

NHSE – NIHR ARC Wessex Researcher Initiation Award 2024

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Researcher Initiation (RI) awards are intended to introduce individuals working within health or care organisations to research with the aim of helping them to explore what an academic career involves and begin to develop knowledge and skills in research. The RI awards offer an introduction to aspects of applied health research through gaining research experience by observing/visiting/working in a research environment aligned with your chosen topic and undertaking study in research in preparation for applying for a Pre-doctoral Fellowship or a Doctoral Research Fellowship

1. Who should apply for the RI Awards?

All health or social care practitioners and applied health researchers, working in the healthcare sector or a local authority in Wessex. Including, but not limited to social care practitioners, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and allied health professionals.

2. Do I need to be a registered clinician?

Applicants must be currently employed in either a full time or part time with a health care / social care organisation or voluntary care sector organisation with one of the ARC Wessex partners but there is no requirement for you to be employed as a clinician.

3. Do I need to be employed within Wessex?

Yes, you should be employed in the Wessex region.

4. Do I have to have set project in mind?

We really do want applicants to have a good start and the scheme is aimed at supporting you to progress your ideas for your applied health and/or social care research further. What we are looking for is that you begin to develop your contacts and, of course we are looking to fund individuals who wish to undertake applied health and care research within one of our themes for which we are funded. A key aspect we are looking for is that all applicants align their research ideas with our themes and at a minimum have had a discussion with an academic who is currently employed within one of our partner HEIs' with one of the four ARC Wessex themes about your research ideas and how you will work with them. This should be stated within your application. Through the [themes](#) you should be able to see the various projects underway, publications and project leads.

5. How many hours would I be expected to commit to?

A reasonable commitment is that you are released from your clinical and care duties to focus on your research for a minimum of one day per week over six months.

6. I work part-time, rather than backfill my currently hours can I apply for this to fund additional hours?

Yes, as long as we have confirmed support with your line manager that they will increase your contracted hours to match the additional funding.

7. Does the named research supervisor need to be attached to a university?

Yes. Potential supervisors can be found/contactable through our ARC Wessex. It might also be worth that you attempt to discuss the research with one of the ARC theme leads / theme project leads too to see where the research aligns with our aims and scope. It is highly recommended to have at least two named supervisors/mentors including a clinical mentor if you are a clinician.

8. How much funding can I apply for?

The maximum amount to apply for under the Research Initiation Award is £10,000. Co-funding from partner organisations is desirable but not essential.

9. How do I calculate costs for my Research Supervisor, can I also request funding for estates/indirect costs as well as staff time?

We are offering a fixed fees of £500 per supervisor(s) in recognition of their time and support up to a maximum of two supervisors. In your application under the section that requests details of your supervisor(s) please indicate how and when you will meet with them. For example, 1 hour per week face to face / virtually and / or email discussion as required.

10. Is there any obligation to attend external events / training? Or would it be as a self-contained project with support from my nominated supervisor?

Most of the funding is likely to support your salary backfill however, you can request funding for training courses that are reasonable to attend within the specified internship timeframe and that will support you in the development of your research ideas towards further funding applications. You develop your training plan to fit these needs. Each course/workshop/ placement etc proposed must be justified according to finance and timeframe. We are especially seeking to support applicants who wish to develop applications for NIHR clinical academic doctoral fellowships.

11. How could I identify my training and development needs and formulate a training plan?

You need to discuss your training and development needs with your proposed supervisors. You can use frameworks such as the Vitae (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>) to help you identify any gaps and areas for improvements in your research and leadership skills. Your training plans should also be aligned with your proposed research activities and any future plans for further funding applications. For example, you might need to include a training on patient and public involvement PPI, conducting a literature review, scientific writing, designing research proposals, presentation skills, writing a grant application to support a fellowship,... etc

12. What needs to be included in the detailed justified spending plan for the award period?

A Gantt chart and a table of breakdown for what you will be spending and why. A letter of approval from your R&D finance department at your trust must be included.

13. What could be included in the costing?

You could include the costs of the following: your salary backfill (e.g., one day/week for 6 months), patient and public involvement fees using the NIHR rates, supervision costs, training and development courses/modules to develop your research skills,

publication (up to £1500), conference and dissemination (up to £1500), other research-related costs. The maximum fund available is £10,000

14. Will there be other opportunities for NIHR ARC Wessex funding?

At present, this is the last planned Internship opportunity with ARC Wessex as our current funding is scheduled to end September 2024

15. Can I include publication costs?

We encourage applicants to work with their mentors to find out if their host organisation covers this in the first instance. You can include the costs of publishing one article in your application if you have scope within your finance plans up to a maximum of £1500.

16. Can I include conference costs?

We encourage applicants to work with their mentors/supervisors to find out if their host organisation covers this in the first instance. You can include the costs of conference(s) attendance up to a maximum of £1500.

17. Do I need to refer to and cost for Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)?

Yes

Please indicate the ways in which you will involve patients and public in your research plans and include costs for any planned PPI activities. You can find further resources at: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392>

18. How does my employer receive the award funds?

The full funding award amount is paid to your employer either at 50% mid-way through the project and 50% upon completion or 100% upon completion. Your employer/finance department is responsible for then paying invoices/costs for supervisory fees, training courses etc.

The applicant, if successful, in collaboration with their Trust finance team, will be responsible for overseeing and administering the budget as per their proposed spending plan.