

Questions Submitted at the Webinar

- Do you have to apply for OOPR for this? Or do you apply to work part time? Or is it more integrated like ACF/ACLs?

This depends on where you are in your training. If you are still a resident doctor in training, there are two options:

Less than full time (LTFT) for academic reasons — This is the most likely route. You would apply to work LtFT, which would allow you to split your time 50/50 between clinical training and research. This preserves your clinical training programme, and you would continue to receive a guaranteed salary. You would, however, have limited choice over your academic placement. This arrangement would need to be discussed and agreed with the relevant parties, but it is the standard approach for a half-funded post of this kind.

Out of Programme — This is less likely to be appropriate for most applicants, given that the award only covers 50% of salary.

If you have already reached CCT, neither of the above applies — you would not need anyone's permission to take up the award.

- I received my PhD in March 2021 so am more than 3 years after completion but in the mean time I have had bridging funding which resulted in a 3 year NIHR senior leadership award which has just finished. Would I still be eligible?

You are not formally excluded from applying, but you should be aware that the panel will scrutinise your application carefully. Having already received three years of post-PhD research funding, the panel will want to understand clearly why this additional year of 50% protected research time is needed and what it will enable you to achieve at this stage of your career. A strong, well-reasoned justification will be essential.

- Due to timings of maternity leave, I would be eligible for this award (in terms of being at the right partner trust) at the time of starting the application, but am not currently there now. Am I eligible to apply? If I waited until a future round, I suspect it would be too late, as I would then be due to rotate out of that trust by the time of the award of the application.

This is a complex question that depends on individual circumstances. The key requirement is that you must be employed by one of the partner NHS trusts or universities at the point of application, as the scheme is not able to provide a contract of employment directly. We would strongly encourage you to get in touch with us directly so that we can work through the specifics of your situation with you.

- What counts as mitigating circumstances- ie if you received your PhD in 2023 but took parental leave during the Phd- would that count? Thanks

Yes, absolutely. Parental leave taken during your PhD would count as a mitigating circumstance.

- For those approaching CCT. Should we have secured consultant position? it would be very difficult to secure clinical PAs in 1 month. Is there some agreement with the trusts to support this with funding from the clinical departments?

If you are still in training, the guidance on LTFT for academic reasons (see above) would apply. If you are very close to CCT, you would need to have secured a consultant post at one of the eligible partner trusts before applying. If you are in a grey area - between finishing training and taking up a consultant post - you would not be eligible to apply at that point. We would encourage you to consider applying in a future round once your position is confirmed. It is also worth noting that the RACR scheme can support a consultant salary contribution, but at the first entry point.

- Will this scheme run annually and does it replace MRC the old CARP?

The MRC CARP scheme has been discontinued and will not be reinstated in its previous form. The RACR scheme has, in some respects, taken its place - though it operates quite differently. The current scheme is running as a two-year pilot, with the possibility of a further two-year extension following a review by the MRC. If the scheme proves successful, there is a clear intention to continue beyond that, though nothing beyond the initial four years has been confirmed at this stage.

- I have a VL (visiting lecturer) contract with one of your partner institutions but I work clinically at a trust that is not listed as one of the participating trusts - does this mean I am not eligible?

Eligibility requires that you are employed by one of the partner NHS trusts or universities. The scheme is not able to offer contracts of employment, so if your clinical work is based at a non-partner trust, this could affect your eligibility.

- For those not eligible for the current cycle but who expect to be awarded a PhD soon and may be eligible for future cycles, how many rounds of funding are expected to be available/when could future cycles be expected to be released please?

There will definitely be at least one further round next year, and we anticipate, subject to the scheme's success, that there will be rounds for up to four years in total. Beyond that, we cannot say with certainty. We hope to open the next round earlier than this year's deadline of 1st November; a deadline around September is possible, though dates have not yet been confirmed.

- Regarding the approximate start date of August 27, is it possible to begin receiving the funding earlier and if so when could this likely start?

Yes, it is possible to start earlier than August. The August date was chosen as a practical starting point, on the assumption that applicants may need time to give notice and make

arrangements around their clinical commitments. However, if all administrative requirements are in place, there is no reason why a successful applicant could not begin sooner.

- You mentioned that the other 50% of funding must be from the clinical side. If you are a researcher trying to move towards clinical research by enhancing your clinical skills (in my case gaining pharmacy experience in my area of research and acquiring my prescribing qualification), and therefore the other 50% would likely have to come from additional charity funding or something similar, would this mean you would be ineligible?

In principle, no - you would not be ineligible on those grounds. Each case will be considered individually, and the panel will look at the overall justification and the likely impact of the award on your career. It is worth noting that if you are in receipt of charity funding, you would typically need to be employed by a university, and eligibility would hinge on that employment relationship.

- How many positions are you looking to fund this round?

We are expecting to fund approximately four to five positions in this round, though this may vary slightly depending on the level and nature of the applications received.

- Do you have to have a certain amount of time left prior to CCT to apply if you have not secured a consultant post at the trust?

No — there is no specific time constraint from that perspective.

- If an applicant is employed part-time is it possible to apply for this scheme with a view that the employer (NHS) would increase the FTE if successful to accommodate the award? Or is this only for full-time employed staff?

The scheme is not restricted to full-time employees. If you are currently working part time, you would need to have a discussion with your clinical employer and, where relevant, the university, to ensure that all parties are content with the proposed arrangement. Subject to that, part-time applicants are welcome to apply.

- I am an NHS consultant on a 10PA job, completed PhD in March 2025. I note the application states up to 50% FTE protected research time. Firstly, would it be suitable to apply for 20% salary i.e. 2PAs to cover one full day of protected research time (in addition to my 10PAs)? Secondly, is this seen as less attractive as an application as it is an application for less than 50% funding, or does this not influence decisions?

Yes, the award is flexible, and you can apply for anywhere up to 50% of your salary. Applying for 20% is perfectly acceptable. The panel will, however, look carefully at how the funded time sits alongside your existing 10 PAs, so it will be important to set this out clearly in your application. Applying for less than 50% will not in itself disadvantage your application

- the panel is interested in what you will do with the time, not simply how much you are requesting.

- Is the expectation that successful applicants will secure funding for consumables prior to taking up the award? or that this scheme is predominantly for clinical research?

The scheme is not restricted to clinical research. However, if your proposed work involves significant consumable costs, you will need to demonstrate in your application how those costs will be met. The panel will want to see that you have a credible and realistic plan for delivering your research - without that, it would be difficult to justify the award.

- Does the three year limit since PhD cover academic time? Clinical time? unemployed time? Any time?!?

It covers any time elapsed since PhD completion, regardless of what you were doing during that period. If you have particular circumstances you feel are relevant, please contact the team directly and they will be able to give you a definitive answer based on your situation.

- Sorry that I missed it but when will the next round of applications be?

Dates for the next round have not yet been finalised, but we expect it to open earlier than this year. A deadline around September is a possibility. We will communicate confirmed dates as soon as they are available.

- What will be the biggest stand out criteria you will be looking for when assessing this award - research project theme? Clinical research career progression? Etc

It is a combination of both. The panel will want to see a strong, well-developed research proposal alongside a clear and compelling account of the impact the award will have on your career progression. There is no single determining factor - all of the criteria listed in the advertisement will be considered. Importantly, we recognise that career progression can take many different forms, and we are not looking for one particular trajectory. What matters is that you articulate clearly what this award will enable you to do and why it matters for your development.

- What proportion of the 5 places are aimed/ringfenced for non-medical/ allied health professionals? Or does it just depend on the strength of the applications?

At this stage, no places have been ring-fenced for any particular professional group. Decisions will be made purely on the strength of applications. This is something we may review in future rounds.

RACR Questions submitted

- Could you please let me know when the posts, if successful, would commence?

For this first round of applications, awardees will be expected to commence by summer 2027, but could be earlier depending on individual circumstances.

- I work for a Community Interest Company (CIC) that is commissioned to provide NHS community services within a London borough. Do I need to be employed directly by an NHS Trust in order to apply for this award?

The eligibility has been set so that applicants need to be directly employed by one of the NHS trusts or Universities in the consortium. If you are not directly employed, then I'm afraid you are not eligible to apply. If employed by the university, as long as your contract is not an honorary contract, you will be eligible; it does not need to be a permanent contract.

- The eligibility criteria for the SWL RACR state that candidates must have had a PhD or MD(Res) awarded within the last 3 years to apply for funding. Would candidates who have recently completed other doctorates such as DClinPsy (Doctor of Clinical Psychology) also be eligible for this programme?

Unfortunately those with a DClinPsy would be ineligible to apply for the RACR, as it is a professional doctorate as opposed to a research doctorate

- I just wanted to ask if there was any leniency in the PhD eligibility criteria? I'm planning to submit my thesis at the end of this month/early in October but I'm not sure it will have been awarded by the November deadline. Would this still be okay to apply? I envision it will have been awarded by the time of interview and certainly by the time the award would begin.

The eligibility criteria has been set by the Steering Group and will need to be applied consistently to all applications. There will be a further call for applications next year if you are not able to meet eligibility this year.

- I work part time at the moment - 75% WTE. Would I then apply for 37.5% WTE research and 37.5% WTE clinical? Does it have to split 50/50? Or could it be 60/40? or 70/30 research / clinical split? And on the worktribe, am I requesting just the research cost part of the award?

The RACR comes with up to 50% protected research time. We understand this to mean 50% of an applicants WTE; if your WTE is 75% then this would mean you could claim up to 37.5% of your salary towards research.

The worktribe costings are in relation to the research part of the award and how much you will be requesting.

- Are NMHAPPS encouraged to apply? Is the process the same?

NMAHPPs are absolutely encouraged to apply; the MRC has requested we refer to NMAHPPs as 'registered and regulated healthcare professionals'. The process is exactly the same for everyone, regardless of clinical background.

- Could you clarify whether there are other application time windows planned over the 2 years? (e.g. if current funding finishes at the end of 2027, is now the right time to apply, or next year at some point?)

There is another application window planned for next year; when to apply would depend on your individual circumstances and eligibility.