Postgraduate Scholarship Information Sheet

Scholarship Project Title	Empowering Person-Centred Osteoarthritis Care through Shared Decision-Making and Outcome Measurement
Advert Reference number	SETU_2025_15_CW_2
Supervisor(s)	Dr Clare Lodge SETU Carlow Siobhan Corcoran SETU Waterford Dr Brenda Monaghan Trinity College Dublin
Research Group	Health
Department /School/Faculty	Department of Health and Sports Sciences
Duration	4 Years/48 Months
Status: Full-time / part-time	Full Time
Funding information	SETU 2025 Presidents Scholarship Programme
Value of the scholarship per year for four years	Stipend: €22,500 per annum Fees of €5,750 per annum Research costs- €2,000/€3,000 per annum
Closing date and time	Wednesday, 16 September 2026 @ 5pm
Interview date	Thursday, 1 October 2026
PhD commencement date	To be started at the latest date of the 31 October 2026

Project Key Words: OsteoArthritis, Shared Decision-Making, Patient-Reported Outcome measures

Post summary

Improving Osteoarthritis Care Through Shared Decision-Making

Osteoarthritis (OA) is one of the leading causes of pain and disability in Ireland, yet how treatment decisions are made can vary widely across services. This PhD project aims to improve how patients and clinicians work together to choose the best care options.

The research will first identify which patient questionnaires (used to measure pain, function, and quality of life) are most useful and practical in real-world OA care. It will then explore how shared decision-making currently happens in GP, physiotherapy, and hospital clinics. Finally, the project will pilot simple, evidence-based tools to help ensure patients' preferences and values are central to treatment decisions.

Working with clinicians, patients, and Arthritis Ireland, the successful candidate will help design a more consistent, patient-centred OA care pathway that could be scaled nationally and applied to other long-term conditions.

This is an exciting opportunity to influence real-world healthcare practice in Ireland.

Knowledge & Experience

Essential

- Primary degree (First or Upper Second-Class Honours) in Physiotherapy, Health Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, Public Health, Psychology, or a related discipline.
- Experience conducting research (e.g., undergraduate thesis, MSc dissertation).
- Competence in data analysis (SPSS, R, or equivalent statistical software).
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively with clinicians and patients.
- Ability to manage timelines, coordinate stakeholders, and track milestones.

Desirable

- Clinical Experience in Musculoskeletal or Chronic Disease Care:
  Experience working in physiotherapy, primary care, orthopaedics, rheumatology, rehabilitation, or community health settings would be advantageous. Familiarity with osteoarthritis management, conservative care pathways, or multidisciplinary team working would strengthen the candidate's ability to engage meaningfully with clinical stakeholders.
- Experience with Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs):
  Prior exposure to tools such as EQ-5D, Oxford Scores, WOMAC, or similar health-related quality-of-life measures would be beneficial, particularly in understanding scoring, interpretation, and responsiveness.
- Knowledge of Shared Decision-Making (SDM):
  Familiarity with SDM concepts, patient-centred care, behaviour change theory, or communication frameworks would be advantageous.
- Survey and Qualitative Research Skills:
  Experience designing surveys (e.g., Qualtrics), conducting interviews or focus groups, and analysing qualitative data (e.g., NVivo) would be valuable.
- Implementation Science or Health Services Research Exposure:
  Understanding of implementation frameworks (e.g., CFIR) or experience working in health system improvement projects would be highly desirable.
- Engagement and Stakeholder Communication:
  Experience collaborating with healthcare professionals, patient groups, or advocacy organisations would support the translational focus of the project.

Skills & Competencies

Essential

- Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate on application that they meet SETU's English language requirements and provide all necessary documentation. See Page 7 of the Code of Practice
- In order to be shortlisted for interview, you must meet the SETU English speaking requirements so please provide evidence in your application.

Desirable

- Experience organising workshops, meetings, or small research studies.
- Understanding of digital health systems, electronic patient records, or survey platforms
- Awareness of Sláintecare, HSE service structures, or international guideline frameworks (NICE, OARSI, OMERACT).
- Experience developing infographics, policy briefs, or plain-language summaries.

Further information
For any informal queries, please contact Dr Clare Lodge on email clare.lodge@setu.ie

For queries relating to the application and admission process, please contact the Postgraduate Admissions Office researchadmissions@setu.ie or telephone +353 (0)51 302883.

For queries relating to the funding programme, please email scholarships2025@setu.ie

University Website https://www.setu.ie/

Application procedure

Complete the online application form from the SETU website quoting the advert reference number SETU_2025_15_CW_2.

Please ensure that you upload all supporting documents as part of your submission.

Please note that paper submissions will not be accepted.

The University will short-list and interview those applicants who provide the most suitable information in terms of experience, qualifications and other requirements relevant to the scholarship.

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