



BACD-Castang Fellowship Programme

The BACD-Castang Fellowship Programme is led by BACD's Strategic Research Group and funded by the Castang Foundation. It aims to identify, support, and develop future childhood neurodisability research leaders. Over the course of the Fellowship, multidisciplinary early career researchers from different clinical, professional, and/or academic disciplines develop their confidence and skills in leading childhood neurodisability research, and work towards submitting a childhood neurodisability grant application as Primary Investigator. The programme consists of interactive workshops, an intensive grant sprint, and peer support amongst the Fellows themselves. The programme has also connected Fellows with mentors who are national research leaders in multidisciplinary fields.

In the first round of the programme (March 2017 – February 2019) we offered nine Fellowships to candidates undertaking or having completed a PhD or MD qualification. This cohort's research and practice interests were diverse, including interventions and service delivery related to nutrition, mental health, assistive technology, multi-lingualism, allied health support in schools, physical activity, anxiety, and participation at home, school, and in the community. Our evaluation highlights that the Fellows went on to lead or jointly submit 17 research grant applications worth over £6 million. Eight applications worth over £1.5 million were successful and several Fellows have plans in place for resubmitting those not funded. Three of the nine Fellows also secured a promotion or new job, citing the programme – and particularly their mentors – as playing a critical role in their success. Overall, the Fellows described how they are now able to be more connected and strategic, and feel more supported, within the wider childhood neurodisability community.

In the second round of the programme (March 2019 – February 2021) we offered ten further Fellowships to candidates with backgrounds in medicine, allied health, psychology, and design. We would like to sincerely thank all of our Fellows and mentors for their strong commitment to the programme and we wish them the very best with their ongoing research. We look forward to reporting fully on the programme's impact over the coming months. In the meantime, please contact Jennifer.mcanuff@newcastle.ac.uk with any questions or feedback.