

Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowship Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

<p>My profession is not listed as an ICA Programme Eligible Profession. Can I apply to the NIHR TCC for special dispensation to apply?</p>	<p>Prospective applicants whose clinical profession is not listed as an ICA eligible profession, but who are registered with one of the regulators listed for one of the named eligible professions (e.g. HCPC) should contact the NIHR TCC to discuss their eligibility further.</p> <p>If a prospective applicant's profession is not listed as an ICA eligible profession, and they are not registered with one of the regulators listed for one of the named eligible professions, they are not eligible to apply to any of the ICA schemes.</p> <p>Applicants considering doctoral level training may be interested in the NIHR Fellowships Programme, which is open to all professions.</p>
<p>My nursing qualification is at diploma level, but I have since achieved a post-graduate (Masters</p>	<p>If an applicant's original professional qualification did not result in a degree, a subsequent Masters degree would enable them to meet the eligibility criterion that requires applicants to be "graduate (post degree) professionals" from one of the ICA eligible healthcare professions.</p>

level) diploma. Would I meet the criteria to apply?

In addition, individuals without a first degree or a Masters would be eligible to apply, but would be expected to use the award to gain a Masters degree and, therefore, eligibility for subsequent PhD study.

Employment

What do I have to do about my current job in terms of being able to undertake the academic training funded through the PCAF? Do I ask for a secondment?

PCAF award holders will hold a contract of employment with the Employing Host Organisation for the hours and duration of the Fellowship. There are a number of possible scenarios that prospective applicants and their line managers may encounter:

- i) **Applicant proposes uptake of a Fellowship at the same number of hours per week that they are currently employed and the proposed Employing Host Organisation is the applicant's current employer**

No change to the Fellow's employment contract would be required, however the Fellow's line management would need to make arrangements to cover the time the award holder will spend away from their clinical position when undertaking their academic training. The award funds 50% of the award holder's salary, therefore, the employing host organisation has the option to use the 50% of the award holder's salary that they are saving/ not paying during the award to backfill the clinical position of the award holder.

- ii) **Applicant proposes uptake of a Fellowship at an increased number of hours to that currently employed for and the proposed Employing Host Organisation is the applicant's current employer**

The Fellow's employment contract for the duration of the Fellowship must cover the hours and duration of the award, even if the number of hours undertaking clinical practice for the host organisation remains the same. A change to the Fellow's employment contract would be required.

The award funds 50% of the award holder's salary, therefore, the employing host organisation, although increasing the hours the Fellow is employed for during the award, will only need to

cover an increase in salary costs if the awardee will be spending an increased number of hours in clinical practice. The award will fund the hours spent in academic training.

iii) **Applicant proposes uptake of a Fellowship at a decreased number of hours to that currently employed for and the proposed Employing Host Organisation is the applicant's current employer**

A Fellow could negotiate a revised contract of employment for a reduced number of hours as long as the employment contract covers the hours and duration of the PCAF award.

If a prospective Fellow wished to take up the award at less hours than they are currently employed in order to undertake a separate role at the same employing organisation, which would make up the rest of the hours of their employment contract, the Fellow could retain their current employment contract. Employment or activities undertaken outside of the PCAF are at the awardees own discretion, however, and would not be funded by the award.

iv) **Applicant proposes a Fellowship with an Employing Host Organisation that is not the applicant's current employer**

If the application is successful, the Fellow will have a contract of employment with their new employer for the hours and duration of the Fellowship. The new employer will be responsible for covering up to 50% of the award holder's salary to cover their time spent in clinical practice. The award will also fund up to 50% of the award holder's salary to cover the time spent in academic training.

Award holder's **must** hold a contract of employment for the hours and duration of the Fellowship with the Employing Host Organisation that will hold the award contract. Secondments for award holders are only possible, therefore, if the employing organisation is the awardees current employer with whom they want to remain employed following the completion of their award.

Prospective applicants are advised to discuss employment arrangements as early as possible with their host organisations and to ensure they are clear what arrangements are in place for their contracts of employment following completion of the award.

<p>What happens if I get promoted over the course of the award?</p>	<p>The award will cover annual salary increments, which will be built into the award contract. If an award holder is offered a promotion over the course of the award, however, it would be the responsibility of the employing host to “top up” their salary, the increase in salary would not be included in the award.</p> <p>If an applicant is offered a promotion in between submitting an application and being offered an award, there is the potential to reflect the new salary in the award costs as long as the promotion is not a result of the offer of the award.</p>
<p>Can the PCAF support 100% academic training for one year? My managers are likely to find it much easier to back fill a full time post rather than 50% of my post over 2 years</p>	<p>Careful consideration was given to the structure of the new pre-doctoral level provision while the PCAF scheme was being developed. The decision to support a model where Fellows are splitting their time equally between clinical service and academic training reflects the purpose of the ICA Programme funding - to support non-medical healthcare professionals to develop careers that combine clinical research and research leadership with continued clinical practice and clinical development. As such, the PCAF scheme has been designed to enable individuals in the early stages of their research career to develop academically while continuing their clinical development.</p> <p>Institutional support and the correct environment is vital for a successful personal research training award application. For ICA applicants, the commitment of the hosting organisations to the individual's clinical academic career and, at doctoral level and above, capacity building of non-medical clinical academic careers, is a key area of assessment for the review panels.</p> <p>Prospective PCAF applicants will already need to be planning their doctoral level clinical academic career development and support from their clinical host organisations to enable them to remain clinically active while developing their research careers will be key to this.</p> <p>We have recently produced a webinar designed to support managers of aspiring clinical academics. This is available via the NIHR TCC Webinar Channel. [https://www.nihr.ac.uk/events/webinars/nihr-tcc-webinar-channel/6488]</p> <p>A Guide to support aspiring clinical academics and their managers is also available from the NIHR website: Building a Research Career.</p>

<p>I wish to develop my research career, and therefore undertake academic training during my PCAF, within a different clinical area to that in which I currently work. Would this be possible?</p>	<p>There is no stipulation that the academic training undertaken during a PCAF relates to the Fellow's current area of clinical practice however, prospective applicants will need to demonstrate to the panel how the award is going to enable them to develop a clinical academic career. Thinking about how the award can support a move into a desired area of clinical practice, and being clear in the application about the career the PCAF will support the development of, will be important.</p>
<p>The PCAF Guidance states that awards can be taken up at</p> <p>100% for 24 months 80% for 30 months 60% for 40 months</p> <p>What does that mean in terms of number of days in clinical practice?</p>	<p>The PCAF is a two year award (or can be taken up part-time over 30 or 40 months), during which Fellows split their time equally between their clinical position and the academic training funded through the award. Applicants must have arrangements in place for a clinical post that will constitute 50% of their proposed Fellowship.</p> <p>The breakdown of clinical time and academic time over the course of the award should average out approximately as:</p> <p>Full time (100% uptake): Averaging 2.5 days in your clinical role and 2.5 days in academic training per week for 24 months</p> <p>80% uptake: Averaging 2 days in your clinical role and 2 days in academic training per week for 30 months</p> <p>60% uptake: Averaging 1.5 days in your clinical role and 1.5 days in academic training per week for 40 months</p> <p>How the 50:50 split is actually arranged over the course of the award, however, is flexible to support the academic training detailed (e.g. an applicant may wish to spend a full week on a course or time in another group) but this must be clearly detailed in the application form.</p>

Scope of the Academic Training

<p>I have completed a lot of academic training already and would like to use the PCAF</p>	<p>Planning for the submission of your doctoral Fellowship application will strengthen your academic training plan and the evidence of your commitment to a clinical academic career, however, you will need to demonstrate to the PCAF review panel that the PCAF is the correct award for you. It is worth taking advice</p>
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<p>primarily to develop a proposal for a doctoral Fellowship.</p> <p>Can I propose, in my PCAF training plan, submitting an application for a doctoral Fellowship before the end of the PCAF?</p>	<p>from your proposed academic supervisor as to which ICA scheme is the correct award given your research experience and academic training to date. Do you need time to develop academically or are you already at a stage where you would be a competitive doctoral level applicant? Securing support from your host organisations for the time to complete the doctoral fellowship application form may meet your needs better and demonstrate support for your clinical academic career from you host organisations. A PCAF should support, not delay, the development of your clinical research career.</p> <p>If you and your supervisors do not feel that you would make a competitive doctoral applicant without the PCAF, but you are sure that the doctoral fellowship application would be submitted before the end of the PCAF award, you will need to think about how the remaining academic training time would be best used to support your clinical academic career development. The academic training funded through the PCAF can include dissemination of research findings, building networks, preliminary research in support of a PhD proposal and learning about areas such as PPI in order to develop skills for a PhD and should be developed around your individual needs. As such, we are not restrictive as to what the training should include, however, there are restrictions as to what can be funded and you need to provide justification for the training programme proposed - why this is the right training for you, how this training will support you to develop your clinical academic career?</p>
<p>I would like to apply for a part time Masters as part of the PCAF Fellowship to build on my research skills and knowledge - would this be possible?</p>	<p>The completion of a Master's degree or Masters modules, could be supported as part of the training plan if appropriate to your developmental needs. You would need to consider the academic skills that you need to develop in order to be a competitive doctoral level applicant. In addition, you would be proposing to split the Fellowship time 50:50 between your clinical role and academic training and the academic element of the award must include the preparation of an application for a competitive, peer-reviewed doctoral level research training fellowship such as the HEE/NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship. You would need to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete the academic training plan over the course of the PCAF.</p>
<p>I have already undertaken a number of Masters modules. Can I use the PCAF to do additional Masters modules to gain a full masters?</p>	<p>The completion of a formal academic qualification, such as a Master's degree, can be supported as part of the training plan if appropriate to the developmental needs of the applicant. The academic element of the award must include the preparation of an application for a competitive, peer-reviewed doctoral level research training fellowship such as the ICA Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship.</p>
<p>How much time can be spent undertaking research during the PCAF?</p>	<p>Preliminary research in support of the subsequent doctoral level may be proposed as part of the training plan if appropriate to the developmental needs of the applicant. Candidates will need consider the time available through the award to undertake the training programme to ensure there will be the capacity to</p>

	<p>undertake the proposed research and to prepare an application for a competitive, peer-reviewed doctoral level research training fellowship and any other additional training they wish to undertake during the award.</p> <p>Research costs cannot be funded through this award, however, and the primary supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the all necessary regulatory approvals are in place prior to undertaking any research included in the PCAF training and development programme.</p>
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