

South-West London MRC Regional Account for Clinical Researchers (SWL MRC-RACR)

SWL MRC-RACR Applicant Guidelines: 2026

Purpose of the Award

The aim of the SWL MRC-RACR is to support clinicians at key career transition points and help build the next generation of clinical research leaders across the South-West London region. The programme is funded by the [Medical Research Council](#) (MRC) and will be delivered through a partnership between [Imperial College London](#), [University of Surrey](#), [City St George's University of London](#), [Brunel University of London](#), [the Institute of Cancer Research](#), the [MRC Laboratory of Medical Sciences](#), and eleven NHS Trust partners:

- [Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- [Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group](#)
- [Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- [West London NHS Trust](#)

Key Output

The key output of the award is to generate preliminary data, strengthen research skills, and facilitate progression towards research independence and future externally funded awards.

Successful applicants will receive protected research time, salary support, mentoring, career development opportunities, and access to world-leading research environments.

Funding

The SWL MRC-RACR is a short-term award (up to 12 months in the first instance) providing salary support (up to 50% of total salary) for protected research time. Awards are expected to be small-scale and focused on developing research projects, generating preliminary data, and building towards competitive applications for external funding.

Awardees will remain employed by their current employer (University or NHS Trust) and the awarded salary proportion will be covered by the SWL MRC-RACR award.

Important funding notes:

- This scheme does not provide funds for the full economic cost of the research proposed and will not be responsible for continued support past the award
- Any costs around the ending of employment that result (directly or indirectly) from the scheme's limited fixed funding will need to be borne by the employing organisation
- The SWL MRC-RACR award will not include on-call commitments; on-call costs, if appropriate, should be covered by the clinical component of the award and must be agreed with the clinical division
- Awardees will be paid at their current/equivalent pay level. If pre-CCT, the candidate will usually be appointed at the first threshold of the Consultant Clinical Academic pay scale (unless there are legitimate reasons for variation)
- This award does **not** include any research consumable or indirect costs.

Proposed Research

Research areas/projects must be agreed with the relevant University academic department and supported by the host NHS clinical division. The following general guidelines apply:

- Work involving patients, volunteers, human data and/or tissue samples must have a clear written protocol and have been through appropriate peer and HRA/ethical review, as well as the relevant internal capacity and capability assessment

Who Can Apply?

This opportunity is open to clinicians - doctors and registered regulated health and care professionals - aspiring to progress their research careers across the South-West London region. Applicants must be actively engaged in clinical practice and fall into the following category:

- **Post-PhD Transition**

You have been awarded a PhD or MD (res) within the last three years (extendable to five years with mitigating circumstances) and are seeking protected research time to continue developing your research programme while completing or having recently completed your clinical training.

Note: A PhD or MD (res) must have been awarded by the time of application.

Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must have completed a PhD or MD (res) by the time of application
- Applicants must be actively engaged in clinical practice and maintain an active clinical role alongside their research, in line with their clinical training and the requirements of their clinical job plan

- Applicants should review the SWL MRC-RACR Application Form carefully before applying. They should be confident that they are able to fulfil all requirements stated in the application form and have a credible plan for career progression and future research funding
- Applicants are strongly recommended to approach academic departments and clinical divisions as early as possible to discuss projects and obtain all required signatures and support (including salary costings)
- Applications from current Clinical Lecturers will only be considered if applicants can clearly justify why they require this award having already had 4 years CL funding

How to Apply

The application process consists of two parts:

Part 1 - Applicants must first approach and gain support/sign-off from:

- The proposed 'host' academic department in the relevant University
- The proposed host clinical/NHS division
- The TPD and Head of School if still in training

Once Sections 1a, 2, and 3 of the application form have been completed, the application form and your CV (no more than 3 pages) must be submitted to the Head of Department/Research Manager of the proposed host university academic department and the hosting NHS clinical division for them to complete Sections 1b and 1c.

Applicants are advised to contact both hosting academic departments and clinical divisions as early as possible to discuss their application and give enough time for their review, approval, and preparation of costings.

Part 2 - Once Sections 1b and 1c have been approved and all other sections completed, submit the fully completed and approved:

- SWL MRC-RACR Application form
- Curriculum Vitae (maximum 3 pages)

Via [Qualtrics](#) by **1 November 2026**.

Important Notes for Applicants

- The application process consists of two parts. The deadline for full submission is 1 November 2026
- Your CV should be a maximum of 3 pages. Please include information about your current role; past employment; relevant experience; higher education (degrees etc.); publications and conferences.

- The SWL MRC-RACR Application Form includes a Research Proposal section (Section 3). Details about your proposed research should be entered here. Sections 3.1–5.2 should be completed and expanded as necessary to a maximum of 5 pages in total.
- The Public & Patient Engagement & Inclusion (PPEI) section of the application form (Sections 4.1–4.2) will be reviewed by a panel of Community Partners and should be written in lay language

Evaluation of Applications

Applications with academic department and clinical division sponsor support will be considered by a panel of senior researchers from across the SWL MRC-RACR consortium. Applications will be assessed based on:

- Scientific quality and innovation
- Career development potential
- Strength of the training and mentorship plan
- Alignment with the applicant's longer-term career goals
- Support from the host academic department and NHS division

The highest scoring applications will be invited to attend an interview in January 2027 (date to be confirmed).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The SWL MRC-RACR is committed to creating an inclusive clinical research community and particularly welcomes applications from individuals currently under-represented in clinical academic careers.

We recognise that career paths are diverse and encourage applications from clinicians with non-traditional career trajectories, career breaks, caring responsibilities, or flexible working arrangements.

Contacts

- Further details about the SWL MRC-RACR opportunity can be found on the Clinical Academic Training Office (CATO) [website](#)
- Informal enquiries about the SWL MRC-RACR can be sent to the CATO team at: cato@imperial.ac.uk
- Questions about the online application form should be directed to the CATO team