

# PhD Studentship - COPE-BP Programme

We invite applications for one fully funded collaborative (University of York-Khyber Medical University) PhD Studentship to start in April 2026. The studentship is on a full-time basis, primarily based at Khyber Medical University, Peshawar, Pakistan. The degree will be awarded by the University of York, UK.

The PhD will focus on cardiovascular health research, with an emphasis on improving cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention and management strategies in low-resource settings. This PhD is embedded within the COPE-BP (*Community-Pharmacies managing hypertension: intervention development and Evaluation in Bangladesh and Pakistan*) project, an NIHR-funded global health programme aimed at strengthening CVD prevention through innovative, community-based and health system interventions. The successful candidate will be part of a multidisciplinary research team gaining expertise in implementation science, health systems research, epidemiology, and policy translation.

## COPE-BP Project Details

CVDs are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality globally, with hypertension being the most significant modifiable risk factor. In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) like Bangladesh and Pakistan, more than 60% of individuals with hypertension remain undiagnosed or untreated, contributing to a high burden of CVD. Community pharmacies, which are widely used by low-income urban residents, have the potential to play a transformative role in hypertension management, bridging gaps in healthcare access. The COPE-BP project aims to develop and test a multicomponent intervention to integrate community pharmacies into hypertension care, thereby strengthening primary healthcare systems in resource-limited settings.

This PhD will explore key research themes within the broader COPE-BP programme, including hypertension or cardiovascular disease (CVD) management; cost-effectiveness or sustainability/systems integration of CVD programmes in low-resource settings, health inequalities and access to hypertension care; and determinants of cardiovascular health.

## Skills and training

This post will suit candidates with strong academic backgrounds in public health, epidemiology, global health, or health sciences. You will hold a strong Bachelors and Masters/M.Phil degree in a relevant field (as mentioned above). Experience in global health research, particularly in LMIC settings, is desirable. You will be encouraged to undertake training in advanced research methodologies.

## Funding

This PhD studentship will cover the full University of York international tuition fees for three years.

The selected candidate will receive a monthly stipend (equivalent to £550GBP /month for the 2026 academic year) for a period of up to three years. Stipends are expected to cover living costs such as subsistence, routine travel and accommodation.

The PhD is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care and Research (NIHR-UK), as part of the COPE-BP project, funded via Research for Innovations on Global Health.

## Eligibility

Applicants will need to meet the following criteria:

### Essential:

- Must have at least a Master's/MPhil degree, at least an upper second class (2:1) or 3 CGPA or equivalent, in a relevant field such as public health, epidemiology, global health, or health sciences.
- Bachelors must be in a relevant field such as public health, epidemiology, global health, or medical and allied health sciences.
- The candidate must be located in Pakistan and must be able to attend Khyber Medical University on a full time basis. The candidate will be expected to travel to the University of York once a year.
- English Language: IELTS 7.0 with a minimum of 6.5 in each component or equivalent requirement ([please see detailed requirements for the Department of Health Sciences here](#)). This can be submitted later and is not required for the test.

### Desirable:

- Experience in global health research, particularly in LMIC settings.
- Demonstrated interest in cardiovascular disease prevention, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and health systems research.
- Good understanding of qualitative and/or quantitative research skills.

**COPE-BP welcomes applications from all backgrounds, genders, and communities that are typically under-represented in cardiovascular health research.**

## Process of application

### Admission Process

- Each candidate shall make an application for admission to the PhD program on the prescribed form, along with documents specified in the Form. The Form can be downloaded from the link [oric.kmu.edu.pk](http://oric.kmu.edu.pk) or received from the ORIC-KMU office in Peshawar. The application form with all supported documents must be submitted as a single PDF file at [copebp.kmu.phd@gmail.com](mailto:copebp.kmu.phd@gmail.com) (see below for details of documents required).

- The candidates will be required to pass a screening test. The screening test will consist of MCQs, comprising of General Public Health (including CVDs/hypertension), Analytical, English, and Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
- The shortlisted candidates based on the test score will be invited to submit a research proposal (max 500 words) on the topic that the candidate may like to pursue for his/her doctoral thesis. The proposal must reflect the background, rationale, research question & objectives, proposed methodology and expected outcomes of the research.
- After a thorough review, the selection committee will shortlist the top proposals for an **online** interview. The interview panel will include members from KMU and University of York, UK. (Only shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview).

## Admission Timeline:

Advertisement: 20 February 2026

Deadline for applications: 6 March 2026

Screening test: 2nd week of March 2026 (candidates will be informed via email regarding the confirmed date)

Notification of qualified candidates for proposal submission via email: 2nd week of March 2026

Deadline for submission of proposals in the specified format/template: Shortlisted candidates will be informed through email

Notification of shortlisted candidates for the interview (KMU and York Panel): Will be informed through email

Interview of the shortlisted candidates: Will be informed through email

Notification of the qualified candidates and admission offer: Will be informed through email

## Supporting Documents

### **TO BE SUBMITTED AS A SINGLE PDF FILE**

1. Completed application form (with photograph)
2. Updated CV
3. SSC, HSSC, Undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, transcripts and any other relevant qualifications.
4. Scanned copy of Computerized National ID card.

NB: All documents mentioned above must be submitted to the above-mentioned email ID as a **single PDF file**. Missing information/documents will lead to a drop out from the admission process.