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**Research Passports**

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1. PURPOSE

This SOP describes the process for completing the forms necessary for a Research Passport and Licence to Attend in order to undertake research related activity in the NHS. This SOP is relevant for College staff wishing to undertake research in the NHS and for staff members employed by an NHS Trust to undertake research related activity in other NHS trusts.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care published by the Department of Health requires all parties 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 procedure is the mechanism that researchers can use in order to obtain an honorary research contract (HRC) also known as a Licence to Attend (LTA) or a letter of access (LoA). The procedure enables researchers to complete a single set of documents in order to be able to access a single or multiple NHS sites. 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.

The trust fully supports the Research Passport System; nonetheless, researchers are still required to have a License to Attend. Without a License to Attend, a researcher who has no contractual employment with the ICHT, but will be working with or attached to a CPG/department to carry out research activities on the ICHT premises, or with Trust patients and in the course of the researcher duties may perform/observe clinical duties or may have access to patients or confidential information relating to the Trust, its patients, employees and other parties, will not be covered under the ICHT’s insurance policies, and hence will not be indemnified. Licenses to Attend are issued to safeguard the Trust, its patients and/or confidential information relating to the ICHT

2.1 The Research Passport

- is a single set of 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, enabling an Honorary Research Contract (License to Attend) or Letter of Access to be issued, according to the nature of the research activity;
• 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.

The Research Passport form and more details can be found at the NIHR website https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/CCF/policy-and-standards/research-passports.htm

2.2 The Licence to Attend Application form

• License to Attend enables the 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 the Non-Medical Licence to attend procedure version 1.5.

• it requires completing a separate called Licence to Attend form which is different from Research Passport form. Licence to Attend form is applicable to ICHT only. For details information and to request for the form contact the Trust HR via email: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk

3. Procedure

There are a number of documents and checks that will need to be completed by researchers in order for them to obtain a Letter of Access or Licence to Attend. However, depending on what group the researcher falls into, a Research Passport (Licence to Attend form) may not be required or allowed. Please check appendix 1 to determine what group the researcher falls under and then follow the procedure listed below.

Imperial College London contacts for Letter of Access is available from: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/joint-research-compliance-office/project-planning/research-passports/

3.1 Group A and Group B Researchers

• These researchers will need to acquire an honorary research contract also known as a Licence to Attend to work at ICHT. They should complete the Licence to Attend form (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: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk and copied the Trust HR staff who sent the form.
3.2 Group C Researchers

These researchers will not need to complete a Research Passport form or License to Attend application form. They must send a copy of their CV, the name of the person designated as their manager in ICHT, and the NHS to NHS proforma confirmation of pre-engagement checks to the JRCO office via email: jrco@imperial.ac.uk

This proforma must have been completed by the Human Resources (HR) department of their substantive employer.

Once the JRCO 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 also be sent to the researchers’ substantive employer, through the researcher HR representative who signed the form, informing them of the researcher’s activities in ICHT. A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk and a copy of the LoA sent to the researcher Trust HR representative who completed and sent the NHS to NHS form.

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 JRCO database to allow for tracking and enables the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

3.3 Group D researchers

These researchers will not need to complete a Research Passport form or License to Attend application form. They must send a copy of their CV, the name of the person designated as their manager in ICHT, and the NHS to NHS proforma confirmation of pre-engagement checks to the JRCO office via email: jrco@imperial.ac.uk

This proforma must have been completed by the Human Resources (HR) department of their substantive employer.

Once the JRCO 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 also be sent to the researchers’ substantive employer, through the researcher HR representative who signed the form, informing them of the researcher’s activities in ICHT. A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk and a copy of the LoA sent to the researcher Trust HR representative who completed and sent the NHS to NHS form.

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 JRCO database to allow for tracking and enables 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 JRCO via email: jrco@imperial.ac.uk.

The JRCO will validate the research passport form and issue the researchers with a LoA. A copy of this letter will be sent to the researchers’ substantive employer, through the researcher HR representative who signed the form, informing them of the researcher’s activities in the Trust. A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to ICHT HR department via email: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk.

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 JRCO database to allow for tracking and enables the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

3.5 Group F Researchers

These researchers will not need to complete a Research Passport form. They must send a copy of their current signed and dated CV, the name of the person designated as their manager in ICHT, and the NHS to NHS proforma confirmation of pre-engagement checks to the JRCO via email:jrco@imperial.ac.uk. This proforma must be completed by the Human Resources (HR) department of the NHS organisation who issued them with the honorary clinical contract

Once the JRCO 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 also be sent to the researchers’ substantive employer, through the researcher HR representative who signed the form, informing them of the researcher’s activities in ICHT.

A copy of the letter of Access and all the documents obtained from the researcher must be sent to Trust HR via email: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk and a copy of the LoA sent to the researcher Trust HR representative who completed and sent the NHS to NHS form

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 JRCO database to allow for tracking and enables 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 cover the proposed research activities.. 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 cover the proposed research activities. 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 JRCO via email:jrco@imperial.ac.uk.

The JRCO 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: LicenceToAttend@imperial.nhs.uk.

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 JRCO database to allow for tracking and enables the researcher to be contacted when necessary.

3.9 Group J 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.

3.10 Group K 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 JRCO pre-award or ICHT HR for details.
REFERENCES


2. Non-Medical Licence to Attend Procedure, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, version 1.5 dated 05 February 2014.
Appendix 1 - Researcher Grouping According to NIHR criteria.

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. (Refer to the NIHR website below for the algorithm of research activity and pre-engagement checks) [http://www.nihr.ac.uk/systems/Pages/systems_research_passports.aspx](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/systems/Pages/systems_research_passports.aspx)

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: Students conducting research as part of their healthcare placements.

Group K: Researchers from a commercial company.