

Department of Public Health and Primary Care

Education and Training Strategy 2024-2027

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1. Purpose and background

This strategy sets out the Department-wide priorities for education and training for the period 2024-2027 to enable us collectively to maintain, and enhance where appropriate, the high-quality education and training activities that we lead, deliver and contribute to. It has been developed in collaboration with senior members and teaching leads within the Department following consultation with the wider Department and key individuals external to the Department within the School of Clinical Medicine, the School of Biological Sciences and NHS England East of England. It also takes into consideration relevant University publications, including the University mission and core values¹, the School of Clinical Medicine Academic Vision,² the University teaching and learning strategy 2015-2018, the University Teaching and Scholarship Academic Career pathway, and the Improving Doctoral Supervision report produced by the Cambridge Students Union in 2021, as well as the Advance HE Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 2023³ and the Academy of Medical Educators Professional Standards.⁴

The focus of this strategy is on students undertaking undergraduate or postgraduate courses, predoctoral and doctoral research students, and trainees within clinical speciality training programmes. Support for postdoctoral researchers will be considered separately. As the first Department of Public Health and Primary Care strategy for education and training, this strategy recognises the extensive educational expertise amongst members of the Department and builds on the successes of existing education and training programmes delivered across the Department. Some have been in place for over twenty years, with many developed and grown through the enthusiasm and dedication of individuals and small groups of individuals. Finding a balance between the benefits of individual autonomy and the benefits of a collective Department level vision has been a key consideration when developing this strategy. The need to balance our education and training activities

¹ <https://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/how-the-university-and-colleges-work/the-universitys-mission-and-core-values>
² <https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/about/academic-vision-2021/>
³ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/psf>
⁴ <https://www.medicaleducators.org/Professional-Standards>

with those of other departmental activities – such as research, impact, public engagement, management and leadership – must also be considered (Box 1).

The Department's Strategic Lead for Education and Training, in consultation with the Departmental Executive committee, Senior Management Team, teaching leads and wider members of the Department, will periodically oversee the development of action plans for implementation. These action plans will identify how the goals and objectives of the strategy will be delivered, set out timescales, and allocate responsibilities to individuals or groups of individuals.

Box 1. Departmental goals and objectives

The Department of Public Health and Primary Care (PHPC) at the University of Cambridge aims to create a scientifically excellent evidence base, support the prevention of premature death and disability, promote health and well-being throughout the lifespan, reduce health inequalities, and aid the formulation of evidence-based health and healthcare policy.

Our strategic priorities are to:

- (1) Create and make accessible to the wider scientific community cutting-edge methods, tools, and population resources with direct research application, including developing novel methods for analysing and interpreting complex health data.
- (2) Foster an environment that attracts talented young researchers and integrates training with high-quality research.
- (3) Promote aetiological discovery to lay the foundations for health promotion and new disease prevention and control efforts.
- (4) Develop and evaluate new approaches to predict disease, including methods for early detection.
- (5) Develop and evaluate new interventions to prevent disease both through primary and secondary prevention.
- (6) Produce evidence to promote health and well-being that has a direct impact on policy and practice.
- (7) Produce an evidence-base for improving quality and safety of care and the organisation and delivery of healthcare services.
- (8) Provide excellent education and training.
- (9) Promote a positive workplace that respects equality, diversity and inclusion.

This strategy, together with the associated action plans, will be reviewed annually, taking into account other Departmental and University strategies and reviews, including anticipated reports from the Postgraduate student mental health advisory group, the on-going University review of doctoral education and results of the annual University Education Monitoring and Review process. This strategy will also be reviewed and, as necessary, updated in light of future internal or external guidance relating to education or training. This includes, but is not limited to, changes to University curricula and forms of assessment, government policy, external regulation, policies and guidance, competition from other higher education providers and international influences.

2. Strategic Goals

The Departmental strategic goals for 2024-2027 in relation to education and training are to:

1. attract, inspire and support students from diverse backgrounds to become future researchers, academic healthcare professionals, and clinicians in the field of population health sciences and related disciplines;
2. maintain our role in the training and development of current and future generations of doctors and other healthcare professionals through our teaching within the undergraduate medical courses and within postgraduate education programmes;

3. promote a culture in which education and training is valued at all levels and by all members of the Department and in which members of the Department are encouraged and supported to contribute positively to education and training and are given opportunities to develop as educators;
4. enhance our systems and operational processes to support us to achieve the highest standards of delivery and ensure that our education and training activities are sustainable into the future;
5. operate as a model of excellence in teaching and training and by so doing positively impact on generations of clinicians and researchers, and influence education, teaching and training practice more widely.

2.1 Attract, inspire and support students

The Department already makes substantial contributions to building clinical and research capacity across disciplines within and related to population health sciences through its teaching and training activities. This includes:

- leading all undergraduate clinical specialty teaching for general practice, palliative care and public health;
- offering student-selected components within the medical course in primary care and public health research, general practice, palliative care, medical education research and the humanities;
- supporting around 50 doctoral students each year;
- providing training, in partnership with the MRC Epidemiology Unit and MRC Biostatistics Unit, to 70-80 students from across the UK and globally each year in epidemiology, health data science, global health, infectious diseases, primary care research, and public health through the MPhil in Population Health Sciences;
- providing academic training opportunities throughout all stages of the academic pathway for doctors (particularly GP, palliative care and public health trainees) and nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.

Over the next three years we will seek to build on these existing activities, with a particular focus on how we can attract and inspire students and trainees, including those from under-represented groups, into these clinical and academic areas and how we can best support students to achieve their academic potential.

To achieve this, we have identified a number of actions for each group of students/trainees.

For postgraduate students we will:

- a) Consolidate the recent expansion of the MPhil in Population Health Sciences, focusing on the quality of teaching provision, sustainability of the course and widening participation;
- b) Scope out opportunities for developing individual MPhil modules or other short courses as stand-alone courses in collaboration with the wider Population Health Sciences Partnership and/or the Institute for Continuing Education (ICE), and developing a suitable income-sharing model for ICE courses.

For doctoral students we will:

- c) Review our doctoral training provision, taking into consideration the on-going University review of doctoral education, the Cambridge Student Union Improving Doctoral Supervision report and the UK Council for Graduate Education Good Supervisory Practice Framework;
- d) Seek to increase the number of doctoral students within the Department commensurate with our capacity and whilst maintaining our high standards by adopting a more proactive approach to doctoral recruitment, particularly seeking to take greater advantage of funding opportunities and local PhD programmes and supporting our MPhil students with doctoral applications;
- e) Encourage the involvement of more junior members of the Department in doctoral student supervision as co-supervisors, advisors or additional supervisory team members as appropriate;
- f) Review the structures we have in place to provide support and signposting to support and services for doctoral and postdoctoral student well-being, taking guidance from the University Postgraduate Advisory Group and Strategic Review of Mental Health.

For undergraduate students we will:

- g) Increase visibility of the opportunity for departmental colleagues to offer Student Selected Component placements (SSCs) within the undergraduate medical course across the Department;
- h) Curate existing opportunities and scope additional opportunities to host undergraduate internships or short research placements, especially for under-represented groups and in subject areas of particular need, commensurate with available capacity;
- i) Update, or develop where such plans do not already exist, action plans for promoting general practice, palliative medicine and public health as clinical specialities amongst medical students.

For clinical academic trainees we will:

- j) Continue to champion pre-doctoral and doctoral training opportunities for nurses, midwives and allied health care professionals, seeking particularly to increase the number of trainees being awarded doctoral training fellowships;
- k) Expand our offering of medical Specialised Foundation Programme posts to include public health as well as general practice and appoint a Departmental lead for Public Health training to work with the Academic Speciality lead for public health to enhance the support offered within the Department for academic public health trainees;
- l) Review our support for academic general practice, particularly looking at how we can better support academic clinical fellows and local GPs and other primary care allied healthcare professionals to obtain doctoral and in-practice training fellowships and opportunities to raise the profile of academic general practice locally and regionally;
- m) Scope out the opportunity for Specialised Foundation Programme posts in academic palliative medicine.

Relevant to all groups of students/trainees, we will also:

- n) Update the Departmental webpages relating to education and training with a particular focus on increasing the visibility of opportunities and providing accessible guidance for potential students and trainees.

2.2 Maintain our role in the training and development of current and future generations of doctors and other healthcare professionals

In addition to our efforts described above to attract, inspire and support individuals to become future clinicians, academic healthcare professionals and scientists in the field of population health sciences and related disciplines, we also play an important role in the training and development of future doctors graduating from the University of Cambridge and doctors and other healthcare professionals both regionally and nationally.

Within the Undergraduate Medical Degree, members of the Department lead all components of the clinical strand within the first year, including courses covering the Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice, the Social and Ethical Context of Health and Illness and Preparing for Patients A, the first contact medical students have with patients within the course. We also deliver an optional course on Integrated Biomedical Problem Solving and a minor module in Applied Clinical Research within the Part II Biological and Biomedical Sciences course in year 3. Within the clinical component of the course, we lead all the teaching for three of the six integrated curricular themes that run throughout the three years (Professional responsibilities, Palliative care and Improving health) as well as all specialty teaching for General Practice and training on research methods. Together, this equates to approximately 20% of the clinical medical course and includes, for example, co-ordinating over 3,000 student placements within 183 GP surgeries across the Eastern region each year. We also run two optional extra-curricular groups to support and encourage research and teaching amongst medical students: the Medical Student Systematic Review Group and the Public Health Student Medical Educators Programme.

Maintaining this central role in teaching within the undergraduate course, sustaining its excellence, and ensuring that all our contributions are appropriately recognised and resourced by the Schools of Clinical Medicine and Biological Sciences is a critical strategic goal. This is particularly important at the current time given the on-going review of the Medical Science Tripos and the chosen emphasis within the School of Clinical Medicine Academic Vision on developing the new cross disciplinary “clinical-facing” theme encompassing elements of epidemiology and statistics, social context of health and disease, early clinical experience, medical ethics and law, and professional responsibilities courses, all of which are currently led by the Department.

Outside these University courses, members of the Department also contribute to postgraduate training for healthcare professionals from a range of disciplines. This includes delivering palliative care study days for GPs and GP trainees, leading sessions on climate change, medical education and diabetes care to GP trainees, foundation year trainees, teaching fellows and East of England Deprivation Fellows, and, alongside Cambridge Breathlessness Intervention Service colleagues, leading breathlessness management study days, some of which have been externally commissioned by national clinical programmes, and increasingly draw an international audience. Many of these postgraduate teaching activities have arisen through the interests, expertise and enthusiasm of individual members of the Department and are often not captured as teaching and training contributions across the wider Department. Curating, recognising these contributions and reviewing where and how we contribute are important aims.

To achieve our overall goal to maintain our central role in the training and development of current and future generations of doctors and other healthcare professionals through our teaching within the undergraduate medical course and within postgraduate medical education programmes, we will:

- a) Ensure on-going representation from the Department within the University review of the pre-clinical medical course, and contribute in particular to the proposed new cross-disciplinary “clinical-facing” theme;
- b) Provide forums for discussion and sharing best practice among members of the Department involved in clinical teaching;

- c) Curate the current postgraduate clinical teaching that we provide and explore potential funding streams and opportunities to host teaching sessions or courses or provide learning resources that can be supported through external funding

2.3 Promote a culture in which education and training is valued at all levels and colleagues are encouraged and supported to contribute to education and training and are given opportunities to develop as educators

Historically, across the University there has been a perceived lack of recognition for those involved in teaching and training. This was reflected in the University Staff Teaching and Learning Survey in 2022 where both those in teaching roles and those contributing to teaching in other roles reported a lack of recognition and incentivisation of teaching. The recent introduction of the new Teaching and Scholarship academic careers pathway may help in shifting this perception, but the Department view promoting a culture in which education and training is valued as a core strategic goal.

The Departmental education and training survey in June/July 2023 highlights low levels of awareness of many of the courses delivered within the Department. The most common reasons given by individuals for not contributing to teaching include not being aware of the options, not having been asked, and not feeling confident teaching or supervising students. Improving equality of opportunity by providing more information about the opportunities for contributing to teaching and supervision across the Department and access to training for both teaching and supervision are, therefore, key priorities.

To achieve these, we will:

- a) Ensure that high quality teaching and scholarship is recognised, publicised and celebrated within the staff induction and appraisal process and in Departmental communications and events;
- b) Reinforce the close inter-relationship between teaching, supervision, and research in Departmental communications and events;
- c) Create a teaching forum to bring together all those with an interest in teaching across the Department to exchange ideas, showcase innovations and achievements offer informal learning and to share opportunities to develop as educators and contribute to education and teaching within the Department;
- d) Develop resources to ensure that all those in the Department are aware of the education and training activities within the Department and of the opportunities available to them to contribute;
- e) Work with members of the Department to identify and develop additional ways of recognising and rewarding excellent and innovative teaching;
- f) Ensure members of the Department are aware of and have access to opportunities to develop as educators through informal workshops/training sessions and formal accredited courses and support those individuals whose roles are predominantly teaching focused to progress along the relevant teaching career pathway;
- g) Ensure that the expectation to contribute to education and training within the Department is included within job descriptions for all new academic and research posts, as appropriate for type of post.

2.4 Enhance our systems and processes to support us to achieve the highest standards of delivery and ensure that our education and training activities are sustainable

Having robust systems and processes in place to record and collectively review our education and training activities and to provide appropriate governance, support and guidance to individuals delivering those activities is essential to enable us to achieve the highest standards of delivery. Many

of our education and training activities, particularly at postgraduate level, rely on the goodwill of many members of the Department. Workload capacity, competing responsibilities, relatively poor remuneration and lack of time, particularly for those funded 100% on research grants, are challenges frequently cited by members of the Department. Ensuring our educational and training activities are sustainable, both financially and in the context of the resources and capacity within the Department is, therefore, essential.

To achieve this, we will:

- a) Set up a Departmental Education and Training committee with the remit to:
 - i. review existing education and training activities across the Department, including the use of reflection, feedback and peer observation to drive continuous development;
 - ii. review progress with our strategic goals and objectives;
 - iii. disseminate University, School and Departmental policy; and
 - iv. review and provide feedback on proposals for new or expanded activities, with due attention to the resource and capacity requirements, the expertise of existing and/or new members of the Department, the alignment with the goals and strengths of the Department, the local/regional/national educational landscape, and the opportunity costs;
- b) Refresh our education and training governance and committee structures
- c) Review the distribution of senior education and training roles and responsibilities across the Department to ensure equitability of workload, accounting for role, funding source, and other responsibilities and support succession planning;
- d) Review administrative support for both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and training to identify areas of particular need and opportunities for collaboration and develop business cases for increased support where required;
- e) Review our processes for admissions, recording and quality-assuring doctoral supervision, and the reporting and reviewing of the progress of doctoral students, including the role of CamSIS and other University systems;
- f) Review our processes for recording outcomes of students and trainees, including the role of Tableau and other University or School of Clinical Medicine level systems;
- g) Clarify the sources of funding and Departmental expenditure related to each activity and seek out opportunities for additional funding and/or posts arising from and to support education and training activities;
- h) Review the line management and dotted-line reporting of those with education and training responsibilities within the Department and clarify where responsibility for the organisation and delivery of different activities sits;
- i) Review the physical spaces, and IT and audiovisual facilities utilised for our teaching and develop business cases for improvements in these when necessary.

2.5 Operate as a model of excellence

We recognise the importance of taking a scholarly approach towards our teaching and training activities. While there is no universally agreed definition of scholarship in this context,⁵ Advance HE and the Academy of Medical Educators provide descriptions of key attributes that resonate with markers of high-quality teaching and training within the Department and wider University. These include:

- the use of critically evaluative, reflective and evidence-informed approaches to teaching and training;

⁵ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/defining-and-supporting-scholarship-teaching-and-learning-sotl-sector-wide-study>

- practice development that produces shared knowledge and is associated with change and impact on wider policy and practice;
- promotion and respect for diversity and inclusion across activities;
- and engagement of students and learners throughout the development and evaluation of teaching and training.

Within the Department, there are many examples of such scholarly activity, with individuals and teaching courses being recognised both locally and nationally as exemplars of excellence, innovation and influence on national practice. This includes:

- the Palliative care course being described by the Chief Executive Officer of the General Medical Council as ‘an example of notable practice in medical education’;
- innovations in teaching being published in medical journals;
- the Clinical School Leadership Programme leading to the University of Cambridge medical course being one of the first medical schools in the UK to be formally accredited by the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management;
- the redevelopment of the Social and Ethical Context of Health and Illness course highlighted as a valued instance where racism and inequalities were addressed in the Cambridge curriculum;
- the MPhil in Population Health Sciences being cited as an exemplar of sustainable course expansion by the School of Clinical Medicine;
- the general practice education group influencing national policy through contributions to the development of new national arrangements for the organisation and funding of undergraduate primary care teaching in England and national leadership on the role of remote consulting in medical education; and
- co-leadership of the national Association of Palliative Medicine (APM) Special Interest Forum on undergraduate palliative care education.

We consider it important to build on these exemplars so that we operate as a model of excellence in the teaching and training that we deliver. In so doing, we will not only positively impact on future generations of students and trainees, but will also influence wider teaching practice through critical evaluation, innovation, and sharing of good practice both internally and externally.

We will achieve this cross-cutting goal through the objectives identified for other goals. In particular, the planned creation of a teaching forum (objective 3c) will facilitate and encourage the sharing of best practice and development of ideas for innovations, the planned training (objective 3f) will seek to enhance the teaching and supervision across the Department and actively support the continuing professional development of those involved in teaching and training, and the enhanced systems and processes (objective 4a) will support the integration and sustainability of existing and potentially new activities.