NIHR SENIOR INVESTIGATORS COMPETITION 12

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

INTRODUCTION

The vision of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. NIHR Senior Investigators are some of the nation’s most outstanding leaders of clinical and applied health and social care research. At present there are 200 members of the NIHR College of Senior Investigators. The intention is to maintain numbers at around this level through continuing annual rounds of competition.

This document sets out the detailed process for a new, open competition for NIHR Investigators to submit an application for an NIHR Senior Investigator award. An Independent Selection Panel will review applications and make recommendations on NIHR Senior Investigator awards.

AIMS OF THE SCHEME

Senior Investigators, as NIHR’s most prominent and prestigious researchers, are fundamental to NIHR. Together, members constitute the College of Senior Investigators, a distinguished body with its own programme of events that provide visible leadership within the NIHR. More details can be found at this link. From 2018 onwards, Senior Investigators will become Members of the NIHR Academy, with an enhanced role in providing senior leadership and helping to develop research capability (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/our-faculty/documents/TCC-NIHR-Strategic-Review-of-Training-2017.pdf). The award acknowledges senior researchers and their work; enhancing esteem for clinical and applied health and social care research and reflects individuals' national and international prominence.

NIHR Senior Investigators will be awarded 3, 4 or 5 year appointments on the recommendation of an Independent Selection Panel and appointments can be held for a maximum of two terms, equating to a maximum of eight years in total. NIHR Senior Investigators are awarded no more than two terms in post in order to continue to incentivise the research community by creating opportunities for new researchers to participate in NIHR at this level, whilst maintaining the College of Senior Investigators at a manageable size. After two terms, a Senior Investigator will be awarded an Emeritus status, if continuing in substantive employment.

Full information on NIHR Senior Investigators and NIHR People is available at http://www.nihr.ac.uk/our-faculty/.
As a condition of appointment, successful applicants will be expected to join a half-day NIHR Senior Investigators’ introductory meeting for all new and returning Senior Investigators. The purpose of the meeting is to help Senior Investigators navigate and define their role, meet with fellow Senior Investigators, and discuss topical issues with Department of Health and Social Care and NIHR colleagues.

The role of the NIHR Senior Investigators will be to:

**Contribute significantly to NIHR as a senior leader**
- Support panels and peer review activities, Boards and roles in the Infrastructure;
- Engage with and provide advice and suggestions to the Chief Scientific Adviser and the Department of Health and Social Care’s Science, Research & Evidence Directorate on key activities, programmes and consultations;
- Provide formal leadership within the NIHR at regional and national levels.

**Lead in Training and Development of NIHR’s people**
- Become an active Member of the NIHR Academy;
- Maintain a strong track record in training and developing researchers and shaping the training agenda;
- Mentor other members of the NIHR workforce – both informally and as part of an ongoing formal NIHR mentoring programme;
- Take part in activities run through the NIHR Leadership Programme.

**Act as an Ambassador for the NIHR in the wider system**
- Act as ambassadors and advocates for NIHR, identifying and utilising platforms for promoting NIHR activity;
- Work with stakeholders, especially the NHS, and public health and social care systems, to disseminate and act on NIHR’s aims;
- Be key communicators within NIHR.

**Research Excellence**
- Maintain and develop a track record of excellence in clinical and applied research, of benefit to patients, the public and the health and care system.

**Contribute to Growth**
- Play a leading role in NIHR’s Contribution to Growth.
- This can be done through working with the NIHR, through:
  - supporting collaborations and contract research with the life sciences industry;
  - creating the research environment that supports the nation’s international competitiveness;
  - attracting, developing and retaining a highly skilled health research workforce;
  - providing the clinical evidence to help the NHS and public sector to make efficient use of resources; and
  - providing the research evidence that contributes to establishing a healthier workforce and wider population.
Integrate Patient and Public Involvement in Research

- Integrate patient and public involvement (PPI) in their research, provide leadership and support capacity development for PPI.

ELIGIBILITY

NIHR Investigators are eligible to apply to become NIHR Senior Investigators. Associates and Trainees are not eligible to apply.

NIHR Investigators are researchers who:

- conduct or support clinical and applied health and social care research;
- have part or all of their salary funded as a ‘Research Cost’ from NIHR have ‘Active’ funding at the time of application (e.g. the grant must be live and research must have begun and extend beyond 30 June 2019); and
- are employed by an NHS organisation or by a university or a charity based in England.

NIHR Research Professors reaching the end of their term are also eligible to apply; providing their term ends before 1 April 2019 and they have ‘Active’ NIHR funding at the time of application; independent of their NIHR Research Professorship award.

The NIHR funding streams, which confer NIHR Investigator status (and hence eligibility to apply to become a Senior Investigator), are those for NIHR Projects, Programmes, Units, Centres, and Schools; NIHR and Medical Research Council (MRC) Partnership Programmes; and other NIHR contracts. This funding is administered mainly through some of NIHR's managing agents: the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) and the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC). Applicants from grants from NIHR joint funding (managed outside of NIHR) are also eligible to apply. A full list is given in Annex 1.

An individual currently working at a site funded by one of the NIHR Infrastructure grants [e.g. Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) etc.] is also eligible to apply. Individuals from the Infrastructure will be cross-checked against the Infrastructure Investigator list submitted in the annual reports. If an applicant is not listed within the annual reports, a letter of support from the site Director or another individual with the relevant authority will be required. If the grant is new and an annual report has not yet been submitted, a letter of support from the site Director will be also required.

The applicant will need to state how much of their salary is funded as a ‘Research Cost’ from NIHR funding in FTE commitment and state the relationship the applicant has to the eligible grant. If the applicant is conducting research in the same department, but no part of their salary is paid through the NIHR, they are not eligible to apply.

Current Senior Investigators whose first-term appointments expire on 31 March 2019 can reapply, if they remain eligible. These applications will be entered into the competition.
alongside those of all other applicants on an equal footing. Senior Investigator appointments can be held for a maximum of two terms, equating to a maximum of eight years in total, after which they will be awarded Emeritus status and are no longer eligible to reapply.

Eligibility will be checked by the NIHR and the Department of Health and Social Care. Individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria will be notified and their applications withdrawn from the process.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

The NIHR Senior Investigators will be selected by open competition. Applications will be considered by an Independent Selection Panel. Each application will be allocated to three members of the Panel as Lead Assessors, and to one PPI member, who will review the information provided in the application form.

The Panel will advise the Chief Scientific Adviser, Department of Health and Social Care, as to which applicants should be appointed.

The timetable will be:

- 27 June 2018: Competition opens
- 29 August 2018: Deadline for applications
- December 2018: Independent Selection Panel meeting
- February 2019: Applicant notification of outcome
- 1 April 2019: Senior Investigator term begins

**FUNDING**

Funding will be awarded for 3, 4 or 5 year appointments on the recommendation of the Independent Selection Panel (starting 1 April 2019).

Selected Senior Investigators will receive a discretionary research award of £15,000 per annum payable to their employer. The discretionary award is designed to fund activities that support their research.

Typical examples might be:

- Travel costs
- Conference costs
- Personal development and team building
- Books
- Consumables and minor items of equipment (not capital equipment)
- Bridging funds to support research staff appointments whilst awaiting new research income
• Providing additional support (e.g. clerical) including overtime payments

These activities may be carried out by the NIHR Senior Investigator or by other individuals at the NIHR Senior Investigator's discretion.

Research Capability Funding

Research Capability Funding (RCF) payments of £75,000 per annum accompany the Senior Investigator appointments. Allocations will only be made to Senior Investigators who hold a substantive or honorary contract with an NHS Organisation. We expect that the Senior Investigator will have access to, and a say in, the use of the RCF. This must be in line with the agreed uses of RCF.

RCF payments can be used towards (but are not limited to):

• Helping research-active NHS Organisations to act flexibly and strategically to maintain research capacity and capability;
• Supporting the appointment, development and retention of key staff undertaking or supporting clinical and applied health and social care research;
• Contributing towards costs of hosting NIHR-funded or 'adopted' research that are not currently fully covered across NIHR’s programmes and that are not met in other ways.

The employer is responsible for managing the award and making sure it is used for its intended purpose. Where individuals with an award transfer to another employing institution then the award would transfer to the new institution and any surplus funds, which have not been accounted for in contracted expenditure would also transfer to the new employing institution. This process should be managed between both institutions’ finance departments as the NIHR cannot provide a Deed of Novation (DoN) for non-contracted funds.

Where individuals’ appointment should expire before their funds are used, individuals are allowed to retain the remainder of the award for the uses intended for any period of time beyond the end of the award. This will not necessitate a No-cost Extension as the funds are not contracted. Please note that if an individual retires or moves outside of England, the NIHR will need to be informed and funds will need to be returned.

The NIHR would not expect overheads to be deducted from this award by the employing institution.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE APPLICATION STAGE

The selection criteria for the full application will be:

A. Individual Research Excellence and Impact
   • High quality and volume of internationally excellent research;
B. NIHR and Applied Research Focus

- Evidence of significant personal contribution to the NIHR;
- Research portfolio highly relevant to the health and care of patients and the public; and with high impact of the research on improvements in health and social care and public health;
- Strong track record of effective patient and public involvement (PPI) in research including leadership and capacity development for PPI;
- Contribution to Growth.

C. Training and Leadership

- High impact of the leadership of the individual on clinical and applied research;
- Strong track record in training and developing researchers including evidence of helping to shape training agendas at regional and national level; with a specific level of Doctoral research supervision;
- Evidence of engagement of healthcare planners and/or policymakers.

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED IN THE APPLICATION

NIHR Investigators applying for the Senior Investigator competition will need to complete and submit an application.

The application will need to set out:

1. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for an NIHR Senior Investigator award, applicants must be paid part of their salary as a ‘Research Cost’ of the grant. The applicant must provide information on the source of, and FTE commitment and relationship to, the qualifying grant. If the qualifying grant does not have a project title, please provide the job title instead. If the qualifying grant does not have a reference number, please provide place of work or name of NIHR Infrastructure.

Please refer to the ‘Eligibility’ section of this document for any further clarifications.

2. Applicant Details

Further details on the applicant such as Professional Background, Region (applicants outside of England are not eligible to apply), NHS Trust Affiliation and Research Fields are required. All information regarding applicant details is auto-populated from the ‘Manage my Details’ section within the Lead Applicant’s CCF RMS Portal account. This should be updated and edited prior to submission. It is necessary to select a subcategory of professional background for those who select ‘Allied Health Professional’, ‘Not a Health Professional’, or ‘Other Health Professional’.

Applicants should enter the name of their NHS Organisation and whether they hold a substantive or honorary contract. This information will be used to allocate Research
Capability Funding (RCF), if successful. Use the search option to select the NHS Organisation the applicant is affiliated with. If the organisation does not appear on this list, please contact the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility. Please be aware that if the applicant is successful in this competition and they have not entered an NHS Organisation, then they will not be in receipt of RCF.

If the applicant holds contracts with more than one NHS Organisation, they should still name only one NHS Organisation on the application form. Substantive contracts should take precedence over honorary contracts. If an applicant holds more than one honorary contract, please select the Organisation with which they do the most research.

The applicant should state whether they are a clinical academic and, if so, how much of their time is spent on clinical duties. For the purposes of this competition, clinical academics are clinically active health researchers. Clinical academic posts are often joint appointments between health and/or social care organisations and a Higher Education Institution. Both organisations support the post; with one organisation typically holding the substantive contract of employment (with an honorary appointment in the other) to facilitate working across the organisations.

The applicant should choose the two most appropriate categories for ‘Research Fields’. If their research is best defined by just one of the categories in this section, please select the same field in both drop-down boxes.

3. Academic and Professional Qualifications

The applicant will need to provide information on prizes, awards, honours they hold as well as research and infrastructure grants for which they were a Chief Investigator, Co-Chief Investigator, Principal Investigator or Co-Applicant. For the purposes of this competition, a Chief Investigator is an individual who is responsible for the conduct of the whole research project. A Principal Investigator is an individual responsible for the conduct of the research at a local research site.

Grant income in the last five years refers to grants that have been active in the last five years, between 23/08/13 and 22/08/18. Research Capability Funding should not be included in the section.

The academic and professional qualifications and present and previous employment sections will be pulled through from the ‘Manage my Details’ section. Please note that any fields left blank will render the application ineligible.

4. Publications

Assessment of research excellence will be determined through analyses of publications and reviewing applicants’ Google Scholar profiles. Therefore, the applicant will need to provide their ORCID ID and a link to their Google Scholar profile, as well as providing their Google Scholar H-Index. The onus is on the applicant to ensure that their ORCID ID and Google Scholar profile are up-to-date, with all their publications linked, as these are what the
Panel will refer to when assessing an applicant’s research excellence. Please ensure that the Google Scholar profile is made public. The H-Index entered must be the most recent H-Index and correspond to the date of the application submission.

The NIHR utilises Google Scholar as it is an accessible database that provides basic publication metrics; however, like all publication databases, it has its limitations. We are, therefore, asking for ORCID ID, which is both consistent with NIHR policy and provides the opportunity to use alternative databases to interrogate an applicant’s publication record to further support deliberations of the Panel. Please note the use of information relating to publications is only one factor of several used by the Panel.

The applicant must enter their top 20 publications from the past ten years (23/08/2008-22/08/2018) ranked from 1-20. These should be the publications that are considered to be their most important and ones in which they played a substantial role. Publications outside the date range are not admissible and the application cannot be submitted until they are removed. The applicant must be a named author on the publication. Applicants can include publications in which they were part of a consortium.

Please note that publications in press are not admissible. Cochrane Database Review papers are accepted, as are conference proceedings if they have been published in regular volumes of peer reviewed journals. If no exact date of publication is available, please enter ‘01’ for date and month. Details of the applicant’s role in the research leading to the publication are required.

For each publication, the applicant should provide at least one of the following:

- Web of Science code (preferred)
- MEDLINE PMID code (preferred)
- DOI number
- ISSN number

Please note that failure to submit the codes for publications that are listed in the Web of Science or PubMed databases, will risk the application being excluded from the competition.

All Web of Science publication references have a ‘UT’ code (also known as an ‘ISI’ tag). UT code is the unique ID which is obtained for each reference in Web of Science and Web of Knowledge. When entering the code, only type the 15-digit number (without the prefix ISI, WOS or UT). PMID codes consist of 8 digits with no breaks or punctuations.

Some publications do not have PMID or UT codes, for these, please enter the DOI and/or the ISSN code. DOI codes consist of numbers assigned to publishers, the journal title, and each article. ISSN codes are eight digit numbers, divided by a hyphen into two four-digit numbers.

The Department of Health and Social Care and NIHR are committed to supporting researchers in diverse fields and with diverse career paths (including career breaks), and recognises that there are circumstances which may impact on the applicant’s research...
outputs produced over the relevant period of academic careers (e.g. periods of maternity leave, parental leave, sick leave). Therefore, if there is anything that may have an impact on the applicant’s publication record, please outline the reasons for this to ensure that the application is judged appropriately.

5. Case for Support

Provide clear and comprehensive evidence supporting each criterion. All sections must be completed for the Panel to be able to make an informed decision on the application. Applicants should include anything relevant to their application as only information submitted in the form will be taken into account by the Panel.

- Contribution to the NIHR

The applicant must provide examples of their contribution to NIHR, concentrating on the past five years: including work on NIHR panels, committees, events, supporting training, and support for peer review; and any formal leadership roles in NIHR. Formal leadership in the NIHR must be exhibited at national and regional levels.

For applicants who have been previous Senior Investigators (i.e. applying for their second term), the applicant will need to demonstrate how they have contributed to the NIHR during their first term.

The quality and quantity of contribution to the NIHR will be initially assessed by the NIHR and the Department of Health and Social Care. Individuals are expected to describe the contribution they make to the NIHR and those who do not achieve the minimum level of contribution (i.e. only receive funding from NIHR and/or have little involvement in the NIHR), will be notified and their applications withdrawn from the process.

- Relevance of the research portfolio to patients and the public with translation into improvements in healthcare

The two most significant examples of the relevance of the applicant’s research to patients and the public must be provided; citing publications or other evidence. Moreover, the applicant should provide information on how their research has been translated into improving healthcare outcomes in the last ten years; again, citing publications or other evidence such as clinical guidelines. The methods whereby research has been translated should be clearly explained.

- Patient and public involvement in research

The applicant must provide specific examples of their patient and public involvement (PPI) activities in these 3 areas:

- How they integrate PPI into their own research.
- How they support capacity development for PPI.
- How they demonstrate leadership in PPI.
A minimum of one example must be provided by the applicant for each of the above areas.

Please note the distinction that the NIHR makes between 'patient and public involvement', 'engagement' and 'participation' in research and be aware that this question is focussed on PPI. It may be helpful to refer to case studies in the INVOLVE publication: ‘NIHR Senior Investigators: Leaders for patient and public involvement in research’.

You may also wish to look at the new national standards for public involvement in research.

- **Contribution to Growth**

The applicants must demonstrate their track record in playing a leading role in NIHR's Contribution to Growth; for example, through support for the NIHR Office for Clinical Research Infrastructure (NOCRI). It may be helpful to refer to The NIHR as an engine for growth publication. Specific examples of the applicant’s Contribution to Growth must be provided.

Examples of appropriate activity could include (but are not limited to):

- Supporting collaborations and contract research with the life sciences industry;
- creating the research environment that supports the nation’s international competitiveness;
- attracting, developing and retaining a highly skilled health research workforce;
- providing the clinical evidence to help the NHS and public sector to make efficient use of resources; and
- providing the research evidence that contributes to establishing a healthier workforce and wider population.

- **Research leadership**

The applicant must provide evidence of their leadership in clinical and applied health and social care research; citing Chief Investigator (CI) and Principal Investigator (PI) roles and other relevant information. Applicants must include information on their contribution to equality and diversity within research. This will be taken into account by the Independent Selection Panel.

- **Track record in training researchers**

An overview of the applicant’s track record in training and developing researchers must be provided. Moreover, the applicant must state the number of completed Doctoral Research Students and number of completed Masters Students that they have supervised and provide evidence of involvement in shaping training agendas at regional AND national level.

- **Engagement of healthcare planners and/or policy makers in research**

The applicant must provide evidence of how they have engaged with healthcare planners and/or policy makers such as Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs), Clinical
Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Health Education England, NHS England, NHS Improvement, NICE, Public Health England, and Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs); and where applicable the Department of Health and Social Care.

6. Declaration

The applicant must complete the ‘Declaration’ section of the application detailing the COI declaration. The applicant will need to assign a representative of the employing institution with financial authority to the application. On assigning a representative, an email will be sent by the system requesting they approve the application. The representative is also required to tick the access controlled box within the application form before the application is submitted. If an applicant is successful, the discretionary research award will be made to the corresponding institution. In ticking the access controlled box, the representative of the employing institution with financial authority confirms that the named institution is prepared to administer the award if made. The applicant will not be able to submit the application unless all declarations are ticked, including that of the financial representative.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

The application process is managed through the NIHR CCF. Applications should be submitted via the CCF Research Management System (RMS) and applications received through other means will not be accepted. Please note the web browser that is the most compatible to the RMS is Google Chrome. Applicants should be aware that any fields left blank will render that application ineligible.

To apply, individuals must create an account in the NIHR CCF RMS at https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk. Once registered, details will need to be validated by CCF. The applicant will receive a confirmation email and temporary password. If an email from manager@ccfrms.org.uk is not received, please check it has not been sent to the spam folder.

To generate a new NIHR Senior Investigator Competition 12 application, the applicant should, once registered, use the left hand side toolbar and select ‘My Applications’ and go to ‘New Application’, selecting the Senior Investigator Competition from the open funding rounds section.

Before starting the Senior Investigator application, it is advised to first complete the Basic Information and CV details in the ‘Manage My Details’ section. Information from this section will be pulled through to the application form, so it is important to complete this section first to avoid duplication. DO NOT complete the ‘Publications’ or ‘Research Grants’ sections in ‘Manage My Details’ as these will not pull through into the application form.

Please start the application as early as possible and ensure all fields have been completed and all the necessary information as requested has been entered. To navigate the application, use the menu on the left-hand side of the screen and the ‘Previous’ and ‘Next’
buttons. It is advisable to use the mouse to go through the subsections of the form as hitting TAB will not lead to the next field. Please note that if the applicant hits ENTER the system will close down the page they are currently working on and return to the introductory page. Please read the online help prompts marked (?) for additional guidance.

The application will need to be approved by a representative of the employing institution with financial authority. Please leave sufficient time for the representative to approve and complete the requirements within the ‘Declaration’ section of the completed application.

Applications will need to be validated prior to submitting. In the ‘Validation Summary’ section, there are two types of validations, mandatory and recommended validations. Please complete the application form, so that there are no outstanding mandatory validation issues as it is not possible to submit the form until these are resolved. Recommended validations are suggestions from the RMS system; these will not affect the ability to submit an application. We recommend performing ongoing validation checks to ensure the forms are completed and that no fields have been missed.

Please note that the system will not allow submissions after the deadline. Please ensure a confirmation email has been received from the CCF RMS and contact CCF if otherwise. Please note the reference number within the email in the form NIHR200001. It is necessary to use this number in any correspondence with CCF.

Applicants are reminded that during busy periods, such as close to a competition deadline, it could take slightly longer to submit the application. It is likely that during such periods, our helpline will be receiving a very high volume of calls. We, therefore, advise that applicants do not leave their submission until the last 24 hours.

Any enquiries should be sent to: faculty@nihr.ac.uk or phone 0208 843 8003. We will respond to requests for further clarification.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The closing date for electronic submission of applications is 29 August 2018 at 13:00.

Please note that the NIHR will not accept late submissions and the system will not allow submissions after the deadline.

Please note:

- Applications will not be accepted if submitted after the closing date and time. The RMS will automatically prevent this from happening.
- It is the applicant’s responsibility to allow sufficient time to submit an application
- Representatives of the employing institution with financial authority will need to approve the application and tick the access controlled box within the ‘Declaration section’ of the application form.
• Applicants should contact the Faculty team immediately if they think there is a system problem, whilst attempting to continue with their submission.
• Outcome notification: February 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.
ANNEX 1
Research funding that confers eligibility to apply to become an NIHR Senior Investigator

Research funds from NIHR confer NIHR Investigator status on researchers who are employed by the NHS, Universities or charities in England. NIHR Investigator status confers eligibility to apply to become a Senior Investigator. Please check with NIHR CCF if there is any uncertainty as to whether an applicant is eligible. Relevant sources of research funds include the following:

- Biomedical Research Centres
- Clinical Trials Units
- Clinical Research Facilities
- Cochrane Review Groups (with NIHR funding)
- Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care
- NIHR Policy Research Programme
- NIHR Policy Research Programme Research Units
- Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation Programme
- Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres
- Health Data Research UK
- Health Innovation Challenge Fund
- Health Protection Research Unit
- Health Service and Delivery Research (includes Service Delivery and Organisation and Health Service Research Programmes)
- Health Technology Assessment Programme
- Invention for Innovation Programme (includes Challenge Awards and Product Development Awards)
- Joint Global Health Trials
- Medtech and In Vitro Diagnostic Co-operatives
- Methodology Research Programme
- MRC - NIHR Phenome Centre
- NIHR BioResource
- NIHR Blood and Transplant Research Units
- NIHR Child Prosthetics Research Collaboration
- NIHR Global Health Research Groups
- NIHR Global Health Research Units
- NIHR Innovation Observatory
- NIHR Patient Safety Translational Research Centres
- NIHR Centre for Surgical Reconstruction and Microbiology
- NIHR Public Health Research Programme
- NIHR School for Primary Care Research
- NIHR School for Public Health Research
- NIHR School for Social Care Research
- Patient Research Cohorts Initiative
- Programme Development Grants
- Programme Grants for Applied Research
- Research for Patient Benefit
- Translational Research Collaborations
- UK Public Health Rapid Support Team
- Wellcome Trust – NIHR Joint Funding