, and commencing on 1 October 2008. This project will investigate the range of viable public and private sector innovation trajectories, business models, and hybrid approaches to the development of embryonic stem cell therapies, taking into account related social, commercial and political drivers and barriers. The normal ESRC grant will apply, with an additional minimum supplement of £2000 p.a.

Applications should arrive by 7 June 2008.

Further details and application forms can be obtained from the ESRC Innogen Centre, University of Edinburgh www.genomicsnetwork.ac.uk/innogen. Informal inquiries can be directed to Dr James Mitra, email james.mitra@ed.ac.uk For details of how to apply, please contact Angela McEwan, email angela.mcewan@ed.ac.uk

Candidate requirements

Applicants should have an upper second or first class honours degree and must satisfy the ESRC academic and residential eligibility requirements outlined in the *ESRC Research Studentships Guidance Notes for Applicants 2008*, a copy of which can be found via the following web site:

http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/GUIDANCE%20NOTES%20FOR%20APPLICANTS%202008_tcm6-7186.pdf

An interdisciplinary background and additional research experience would be useful and candidates must be able to collaborate with both academic and non-academic partners. In selecting candidates we will consider not only the intellectual capacity of potential nominees to undertake doctoral training, but also their ability to work on a research project involving collaboration with both academic and non-academic partners.

For the 1+ year, the student will be registered on the MSc by Research in Science and Technology Studies. In addition to the required generic research training (which will include 3 courses that cover research design, qualitative and quantitative methods), this programme provides a menu of core and advanced specialist courses.

In addition to the formal research training and induction provided by the University of Edinburgh, the student will be provided with a specialist induction to the work of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service.

The project

This project will investigate the range of viable public and private sector innovation trajectories, business models, and hybrid approaches to the development of embryonic stem cell therapies, taking into account related social, commercial and political drivers and barriers. These issues are of fundamental interest to the disciplines of science and

technology studies, innovation studies and strategic management; and are also a major concern to the two partner organisations; the Scottish Stem Cell Network and the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service. The project will use an interdisciplinary methodology to meet the key objectives. The broad interdisciplinary literature will be rigorously reviewed, and the student will use in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis for the research.

Aims

- 1) Develop a research based analysis of potential innovation processes and models for translating basic stem cell science into viable therapies, including the public sector, the commercial sector and public-private partnerships.
- 2) Develop a research based analysis of regulatory developments related to stem cell therapies, such as the European Advanced Therapies Regulation, and explore connections with emerging innovative trajectories for stem cells
- 3) Apply improved understanding of these issues to make recommendations on how to improve translational models to facilitate therapeutic innovations that are safe, affordable and publicly acceptable.

The key research objectives are to:

- 1) Develop a detailed understanding of the governance of early stage stem cell research, recognising different ethical and moral positions, and relate new governance and regulatory agendas to the development of innovative therapies.
- 2) Interview key actors in the public and private sphere and uncover the factors that may encourage or constrain therapeutic advance.
- 3) Use original data to develop an integrated framework for analysing the interactions amongst scientific and clinical developments, which will be of interest to the academic community, policy-makers and the interests and concerns of the non-academic partner organisations (SNBTS and SSCN).
- 4) Disseminate the outcomes to both academic and non-academic users through peer reviewed publications, conference/workshop presentations and short policy reports.

Expected outputs

Key outputs will include analysis of the impact of the current European ethical, legal and regulatory environment on long-term investment in the development of stem cell therapies in the UK; recommendations on appropriate business models within the current environment, as well as more general policy advice to key stakeholders on balancing the need for private investment against broader public concerns. The student will be expected to disseminate findings through conventional peer reviewed publications, but will also be expected to engage with relevant user groups and produce reports/presentations for non-academic audiences. This research will provide important insights relevant to the interests of the two non-academic partners and the broader policy and innovation community. The non-academic partners expect that the project findings will help them develop a more informed and useful understanding of how best to translate innovative science around stem cells into viable therapeutic products, and the processes required to deliver such products to patients in safe, efficacious and cost-effective ways.

Supervisors

The supervisory team will consist of Dr James Mittra (University of Edinburgh); Prof David Wield (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Marc Turner (SNBTS).

About the ESRC Innogen Centre

Innogen is the ESRC Centre for Social and Economic Research on Innovation in Genomics. Formed in October 2002, it is part of the ESRC Genomics Network studying the evolution of genomics and life sciences and their far-reaching social and economic implications. Innogen is a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and The Open University,

and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The researchers working at Innogen include social scientists, economists, and lawyers. Innogen also engages with a wide range of stakeholders, nationally and internationally, including scientists, industry and private interest groups, policy makers and regulators, and citizens and public interest groups. The Centre is directed by Professor David Wield. For further information see www.genomicsnetwork.ac.uk/innogen

About the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service provides around 300,000 blood components (red cell, platelets and plasma) to patients in Scotland each year, along with tissues (bone, tendons and heart valves) and haematopoietic stem cells for transplantation. It manages hospital blood banks, antenatal and reference immunohaematology and histocompatibility and immunogenetics services in some of the largest hospitals in Scotland. It undertakes Research and Development in collaboration with the major Scottish Universities and has contributed to the development of the Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine and Roslin Cells. For further information see <http://www.scotblood.co.uk/>

Instructions for Completing an Application Form

We invite applicants to complete a University of Edinburgh, School of Social and Political Studies postgraduate application form, which can be downloaded from the following site:

http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/4803/SSPSResearchDegreeApplicationForm.pdf

Please note that section F on financial arrangements does not need to be completed at this stage, as this is a CASE Studentship. Please return this application form by post or email to:

Angela McEwan
Innogen Administrator and PA to Prof David Wield
ESRC Innogen Centre
Old Surgeon's Hall
High School Yards
EH1 1LZ
Tel: +44 (0)131 650 9113
Fax: +44 (0)131 651 4278
Email: angela.mcewan@ed.ac.uk

Please DO NOT return the application form to the Graduate School of Social and Political Studies, as instructed, as this CASE studentship is being processed by the Innogen Centre.

In addition to the application form, we would like candidates to include a short CV together with a two page synopsis of how they would interpret the requirements of the project and how they would plan to tackle it.

We expect to interview short listed applicants on Monday, 23rd June

Please contact Angela McEwan if you have any questions about the application procedure.