

BRIDGE EDUCATIONAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Project BRIDGE and the need to foster talent in clinical research

Clinical research is a cornerstone of medical progress and patient care improvement. At Vall d'Hebron Institute of Research (VHIR), continuous professional development in this field is essential to ensure that our research practices remain at the forefront of scientific and ethical standards. The ability of our professionals to design, conduct, and manage high-quality clinical trials directly impacts the institution's mission to translate research into better healthcare outcomes.

In this context, the **BRIDGE Project** represents a strategic initiative to expand and enhance VHIR's Clinical Trials Unit by incorporating a new area dedicated to pediatric clinical research. Beyond establishing a physical space for pediatric trials, BRIDGE aims to transform the way clinical trials are conducted, promoting hybrid models that combine remote/digital and on-site approaches, and setting the foundations for a scalable, patient-centered research framework across all therapeutic areas.

A key pillar of this transformation is the **development of human talent** through education and training. The retention, growth, and attraction of skilled professionals are fundamental to achieving excellence in clinical research. BRIDGE therefore includes a commitment to consolidate and harmonize all existing educational opportunities within VHIR and the Vall d'Hebron Campus into a unified **Clinical Trials Education Plan**. In addition to consolidating existing educational opportunities, the BRIDGE Clinical Trials Education Plan also seeks to support the development of competencies that are critical for the future of pediatric clinical research, including decentralized clinical trials, telemedicine, patient-centred research, digital health and clinical data integration.

Based on evidence gathered from complementary initiatives such as the GIMM-CARE project and the Pediatric Research Mentoring Plan, professionals across the Vall d'Hebron Campus who wish to receive training in clinical research have expressed a clear preference for learning at their own pace and according to their individual needs. In response, the BRIDGE Clinical Trials Education Plan has been designed as a practical guide to support each professional in creating a personalized educational pathway.

This document serves as a **guide to self-manage your own training plan in clinical research within VHIR**. It is designed to help each professional identify the most suitable learning opportunities according to their role, experience, and career objectives, and to support a culture of continuous learning aligned with international standards and institutional goals.

Through this guide, professionals will be able to:

- Map existing internal and external training resources in clinical research.
- Understand how these resources connect under the BRIDGE educational framework.
- Plan and track their individual learning paths in alignment with institutional priorities.
- Access specialized pediatric clinical research content, supporting VHIR's leadership in this field.
- Benefit from collaborations with international networks such as SCReN, ECRIN, RECLIP, and GIMM-CARE, which provide access to advanced, high-quality training opportunities.

Available Clinical Research Learning Opportunities for VHIR and HUVH Professionals

VHIR and Vall d'Hebron University Hospital (HUVH) offer a broad range of training opportunities that together contribute to the BRIDGE Clinical Trials Education Plan. These opportunities cover different areas of clinical and translational research and are available to professionals at different stages of their careers.

The available opportunities cover the following core areas of clinical research competence:

- Clinical research methodology and trial design
- Good Clinical Practice, ethics and regulatory requirements
- Clinical trial administration and coordination
- Biostatistics and research data analysis
- Responsible Research and Innovation
- Health innovation and translational research
- Pediatric clinical research

Professionals can select individual training activities or, when relevant to their career objectives, undertake more comprehensive programmes.

Core training opportunities at VHIR and HUVH

Training Programme in Clinical Research for Residents — HUVH

A structured three-module programme covering **Basic, Intermediate and Advanced research tools**, designed to introduce young clinicians to the principles of clinical investigation and Good Clinical Practice.

Core competencies covered:

- Clinical research methodology and trial design
- Good Clinical Practice, ethics and regulatory requirements
- Clinical trial administration and coordination

Access: Available through the HUVH intranet.

Training Programme in Biostatistics for Researchers — VHIR

Training providing researchers with fundamental skills in **data analysis, interpretation and reporting**, supporting robust and reproducible research outcomes.

Core competencies covered:

- Clinical research methodology and trial design
- Biostatistics and research data analysis

Access: VHIR Training Catalogue / VHIR intranet or contact formacio@vhir.org.

Training Programme in Responsible Research and Innovation — VHIR

Training focused on incorporating **open science principles, ethical reflection, gender perspective and citizen participation** into research activities.

Core competencies covered:

- Responsible Research and Innovation

Access: VHIR Training Catalogue / VHIR intranet or contact formacio@vhir.org.

Health Innovation Training Programme — VHIR

A programme designed to equip researchers with skills in **innovation management and translational research**, fostering collaboration between academia and the private sector.

Core competencies covered:

- Health innovation
- Innovation management
- Translational research
- Academia–industry collaboration

Access: Contact academia@vhir.org.

Postgraduate and Master's Programmes

For professionals seeking a more comprehensive and long-term training experience, VHIR also offers access to postgraduate programmes in clinical and translational research.

Master's Degree in Clinical Trials Management and Coordination

A comprehensive postgraduate programme offering in-depth knowledge in **clinical trial design, conduct, coordination and regulatory compliance**.

Core competencies covered:

- Clinical research methodology and trial design
- Good Clinical Practice, ethics and regulatory requirements
- Clinical trial administration and coordination
- Responsible Research and Innovation

Access: Further information through VHIR / academia@vhir.org.

Master's in Translational Biomedical Research

A postgraduate programme focused on **translational biomedical research**.

Core competencies covered:

- Clinical research methodology and trial design
- Good Clinical Practice, ethics and regulatory requirements
- Biostatistics and research data analysis
- Responsible Research and Innovation

Access: Further information through VHIR / academia@vhir.org.

Master's in Healthcare Innovation and Entrepreneurship

A postgraduate programme focused on **healthcare innovation and entrepreneurship**.

Core competencies covered:

- Clinical research methodology and trial design
- Good Clinical Practice, ethics and regulatory requirements
- Health innovation and translational research

Access: Further information through VHIR / academia@vhir.org.

External Learning Opportunities

SCReN – Spanish Clinical Research Network

As a member of the Spanish Clinical Research Network (SCReN), VHIR has access to specialized training initiatives focused on the methodological, practical, and regulatory dimensions of clinical research. SCReN's training activities include courses, workshops, and webinars addressing topics such as protocol design, ethical review processes, data management,

pharmacovigilance, and trial monitoring. Participation in these initiatives ensures that VHIR professionals remain up to date with evolving national and European regulations and quality standards. When training opportunities are made available, it is communicated through the official channels.

ECRIN – European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network

Through its affiliation with SCReN, VHIR is also part of the European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN), which provides extensive opportunities for professional development in multinational clinical trial coordination and data sharing. ECRIN offers training sessions, webinars, and joint workshops in collaboration with the European Medicines Agency (EMA), covering topics such as regulatory harmonization, data interoperability, Good Clinical Practice, and trial governance across European jurisdictions.

RECLIP and the C4C Academy – Pediatric Clinical Research Training

As a member of RECLIP (Red Española de Ensayos Clínicos Pediátricos), VHIR contributes to and benefits from the Connect4Children (C4C) Academy, a European platform dedicated to training and knowledge exchange in pediatric clinical research. The C4C e-learning platform offers specialized modules addressing the ethical, methodological, and operational challenges of conducting trials in children and adolescents. These resources support VHIR's commitment, through the BRIDGE project, to strengthen pediatric research capacity and promote inclusive, child-centered approaches to clinical investigation. For further information on how to access CDC's platform, you may contact scientificcoordination@vhir.org.

Future Training Resources: Stay tuned!

VHIR's investment in promoting and consolidating the talent in clinical research will crystallize in novel and promising training opportunities in the following years. One such example is **GIMM-CARE (CARE)** project, which strengthens this educational ecosystem through an international collaboration between the **Gulbenkian Institute of Molecular Medicine (GIMM)** in Portugal and VHIR. The initiative seeks to establish a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** in human-centred clinical and translational research, fostering a continuous flow between biomedical discovery and clinical practice. As part of this project, VHIR leads the definition of a training strategy in clinical research, including the development of a **Clinician-Scientist Training Programme**. This program aims to provide healthcare professionals, researchers, and clinical staff with the competencies required to conceptualize, plan, and conduct clinical research effectively. Key objectives include:

- Strengthening the interface between clinical practice and research.
- Enhancing translational collaboration between multidisciplinary teams.
- Building sustainable educational structures for clinician-scientists across Europe.

In the near future, **GIMM-CARE** will introduce a **Clinical Scientist Training Programme**, offering online courses, self-paced modules, and certification opportunities. This toolset will be made available to all VH Campus professionals as part of **VHIR's Clinical Research Training Library**.

On top of GIMM-CARE's training toolset, and as part of BRIDGE and VHIR's broader commitment to pediatric research, in alignment with the Pediatric Research Strategic Plan of the institutions, a **Pediatric Research Mentoring Plan** will soon complement the training library by providing tailored mentorship and career guidance for professionals who want to strengthen their expertise or build a career in pediatric research.

Finally, as part of BRIDGE, a comprehensive educational program designed to enhance the capabilities of its staff in using the new telemedicine and data management systems will be implemented.

How to self-manage your training?

One of the main objectives of the **BRIDGE Clinical Trials Education Plan** is to empower professionals to take ownership of their learning and development. Building your own educational plan allows you to grow at your own pace, focusing on the knowledge and skills that are most relevant to your current role and future ambitions. This section offers practical guidance to help you design, implement, and sustain a personalized learning path that fits seamlessly into your professional journey at VHIR.

Designing your training plan begins with a simple yet essential step: **self-reflection**. Take time to consider your current position and identify the areas where you want to grow. A short self-evaluation, guided by existing competency checklists or your supervisor's feedback, can help clarify both your strengths and the areas that would most benefit from further development.

Once you have identified your learning needs, **translate them into clear objectives**. Define what you want to achieve and why. This can be, for example, improving regulatory knowledge to coordinate a trial more effectively, or learning to design patient information materials that promote inclusivity and understanding. Keeping your goals specific and measurable will make it easier to stay focused and monitor your progress. You can make use of [SMART objectives](#) to ensure that your objectives are clear and easy to evaluate.

Next, **explore the VHIR Clinical Research Training Library** to identify the courses, programs, and resources that best match your objectives. The library brings together all available opportunities — from internal programs such. Each professional can combine these opportunities in different ways to build a pathway that feels meaningful and achievable.

The **relevance of training opportunities** may also vary depending on your career stage. Early-career professionals or residents might focus on introductory programs such as the Clinical Research Training for Residents or the Good Clinical Practice course, while junior researchers and coordinators may benefit from courses in trial administration or biostatistics. More experienced investigators might be able to look toward innovation management, leadership, or, in the near future, the Clinician-Scientist Training Programme developed through GIMM-CARE. Those involved in pediatric research can also take advantage of the specialized learning pathways available through the C4C Academy or the forthcoming Pediatric Research Mentoring Plan.

To make your plan more tangible, it can be helpful to visualize it in time. A [simple Gantt](#) allows you to map when you plan to take each course or training activity, set milestones, and ensure that your learning remains balanced throughout the year. This doesn't have to be complex — even a basic table or calendar reminder can serve as a powerful tool to keep track of your progress.

Designing a plan is only the first step — **turning it into a lasting habit** is what truly drives progress. Research in behavioral science shows that consistency and environment design often matter more than motivation itself. Instead of trying to “find time” for training, **build learning into your daily routine** through small, sustainable actions. Dedication even 20–30 minutes a few times a week can be far more effective than occasional intensive sessions.

One useful approach comes from the “[Atomic Habits](#)” framework: link new learning activities to an existing routine. For example, review a training module right after your morning coffee, or spend a few minutes reflecting on what you learned during the last trial meeting. This technique, known as *habit stacking*, makes training an integrated part of your workday rather than an extra task.

To maintain engagement, **set short-term, achievable goals** — such as completing one course module each week or summarizing key takeaways after every session. Breaking larger goals into small, measurable steps creates a sense of progress and builds momentum. Using visual tools like a progress tracker, checklist, or Gantt chart can make progress tangible and rewarding.

Accountability also plays a key role in maintaining motivation. Share your goals with a colleague, mentor, or your team, and schedule regular check-ins to discuss progress. Some professionals find value in setting up “learning partners” — peers who follow their own training plans and meet monthly to exchange insights and keep each other on track.

Equally important is **immediate application**. The sooner you put new knowledge into practice, the stronger your learning retention. Try to apply at least one new concept or tool from each training session to your current projects — for example, testing a new data collection method or improving documentation based on Good Clinical Practice principles.

Another key to success at following your own educational time is to protect time for focused learning. Drawing from the concept of [deep work](#), create uninterrupted spaces for study by silencing notifications and dedicating a quiet environment for learning. Even short but focused sessions are more valuable than long, distracted ones.

Finally, remember that training is not only about formal courses or certificates. Participating in discussion groups, attending seminars, mentoring others, or collaborating on multidisciplinary projects are equally valuable learning experiences. Staying connected to the broader BRIDGE, SCReN, and ECRIN communities can open new perspectives and foster a continuous exchange of best practices across institutions and countries.

