

Clinical Academic Research Partnerships

- **Status:** Open
- **Open date:** 30 Nov 2018
- **Closing date:** 12 Mar 2019 16:00 GMT
- **Type:** Grants, Researcher-led
- **Categories:** Infections and immunity, Molecular and cellular medicine, Population and systems medicine, Neurosciences and mental health, Translation, Global health, Methodology, Public health

Aim

A strong multidisciplinary clinical academic workforce is critical to the delivery of many aspects of the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy, in addition to the MRC core mission of carrying out research for patient benefit. As team science approaches to scientific challenges increase, so does the need for the skills and experience to underpin effective collaborations across disciplines, institutions and sectors.

As part of a strong clinical academic workforce, doctors are uniquely positioned to contribute to research. Regular clinical contact enables them to identify emerging research needs and to understand the areas that will make the most difference to patients. It affords them a practical understanding of how to translate research into patient benefit in day-to-day practice. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that clinicians remain involved in research at all levels.

This scheme provides a new flexible route for research-qualified NHS consultants to increase their research skills and experience by engaging with groups and centres of biomedical research excellence, enabling the cross-seeding of perspectives, ideas and connections needed to underpin future translational biomedical research.

Working in partnership to support this pilot, the MRC will be committing £10 million across two rounds, with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) committing up to an additional £2 million.

Scope

The scheme pilots a new mechanism for NHS consultants with a PhD or MD (or equivalent higher research degree) who are not currently research active to participate in collaborative high-quality research partnerships with established leading biomedical researchers.

Applicants

Applicants should be working at consultant-level in an NHS trust with evidence of clinical academic research excellence (for example, an NIHR Biomedical Research Centre or equivalent). Applicants must hold a PhD (or equivalent higher research degree, such as a DPhil or MD). There is no eligibility criterion for how long ago the applicant obtained their

PhD. Within their current posts applicants should not be currently undertaking any substantive research activity (for example have no research funding, and the expectation is that they will have less than one PA of research time). In their applications they must identify a research partner who has significant research funding for the duration of the partnership.

Research partners

Research partners must already have an ongoing peer-reviewed research programme (funded by MRC or other research council, NIHR, Wellcome, CRUK, BHF and so on) for the duration of the planned partnership. They must also be based at an institution eligible to hold research council funding.

Projects

Projects are welcome across all areas of the partnering funders' remits and interests and are open to clinicians in any specialty, including dentistry. Applications may range from basic discovery science to translational and developmental clinical research, and may address research questions from disease-specific mechanistic hypotheses through to research in priority areas such as population health, public health and molecular pathology as outlined in MRC's strategic plan. Applications addressing global health issues resulting in primary benefit to those living in low and middle income countries (LMIC), or those proposing interdisciplinary approaches are also welcomed. The proposed project should be tailored to the interests of and expertise of the applicant and research partner, and designed to provide a mutually beneficial collaboration for both parties.

Institutional support required

The NHS organisation that employs the applicant must provide an upfront commitment on protected research time and a commitment to ensuring that the awardee can re-enter the clinic full-time without any loss of career progression/status at the end of the award. The academic organisation must demonstrate appropriate support (such as access to facilities) to enable the applicant to successfully undertake the project described.

Funding available

Awards are flexible to enable applicants to tailor the support requested to their individual collaborative plans.

Awards will be a minimum of one year and maximum of three years in duration. Each award will support between 30-50% of the applicant's basic salary to support protected research time, and costs for consumables to undertake the project. No additional support for salaries may be requested.

£12 million is available over the first two rounds of the scheme, from which it is anticipated 45-50 awards will be made. There is no limit to the total support an application can request, but applicants should be mindful of the budget available and anticipated number of awards. All awards will be on the basis of Full Economic Costing.

Review

Proposals will be assessed by a specially convened panel, which will reach decisions without seeking external referees' comments. Applicants will not be required to interview. Unsuccessful applicants will receive general feedback.

Proposals will be assessed on:

- the track record of the research partner, including their funding and productivity to date, and ability to offer a strong environment to host the applicant
- evidence of the research capabilities of the applicant, as demonstrated by the productivity and skills gained during their PhD or MD, and any other past research experience if applicable
- alignment of the project to research strengths and interests of the applicant and research partner
- demonstration of the project providing a mutually beneficial collaboration, enhancing the applicant's research experience and contribution they can make to the research partner's existing team
- strength of the institutional support provided, including the facilities and experience the research partner is able to provide, and strength of support from the employing NHS organisation.

Dates

Round 1:

- call opens in Je-S: 30 November 2018
- submission deadline: 12 March 2019
- panel meeting: April 2019 (date tbc)
- take up of awards expected: May-October 2019.

Round 2:

- call opens in Je-S: April 2019
- submission deadline: June-July 2019
- panel meeting: August 2019
- award take up: September 2019-February 2020.

Exact dates to be confirmed.

How to submit

All proposals must be completed and submitted through the Je-S system by 16:00 GMT on 12 March 2019. The call will be available to select on Je-S from 30 November 2018.

For full details on preparing and submitting a proposal see the CARP guidance for applicants.

<https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/browse/carp/clinical-academic-research-partnerships/#Funding>