

NIHR Remit for Training Programme Awards

All research funded by the NIHR as part of a training award managed by the Trainees Coordinating Centre must fall within the following remit:

1. The overall remit of the NIHR is early translational (experimental medicine), clinical and applied health research, including social care research.
2. For personal doctoral-level awards the proposal:
 - must be for clinical and applied health research, including social care research
 - must have clear potential for directly benefitting patients and the public (but recognising the training element of the research)
 - can involve: patients; samples or data from patients; people who are not patients; populations; health technology assessment; or health services research

At doctoral-level, early translational (experimental medicine) research is funded through the NIHR early translational (experimental medicine) infrastructure and particularly the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) training programmes.

3. For Advanced Fellowships, early translational (experimental medicine) research will be within remit. A clear and plausible path to patient or public benefit must, however, be demonstrable.
4. NIHR does not support basic research or work involving animals or their tissue.
5. If the work involves biomarkers:
 - research that tests whether application of new knowledge can improve treatment or patient outcomes, and has obvious direct potential benefit, is within remit; this might include application of known biomarkers, or other prognostic factors, to refine and test novel therapeutic strategies
 - research that aims only to elucidate mechanisms underpinning disease, or identify risk factors for disease or prognosis (including search for biomarkers) is out of remit.
6. The NIHR is also prepared to support high quality research into 'medical education' (defined broadly as education for healthcare providers) and methodological research. It is expected that the research will have the potential to have practical application and the potential impact on patients and the public must be made clear.

NIHR Remit frequently asked questions (FAQs):

The following FAQs are designed to help applicants decide whether the research they are proposing as part of a Fellowship or other research training application falls within the remit of the NIHR. Please bear in mind that in these applications, the research project proposal does not stand alone, but is part of a package of elements expected to provide an excellent training experience that will allow the successful applicant to take his/her skills and experiences to a still higher level. Therefore, along with the research proposal, NIHR panels will assess the abilities, academic trajectory, existing experience, commitment to a career in health research, ambition and aspirations of the applicant, the standards in the research training environment, and the plans for explicit training in research methods. The research proposal provides a framework for research experience so has to be of high quality, but a good research proposal will not be supported if other elements are weak.

If you are proposing a programme of work as part of an application (particularly relevant for more senior awards) it maybe that certain elements of the programme would be outside the remit of NIHR if considered in isolation. If this is the case it is important that you make clear in your application that the research overall fits within the remit of NIHR and also why any elements which could be considered out of remit are necessary to include. It is also important to note that any elements of the research which are considered out of remit will not be funded by NIHR should your application be successful. This includes any work involving animals or their tissue, which NIHR does not fund under any circumstances. Applications which include a programme of work where the majority of the work is out of remit but with a small study within NIHR remit added on, will not be considered.

If you have queries over whether the research you are proposing as part of a research training application falls within the NIHR remit you are strongly advised to speak to a Senior Programme Manager for the award you applying for before submitting an application.

Do you fund the evaluation of education and/or training schemes? Yes.

Proposed studies should be within the overall remit of the NIHR and outcomes measured should be health related, or there should be good evidence for a link between the outcome measured and a health outcome.

Do you fund the development and/or evaluation of decision aids for patients?

The development or updating of a decision aid will be considered as part of a larger project or programme.

Do you fund the development of interventions, devices, technologies or services? The development or adaptation of interventions can be considered as part of a larger project or programme of work. We will not fund standalone developmental studies.

Do you fund the development and/or evaluation of outcome measures, questionnaires or surveys (e.g. Patient Reported Experience/Outcome Measures)? The development, adaptation or updating of outcome measures questionnaires or surveys can be considered as part of a larger project or programme of work.

Do you fund the development, evaluation and/or validation of models (e.g. risk factor models, health economic models etc)?

Yes – we will consider funding the development of models where there is a case for

service need or patient/public benefit. There should also be an evaluation or validation aspect to the study.

Do you fund research that is relevant to, or takes place outside the NHS? Yes. We fund research aimed at improving health, public health and health related social care in a broad sense; we therefore fund research to meet the needs of health services, the NHS, public health and health related social care. Proposed studies should be within the overall remit of the NIHR and outcomes measured should be health related, or there should be good evidence for a link between the outcome measured and a health outcome.

Do you fund research requiring observational/applied epidemiological methods? We fund research according to the potential for patient/public benefit rather than according to specific methodologies. We therefore fund research using a wide range of study designs including observational and applied epidemiological methods. Any study that uses observational and applied epidemiological methods should be an evaluation of an intervention itself, or have a clear, credible and articulated trajectory to further research within NIHR remits. An applied epidemiological component can also be considered as part of a larger project or programme of work.

Do you fund research into workforce? Yes. Proposed studies should be within the overall remit of the NIHR and should concern the impact on health and well-being, whether of patients, the public, or of the workforce itself.

Do you fund research into patient and public involvement in research? Yes. Proposed studies would need to demonstrate the potential for practical application and make clear the potential impact on patients and/or the public.

How does NIHR define the early translational (experimental medicine) research that it is interested in funding?

NIHR is interested in funding translational research which involves investigation undertaken in humans which can show a trajectory to benefiting patients. Proposals must show a clear link to improving disease outcomes and/or improvements in health. This could include proof of concept studies in humans and phase 1 clinical trials. Research which is aimed only at furthering understanding of the underlying biology and physiology of disease, including research into disease mechanisms is not within remit.