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<h2>Research Passports</h2>	
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## 1. PURPOSE

This SOP describes the process for obtaining a Letter of Access (LoA) or Honorary Research Contract (HRC) which is known as License to Attend (LTA) in Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust for the purpose of carry out research in the NHS. This SOP is relevant for College staff who wish to undertake research in the NHS and for ICHNT staff members who wish to undertake research in other NHS trusts.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care Research requires researchers not employed by any NHS organisation undertaking research within the NHS to be clear about their responsibilities and liabilities in relation to research. The underlying principles for issuing an honorary research contract or a letter of access are to ensure that:

- Non-NHS researchers (who have no paid contract with an NHS organisation) are contractually bound to take proper account of the NHS duty of care and to follow the requirements of research governance and other research regulations at every stage of their research process
- Research participants, researchers, services users, care/host organisations are protected
- There is a clarity in legal situation should adverse incidents occur with respect to research activity.

The Research Passport is the mechanism for researchers to obtain an honorary research contract (HRC), also known as a License to Attend (LTA) or a letter of access (LoA). The research passport system enables researchers to complete a single set of documents to be able to access a single or multiple NHS sites to carry out research. The Research Passport system is applicable to researchers who will be conducting a study that could have foreseeable or direct impact on patient care. For example, where the action of a researcher could directly affect type, quality or extent of prevention, diagnosis or treatment of illness or cause injury or loss to an individual to whom the organisation has a duty of care.

License to Attend is issued to safeguard the Trust, its patients and/or confidential information relating to the ICHT

### 2.1. The Research Passport

- Is one standard form and associated documents [*identity checks, CV, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Occupational Health (OH)*] completed by the researcher and her/his employer, and validated by an NHS organisation, to enable an Honorary Research Contract (License to Attend) or Letter of Access to be issued, depending on the nature of the research activity:

Please visit the website below to access the research passport: algorithm of research activity and pre-engagement checks.

[Research in the NHS – HR Good Practice Resource Pack The Research Passport: Algorithm of Research Activity and Pre-Engagement Checks](#)

- clarifies accountability and responsibility for researchers, resulting in increasing patient safety, improving risk management, and employers improving quality assurance of research staff and
- is completed, validated and presented to all the relevant NHS organisations where the study is to be conducted and no duplicate checks at those sites as they rely on assurances offered by those employers who have already conducted these checks and the NHS organisation who validated the passport and accepted the checks.

Information and resources for research passport system are available in IRAS website: [IRAS - HR Good Practice Resource Pack](#)

## 2.2. The License to Attend Application form

- License to Attend enables ICHT ensures that a researcher is properly assessed and relevant checks carried out by the requesting manager before a researcher is allowed to work on ICHT premises in line with Working at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust Under an Honorary Contract or License to Attend for Medical and Non-Medical Staff Policy version 4.0.
- It requires completing a separate called License to Attend form which is different from Research Passport form. License to Attend form is applicable to ICHT only. For details information and to request for the form contact the Trust HR via email: [imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net)

## 3. PROCEDURE

There are a few documents and checks that will need to be completed by researchers to obtain a Letter of Access or License to Attend. This depends on the group a researcher may come under as per appendix 1

Imperial College London contacts for Letter of Access; please send your request to [RGIT@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:RGIT@imperial.ac.uk)

The following grouping is derived from HR Good Practice available at [Research in the NHS – HR Good Practice Resource Pack The Research Passport: Algorithm of Research Activity and Pre-Engagement Checks](#)

### 3.1. Group A and Group B Researchers

- These researchers will require an honorary research contract also known as a License to Attend to undertake research in ICHT. They should complete the

License to Attend form (which is equivalent to the Research Passport Form in other NHS organisations) with the help of the manager (ICHT staff) who will be hosting them. Completed form with the supporting documents should be sent to Trust HR via email: [imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net) and copied the Trust HR staff who sent the form.

### 3.2. Group C Researchers

These researchers will not require a Research Passport form or License to Attend application form but must complete the NHS to NHS proforma confirmation of pre-engagement checks. This proforma is then sent with the researcher's CV and name of the person designated as their manager in ICHT to the RGIT office via email: [RGIT@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:RGIT@imperial.ac.uk)

This proforma must be completed by the Human Resources (HR) department of the researcher's substantive employer.

Once the RGIT has checked the documentation and it is valid, the researcher will be issued with a Letter of Access (LoA). A copy of this letter will be sent to the researcher's substantive employer and the researcher's HR representative who completed and signed the form.

A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: [imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net)

The Letter of Access will be for a specific time and it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the LoA remains valid for the length of the study. Appropriate information must be entered into the RGIT Research Passport Database to track and enable the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

### 3.3. Group D researchers

These researchers will not require Research Passport form or License to Attend application form but must complete the NHS to NHS proforma confirmation of pre-engagement checks. This proforma is then send with the research's CV and name of the person designated as their manager in ICHT to the RGIT office via email: [RGIT@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:RGIT@imperial.ac.uk)

This proforma must be completed by the Human Resources (HR) department of the researcher substantive employer.

Once the RGIT has checked the documentation and it is valid, the researcher will be issued with a Letter of Access (LoA). A copy of this letter will be sent to the researcher's substantive employer and the researcher's HR representative who completed and signed the form.

A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: [imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net).

The Letter of Access will be for a specific time and it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the LoA remains valid for the length of the study. Appropriate information must be entered into the RGIT Research Passport Database to track and enable the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

### 3.4. Group E Researchers

A Research Passport Form is required. The researchers should submit their CV, the name of contact Manager in ICHT and their research Passport form (with all the relevant sections completed and signed by their substantive employer and others) and applicable associated documents as evidence of checks required to the RGIT via email: [RGIT@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:RGIT@imperial.ac.uk).

Once the RGIT has checked the documentation and it is valid, the researcher will be issued with a Letter of Access (LoA). A copy of this letter will be sent to the researcher's substantive employer and the researcher's HR representative who completed and signed the form.

A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: [imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net).

The Letter of Access will be for a specific time and it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the LoA remains valid for the length of the study. Appropriate information must be entered into the RGIT Research Passport Database to track and enable the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

### 3.5. Group F Researchers

These researchers will not require a Research Passport form or License to Attend application form but must complete the NHS to NHS proforma confirmation of pre-engagement checks. This proforma is then send with the research's CV and name of the person designated as their manager in ICHT to the RGIT office via email: [RGIT@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:RGIT@imperial.ac.uk)

This proforma must be completed by the Human Resources (HR) department of the NHS organisation who issued the honorary clinical contract.

Once the RGIT has checked the documentation and it is valid, the researcher will be issued with a Letter of Access (LoA). A copy of this letter will be sent to the researcher's substantive employer and the researcher's HR representative who completed and signed the form.

A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: [Imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:Imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net).

The Letter of Access will be for a specific time and it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the LoA remains valid for the length of the study. Appropriate information must be entered into the RGIT Research Passport Database to track and enable the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

### 3.6. Group G Researchers

No Research Passport Form, no Honorary Research Contract or Letter of Access is required. It is the responsibility of the contractors to check that the professional indemnity covers the proposed research. Please contact ICHT HR for details

### 3.7. Group H Researchers

No Research Passport Form, no Honorary Research Contract or Letter of Access is required. It is the responsibility of the contractors to check that the professional indemnity covers the proposed research. Please contact ICHT HR for details

### 3.8. Group I Researchers

A Research Passport Form is required. The students should submit their CV, the name of contact Manager in ICHT and their research Passport form (with all the relevant sections completed and signed by their substantive employer, the university or college and others) and applicable associated documents as evidence of checks required to the RGIT via email: [RGIT@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:RGIT@imperial.ac.uk).

The RGIT will validate the research passport form and issue the students with a LoA. A copy of this letter is sent to the students' substantive employer or university via email, through the University HR representative who signed the form, informing them of the students' activities in the Trust. A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: [imperial.honorarycontracts\\_doctors@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.honorarycontracts_doctors@nhs.net).

The Letter of Access will be for a specific time and it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the LoA remains valid for the length of the study. Appropriate information must be entered into the RGIT Research Passport Database to track and enable the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

### 3.9. Group J Researchers

No Research Passport Form, no Honorary Contract or Letter of Access is required. The student should be closely supervised by a clinical supervisor who is an NHS employee Or HEI employee with an honorary clinical or research contract (clinical academic). In other words students supervised under close clinical supervision may not require honorary research contract.

### 3. 10. Group K Researchers

No Research Passport Form, no Honorary Research Contract or Letter of Access is required. The responsibility lies with the NHS staff who be supervising the student.

### 3.11. Group L Researchers

No provision for issuing an honorary research contract or a letter of access to researchers from a commercial company. Model of agreements between commercial and non-commercial organisations should be used. Please contact JRO contract team or ICHT HR for details

## 4. REFERENCES

1. The Health Research Authority (HRA) (2020) IRAS Help – Preparing and Submitting Application, Available: [IRAS Help - HR Good Practice Resource Pack](#) Accessed 09/10/2020
2. Non-Medical License to Attend Procedure, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, version 1.5 dated 05 February 2014.



**Appendix 1 - Researcher Grouping based on HR Good Practice. For details, please visit: [IRAS Help - HR Good Practice Resource Pack](#)**

- Group A: Researchers with substantive university employment contracts and no honorary NHS clinical contract and whose research activities will have direct bearing on the quality of care.
- Group B: Postgraduate students with substantive university employment contracts, no honorary NHS clinical contract and who are clinically qualified and experienced and do not require direct clinical supervision, whose research activities will have a direct and foreseeable impact on the duty of care.
- Group C: Researchers with substantive NHS employment contracts.
- Group D: Researchers with a substantive university contract and an honorary NHS contract, e.g. clinical academics.
- Group E: Researchers with substantive university employment contracts and no honorary NHS clinical contract but whose research activities will NOT have direct bearing on the quality of care. In this case the university retains responsibility for all research activities that do not affect the NHS organisation's duty of care.
- Group F: Researchers who are Independent Contractor such as GPs or Practice Staff and are employed by an NHS organisation under certain circumstances.
- Group G: Researchers who are Independent Contractor such as GPs or Practice Staff or Researchers with substantive university employment contracts who are also Independent Contracts (GP) but not employed by an NHS organisation, even if they are working under contract for services to the NHS.
- Group H: Researchers with other substantive employment contracts (e.g. social workers) with local government and charities.
- Group I: Postgraduate students with substantive university employment contracts who are clinically qualified and experienced and do not require direct clinical supervision, whose research activities will NOT have a direct and foreseeable impact on the duty of care.
- Group J: Postgraduate students may conduct research within the NHS other than through healthcare placements. If the student is not appropriately clinically qualified to undertake research activities that may have a direct bearing on the quality of care and foreseeable impact on the duty of care.
- Group K: Students conducting research as part of their healthcare placements.

Group L: Researchers from a commercial company.