

Health and Care Research Wales Faculty

Personal award schemes

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Does the Advanced Fellowship replace the previous Health and Care Research Wales Health/Social Care Research Fellowship award?

A1. Yes.

Q2. Is the funding for salary separate to the cost of the project? Previously, I've found that when costing Health and Care Research Wales fellowship funding, it ends up as only just enough to cover my salary (at Full Economic Costing (FEC) with indirect and estate costs), and that I can't cover the cost of any other planned activity (e.g. MR scanning, etc.). This has previously stopped me applying.

A2. Funding for salary costs of the individual (for up to three years whole time equivalent (WTE)) and the costs of an appropriate research project and training and development programme can be requested. The applicant will need to justify the research costs requested and demonstrate how their work will benefit the public, health service practice or policy, or service users and carers, social care and support services in Wales.

The costs that will be met by the Fellowship awards differ slightly depending on the type of host employer that is chosen by the applicant (80% FEC for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and 100% costs for NHS or other employers). Please see the guidance when published.

Q3. What is the best preparation to be doing now?

A3. You can start to develop your narrative CV. You can also identify your supervisor or mentor and think about the reasons for why your research is needed now as you will be expected demonstrate in your application how your research work will benefit the public, health service practice or policy, or service users and carers, social care and support services in Wales.

Q4. Is there going to be a transparent and validated process for assessing applications to these awards?

A4. All applications will be assessed by independent funding panels. The guidance documents provide details on how they will be assessed. Please see the call for

panel members: [Join a Health and Care Research Wales Faculty personal award funding panel | Health Care Research Wales](#)

Q5. How do you illustrate your passion and commitment to the cause when writing a proposal? and is your passion/commitment to lifelong research in 'next steps' considered when reviewing proposals?

A5. Being able to demonstrate your next steps is a key component of all of the personal awards and will be assessed by funding panels. The narrative CV has been introduced to allow applicants to illustrate their contributions to date across a wide range of activities as part of the application process.

Q6. What opportunities are there for NHS employed staff who are heavily involved with developing clinical trials and collaborative research to dedicate more protected time to such research?

A6. All of the schemes have been developed with the intention of creating more opportunities for individuals to engage in research careers. All the awards are personal awards. Health and Care Research Wales will not fund any research time covered by current arrangements within employment contracts and applicants need to clearly justify requests for salary costs based on their specific employment contract. Organisational support is an expectation of all applications.

Q7. Details about the upcoming Health and Care Research Wales early career awards, when will the details about the scheme become available, when is the submission deadline, what is the remit of the call?

A7. The guidance documents will be released mid-September and deadline for submission is 26 October 2023.

Q8. Are there restrictions on who can apply, besides those at professorial level? What about those who currently hold, or have previously held, Health and Care Research Wales grants?

A8. There are no restrictions based on previous grant awards however Individuals are eligible to be awarded up to two Advanced Fellowships sequentially, not normally totalling more than six years WTE of funding. Individuals can also only apply to one researcher development award at a time.

Q9. Are there options for part funding? I am undertaking a part time PhD. I was successful in a funding application that has funded the first two years of PhD study. I am now exploring avenues to fund the remainder of my studies. Thank you.

A9. Please see guidance. Where already registered for a PhD (or MPhil with transfer to PhD), applicants should not have been registered for more than 12 months at 100% WTE by the time the award starts.

Q10. Do I need to have a current Welsh Higher Education Institute (HEI) and/or NHS link in order to be eligible for an award?

A10. You need to be able to evidence the relevant organisational support to be able to undertake the activities proposed. Organisational support is an expectation of all applications.

Q11. What is the vision for clinical academics and is there a place for people to work 50:50?

A11. We strongly encourage applicants who are eligible to submit applications to the Medical Research Council Clinical Academic Research Partnership (MRC CARP) scheme which has been set up to promote opportunities for clinical academics who wish to retain some clinical work alongside academic work. [Clinical academic research partnerships – UKRI](#)

Q12. Is there a plan or more opportunities for nurse researchers who are both clinically and non-clinically active. Wales seems behind the curve and we are losing experienced nurses and researchers.

A12. Health and Care Research Wales offers funding opportunities across a broad range of health and social care-related topics and places an emphasis on policy, practice and public need. The Researcher Development schemes have been developed with a focus on ensuring opportunities for all at all stages of research careers.

Q13. Is there a limitation for number of years after PhD for Advanced Fellowships.

A13. There is no limit on time post PhD. Please see guidance documents.

Q14. Just exploring options for getting time commitment as a clinician to pursue research.

A14. All of the schemes have been developed with the intention of creating more opportunities for individuals to engage in research careers.

Q15. What is the remit of the funding? Can it fund data collection overseas? What is the maximum budget allowed?

A15. The Health and Care Research Wales personal award schemes are targeted at research that impacts on the health and/or social care needs of service users, carers and the wider population and/or the organisation and delivery of efficient and effective health and social care services in Wales. The schemes do not support basic research or work involving animals or their tissue. Applications for Global Health research are out of remit.

Funding for salary costs of the individual (for up to three years whole time equivalent WTE) and the costs of an appropriate research project and training and development programme can be requested. The applicant will need to justify the research costs requested and demonstrate how their work will benefit the public, health service

practice or policy, or service users and carers, social care and support services in Wales.

The costs that will be met by the Fellowship awards differ slightly depending on the type of host employer that is chosen by the applicant (80% FEC for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and 100% costs for NHS or other employers). Please see the guidance when published.

Q16. For the 'Health and Care Research Wales Advanced Fellowship award' scheme, the website suggests the application will open in Oct 2023 - do you know approximately what the deadline for the applications will be, and when the outcome is likely to be released?

A16. The key dates for applicants are provided below.

Stage in process	date
Competition Launch	19 October 2023
Submission deadline	16:00 – 17 January 2024
Shortlisting Panel	March 2024 (date tbc)
Interview Board	May 2024 (date tbc)

Q17. Can you apply for a doctoral fellowship with some research experience as an NHS employee?

A17. Yes, but you will need to have a Higher Education Institute supervisor in place to support your application.

Q18. Can we include a secondary data analysis component in award applications?

A18. Evidence syntheses and meta-analyses can be incorporated within applications. Also eligible are pilot and/or feasibility studies with strong potential to facilitate or lead to future and larger funding bids for projects with potential high impact. If these include secondary data analyses, the applicant should be able to demonstrate the relevance of this line of investigation to health or social care service users, carers, practitioners and policy makers and how this approach would support the efficient and effective organisation and delivery of health and/or social care services in Wales, and/or improved service user or carer wellbeing.

Q19. Are these schemes applicable to doctors in training (speciality registrars)?

A19. Yes

Q20. Is there an age limit for applying?

A20. No

Q21. Will salary-replacement awards cover a GP salary? Will there be a maximum budget for research costs?

A21. Yes, the salary replacement element will cover any professional health or social care roles.

For the Advancing Researcher award research costs would not be anticipated to be high and for the Advanced Fellowship research costs will be expected to be appropriate. All research costs must be justified and will be assessed for value by the panel.

Q22. Are the Health and Care Research Wales award separate from National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) personal awards?

A22. These awards are 'new' and will not be affected by previous applications to Health and Care Research Wales or National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) schemes. Funding for both is via Health and Care Research Wales, though processes are separate.

No more than two Fellowships will be permitted to be held at one time.

Q23. Which award would be most suitable for progression from a Research Time Award?

A23. That will be dependent upon the individual and their achievements from the award, as there will be people at different career stages within the scheme.

Q24. Are these awards suitable for basic science research?

A24. Health and Care Research Wales' mission is to promote, support and provide collective oversight of health and social care research in Wales to ensure it is of the highest international scientific quality, is relevant to the needs and challenges of health and social care in Wales, and makes a difference to policy and practice in ways that improve the lives of patients, people and communities in Wales.

As such the Health and Care Research Wales personal award schemes are focussed on applied health and social care research activities.

We are however keen to support ambitious research applications to UK government and charitable funders including for example (but not limited to) Medical Research Council which funds research at the forefront of science to prevent illness, develop therapies and improve human health, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) which supports research in economic, social, behavioural and human data science and Wellcome Trust who support discovery research into life, health and wellbeing.

We would welcome applications to our Personal Award Accelerator may be appropriate to provide the protected time to prepare and submit a competitive application to UK fellowship scheme for example the Medical Research Council Clinical Academic Research Partnerships (MRC CARP) scheme which funds project

proposals ranging from basic discovery science to translational and applied health research.

Q25. Will the Fellowship schemes fund experimental research and clinical trials?

A25. Experimental research will not be within remit of the schemes.

The schemes may fund clinical trials, however they must be relevant to the health and social care needs of people in Wales.

Q26. Is there an indicative budget for the Advanced Fellowship call?

A26. Indicative budget (subject to change) is £1.9 mil with approximately three anticipated awards made per call.

Q27. With the update to eligibility, are you expecting more senior researchers to apply for the Advanced Fellowship scheme, and therefore it will become more competitive?

A27. The scheme will be accessible to all career stages however we aim to create opportunities for all researchers. Whilst there will not be ring-fencing, we will be hoping to achieve a spread of different career stages. We have also introduced more awards to open up different opportunities for all career stages.

Q28. Will there be an opportunity to discuss personal circumstances with Health and Care Research Wales, for support choosing and developing an award application?

A28. We will be offering drop-in surgeries for upcoming or open funding schemes. We will host group-based workshops ahead of specific schemes, for example the Fellowship Writing Day on 14 September. One to one support is not provided as applicants are required to secure their own mentors and academic input for individual applications. The Faculty staff are however always happy to answer any questions around the application form or process.

Q29. Who is the Next Steps award applicable to?

A29. The award is only open to current Health and Care Research Wales doctoral award holders only, so as to ensure their progression along a research career pathway.

Q30. Is there a competing interest between Health and Care Research Wales and the NIHR?

A30. No, we encourage applications across the sector with the aim of increasing researcher capacity in Wales.

Q31. Is the Emerging Researcher scheme suitable for individuals holding a PhD?

A31. We wouldn't typically consider someone who already holds a PhD as someone needing to apply for the Emerging researcher scheme as this scheme is intended for those very early on in their research career and wanting to use the funding to progress towards a doctoral award. If there is a valid reason for applying for the Emerging Researcher in this scenario, it would be the responsibility of the applicant to state their case and reasoning.

Q32. Are PhDs awarded from another country accepted?

A32. Yes.

Q33. What if there is no suitable academic mentor for my specialty in Wales?

A33. It is reasonable to approach a mentor outside of Wales if there is no one suitable in Wales who can provide the support that you needed. The mentor does not need to be within your own university. It would be the responsibility of the applicant to explain the reasoning behind the selection of mentor. The applicant should demonstrate how they would bring this expertise back to Wales.

Q34. Is the Doctoral Fellowship available on a part time basis?

A34. Yes. Also, even within the full-time option, we anticipate that awardees may still undertake one to two clinical sessions a week as part of their continued professional development.

Q35. Is there a problem with working in a non-static role, for example within one Health Board but on a rotational basis?

A35. No. It would be the responsibility of the applicant to discuss this with their Research and Delivery (R&D) department and gain the support of the clinical directorate for the Health Board before making the application.

Q36. Will there be opportunities for those working in Public Health?

A36. Yes. We are looking to support research in across all areas of health and social care. It is the responsibility of the applicant to convince the funding panel of the importance of their research.

Q37. Are the schemes open to applications focussing on global health issues, and collaboration with overseas teams?

A37. Global health is out of remit unless the applicant can make a convincing case of the relevance to Wales.

There are a range of UK wide funders with a specific global health remit. We would welcome applications to our Personal Award Accelerator to provide the protected time to prepare and submit a competitive application to these schemes.

Q38. Should academic sponsorship of a university be in place before submitting a doctoral application?

A38. Yes, you must be affiliated with a Higher Education Institute in advance of submitting a doctoral application. Mentors and supervisors are expected to write a statement of support for the application.

Q39. Are the scheme application forms available?

A39. We will release application forms as soon as possible. Previous applications forms and guidance may be useful as follows:

- Health/Social Care Fellowship for Doctoral and Advanced Fellowship.
- Research Time Award for Emerging and Advancing Researcher.

Q40. Will the schemes support international students?

A40. The schemes will not support full international fees; any shortfall would need to be found by the applicant.

Q41. Social Care researchers do not typically link into Research and Delivery (R&D) departments, how should they navigate this?

A41. We have a dedicated social care researcher development advisor who can provide guidance in this area. (Please contact Research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk to get in touch).

Q42. What is the timing of the schemes, in view of developing applications?

A42. The Fellowship scheme will be launching in September/October annually. Closing date is anticipated in January.

Emerging and Advancing Researcher schemes will be launching in September annually and the application form will be shorter.

Personal Accelerator scheme will be launching in September and run twice a year.

The Trials Development scheme will be launching in March annually. We would encourage engagement with Treialon Cymru in developing these applications, but applicants are able to align their activities to any UKCRC registered trials unit.

Medical Research Council Clinical Academic Research Partnership (MRC CARP) launches in November annually.

Medical Research Council Clinical Fellowship runs three calls a year.