Division of Health Research  
Faculty of Health and Medicine  
Lancaster University

LECTURER IN HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Grade 7  
Full Time

The Division of Health Research (DHR) is a lively department offering innovative educational programmes in a high quality research active environment within Lancaster University’s Faculty of Health and Medicine. We are seeking to appoint a Lecturer in Health Inequalities.

Faculty of Health and Medicine

Established in 2008, the Faculty of Health and Medicine brings together a critical mass of expertise in teaching, research and outreach from three established departments and their associated centres: Biomedical and Life Sciences; Health Research and Lancaster Medical School.

The Faculty provides research and teaching in an innovative and distinctive blend of subjects across the health and medicine spectrum. We have established links with private, public and third sector healthcare organisations and work closely with national and local government, health-related industries and the voluntary sector. We have successfully built our reputation in several key areas such as end of life care, ageing, mental health, neurodegenerative disease, developmental biology and disability research, where our academic staff are at the forefront of their fields.

The Faculty offers a diverse range of both undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research programmes in biology, biomedicine, medicine and the social aspects of health. We deliver innovative blended learning courses and are working with healthcare organisations to provide customised Continuing Professional Development.

The Faculty’s research environment was ranked joint first in the UK in the field, with a 100% score on everything from investment in staff and facilities to research income and collaboration. Overall, 89% of the Faculty’s research was judged world leading or internationally excellent, with 84% of research outputs being categorised as 3* and 4*. This places the Faculty among the elite universities in this field.

The Faculty also performed well in The Times Higher Education's research intensity league table which recognises the proportion of staff which are research active, finishing 3rd overall in the UK.

The Faculty is committed to pursuing world-class research. It brings together biomedical, medical, and social science researchers to tackle key challenges of the 21st Century within health and medicine.
Ranked third in our field in the 2014 Research Assessment Exercise on the 'intensity weighted' score, equal first in 'research environment' and in the top 10 for 'research power', the Faculty offers an ideal academic environment to develop your research career.

The Faculty achieved an Athena Swan Silver Award in 2014.

Division of Health Research

Established at Lancaster University in 1996, the Division of Health Research (DHR) is a multidisciplinary department that promotes health-related research and education across the University, the North West, nationally and internationally. DHR has a vibrant research community comprising of over 100 staff from a range of academic and applied backgrounds: sociology, social policy, geography, public health, psychology, health economics and nursing. We share an interest in the perspectives that the social sciences bring to an understanding of health and health inequalities, disability, illness, the delivery of health and social care and interventions and actions to promote population health and health equity.

Members of the Division of Health Research come from a wide range of academic disciplines and professional backgrounds. We have a well-established reputation for conducting excellent academic research that is both interdisciplinary and translational.

Research groups in the Division work closely with our colleagues in the rest of the Faculty of Health and Medicine on the Faculty’s core interdisciplinary research themes: Ageing; Mental Health; Health Information, Computation and Statistics; Infectious Disease Transmission and Biology and Social and Economic Inequality in Public Health.

The Division has good relationships with NHS and social care partners, and the voluntary sector. We also host the regional and local centres for the NIHR Research Design Service for the North West.

Lancaster University is the lead institution (with the Universities of Liverpool, Manchester and Central Lancashire) in a collaborative delivering the NIHR Research Design Service North West (RDS NW), which has just been funded for a further 5 years to 2023. The RDS NW provides free design and methodological support to applied health and social care researchers in North West England to develop grant applications to NIHR and other national and international research funders. This advice is largely provided by academics, funded for part of their time by the RDS to co-ordinate and deliver the necessary advice, and there are opportunities for academics within DHR to engage in RDS work.

In the 2014 Research Assessment Exercise our research was ranked 3rd (intensity weighted score) and 1st for research environment nationally in UoA 3.

The educational programmes delivered by the Division range from postgraduate research degrees (PhDs), professional doctorates such as the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, and a suite of blended learning PhDs in palliative care, public health, organisational health and well-
being, mental health, ageing, dementia and health economics. DHR has over 270 students registered on its full time and part time postgraduate programmes. We collaborate with Lancaster University Management School to deliver several courses. We also contribute to undergraduate teaching in Biomedical and Life Science, Medicine and Psychology.

**Lancaster University**

Lancaster University has been named University of the Year by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018.

Lancaster is a top 10 UK university with a world-class reputation as a centre for excellence in teaching, scholarship and research. Ranked at 131 in the QS World University Rankings 2019 (in their top 13%), 150th in the THE World University Rankings and 71st in the THE Best Universities in Europe 2018. Lancaster’s growing reputation is reflected by our high rankings year on year in each of the UK’s major university league tables - the Guardian (9th), The Times/Sunday Times (6th) and the Complete University Guide (8th).

The Lancaster University campus occupies a beautiful 360 acre parkland site at Bailrigg, just three miles from Lancaster City Centre. £450m has been invested into the estate since 2002, transforming the campus. Key developments include: new academic centres of excellence, student social facilities, improved teaching spaces and one of the largest student residences projects in the UK. Set near to the Lune Valley and the Forest of Bowland – areas of outstanding natural beauty – and on the edge of the Lake District, the campus is located a short distance from the vibrant and historic city of Lancaster, which has excellent schools. Lancaster is easily accessible by road (M6 Junction 33) and rail (West Coast mainline). It is approximately an hour to Manchester International Airport, and about 2.5 hours by train to London.

**Health inequalities**

This research theme is concerned with applied, empirical research that addresses the social determinants of health inequalities. Health inequalities research activity shares a common concern to illuminate the social determinants of inequalities in health and to produce and exchange evidence to reduce these inequalities. At a Faculty level Social and Economic Inequality in Health is identified as a key theme which fosters interdisciplinary research across sociology, economics, geography, feminism, sexualities and gender studies, history, psychology, medicine, psychiatry and statistics within the Faculty as well as across other Faculties at Lancaster.

DHR has a wide range of people engaged in health inequalities research across a number of groupings, all affiliated to the **Centre for Health Inequalities Research (CHIR)** which helps to connect health inequalities research activities across the Division. For more information on CHIR please visit: [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fhm/research/chir/#introduction](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fhm/research/chir/#introduction). Foci for health inequalities research within DHR include (but are not confined to):
As part of LiLaC (Liverpool and Lancaster Universities Collaboration for Public Health Research), Lancaster is one of eight core academic centres within the **NIHR School for Public Health Research** (SPHR). SPHR is a partnership between eight leading academic centres with excellence in applied public health research and evaluative practice in England. The School brings together its members’ expertise in a collaborative working relationship – to ensure emphasis on what works practically, can be applied across the whole country and better meets the needs of policy makers, practitioners and the public. Following an open competition, LiLaC’s membership of SPHR was renewed for a further 5 years until March 2022 (see [http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/index.php/sphr-research](http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/index.php/sphr-research)).

Also as part of LiLaC, Lancaster is a core part of the **North West Coast NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health, Research and Care** (CLAHRC), which has a major focus on tackling health inequalities. CLAHRC NWC’s public health thematic programme is led by Jennie Popay at Lancaster University and Ben Barr, senior lecturer in public health at Liverpool University. It is managed by a group comprising representatives from the nine partner local authorities involved in the programme, and aims to support local authorities to implement and evaluate evidence-based policies/practices to reduce health inequalities by promoting and supporting systems resilience in relatively disadvantaged areas. [http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/index.php/17-nwc-clahrc/21-nwc-clahrc-lilac](http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/index.php/17-nwc-clahrc/21-nwc-clahrc-lilac)

**Mental health inequalities.** Public mental health is a key priority within CHIR and reflects the global and national concern regarding the deteriorating mental health of the population. At CHIR research is being conducted that focuses on those population groups who are most likely to develop poor mental health. These include, for example, those living in impoverished conditions, those at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy, LGBTQ populations, people with learning/intellectual disabilities and young people. Our approach is to conduct research (empirical and theoretical) that aims to understand the social determinants of this mental health inequality, particularly the mechanisms and processes by which inequality is translated into poor mental health. We also have a strong commitment to applied research that examines the ways we can tackle mental health inequality and intervene to prevent poor mental health.

**Inequalities relating to young people.** The research carried out within CHIR recognises the relatively powerless and marginalised position of young people and how this intersects with other social determinants of health and well-being, particularly in relation to gender, sexuality and socio-economic status. We are particularly concerned to explore the structures that prevent the active and equitable participation of young people in the decisions that affect their lives and how this lack of control contributes directly and indirectly to health and social outcomes. Our research includes work with particular groups of young people, including young men and LGBTQ youth, and is focused on exploring particular contexts including educational settings, health services and informal youth provision. The importance and value of participation is extended to the conduct of our research which seeks to be actively participatory and co-produced with young people. Our work covers a wide range of health and social issues but with a particular focus on sex, alcohol and mental health. As with other areas of research within CHIR our research is explicitly theory driven and applied.

**The role of communities in tackling inequalities.** There is a growing body of evidence that low control may be a fundamental cause of inequalities in health. However, there is little evidence about effective approaches to support greater control of communities at the
collective level, and that contribute to reducing health inequalities. CHIR research and engagement activities build knowledge about approaches that empower communities of place and/or interest to have greater control over decisions affecting their lives. We have undertaken several reviews of community engagement and evaluations of regeneration and place based initiatives that aim to involve communities in decision-making within geographical areas. Lancaster currently leads a major NIHR study (the Communities in Control study), now in its third phase, to evaluate the health inequalities impact of the Lottery’s place based programme, Big Local. The research is investigating longer-term impacts for the health and wellbeing of residents who are most actively involved in delivering Big Local, as well as health and social impacts for local populations in Big Local areas. [http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/index.php/sphr-research-projects/11-communities-in-control-study](http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk/index.php/sphr-research-projects/11-communities-in-control-study)

**Inequalities experienced by people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.** People with disabilities or long-term conditions experience considerable inequalities in employment rates, income, education and standards of living. International data show that the magnitude of these inequalities varies significantly across different welfare regimes, and are amenable to policy interventions. Our research utilises quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the social inequalities experienced by people with disabilities and/or long-term conditions and identify ways to address them. Prominent themes include: experiences of working with a disability/long-term condition; government and organisational interventions to support work retention and return-to-work for people with disabilities and/or long-term conditions; and the health inequalities experienced by people with learning/intellectual disabilities. Lancaster University is a member of the Arthritis Research UK/MRC Centre for Musculoskeletal Health and Work, which aims to find ways to support work retention and return-to-work for individuals with musculoskeletal disorders. Lancaster University is also a core part of the Public Health England Learning Disabilities Observatory. This was established in 2010, and aims to generate evidence concerning the health inequalities faced by people with learning/intellectual disabilities, understand these health inequalities, and facilitate policy and practice action to tackle these inequalities.

**Modelling health inequalities.** Health Economics at Lancaster (HEAL, for more information see [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fhm/research/health-economics/](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fhm/research/health-economics/)) has the primary objectives of developing and applying quantitative research methods capable of informing health policymaking through empirical evidence and contributing to the academic and policy debate, including a substantial body of work on inequalities. The work undertaken by HEAL aims at having an impact on people's wellbeing and society as a whole.

**Public Health PhD**

The PhD in Public Health provides opportunities for professionals working within the field of public health, in the UK and internationally, to gain a deeper and more critical insight into their practice, whether they are based within healthcare settings, within local government, education, research or management.

This programme meets the needs of public health professionals wishing to enhance their research skills, develop their understanding of policy and practice, and make an original contribution to knowledge development within their field, while at the same time fulfilling
their existing responsibilities. The specialist taught modules include both the theory and practice of public health (health protection, health promotion and policy).

For further information, please contact: Professor Chris Hatton email: chris.hatton@lancaster.ac.uk or Professor Catherine Walshe email: c.walshe@lancaster.ac.uk