

Aim

This scheme is designed to build research capacity in the Scottish NHS as such it provides the opportunity for clinical professionals (doctors, dentists, NMAHPs and Healthcare Scientists) **early in their career** to undertake a PhD.

Remit

All research funded as part of this training award must fall with CSO's overall remit of early translational (experimental medicine), clinical and applied health research, and social care. The proposals must have clear potential for directly benefiting patients/service users, carers, and the public in Scotland. CSO does not support basic research and projects for this scheme cannot involve work on animals. As part of the application process, you will be required to assess your proposal and classify it according to the Health Research Classification System - [UK CRC Health Research Classification system](#). If your proposed project aligns with the Research Activity code '1. Underpinning research', your project will **not** be eligible for this scheme.

Eligibility

The scheme invites applications from early career clinical professionals wishing to become a clinical academic. This includes Medics, Dentists, Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professionals (NMAHPs) and Healthcare Scientists and others in a clinical role. Specific requirements for each category are detailed below. If your specific situation is not covered or you wish to query your eligibility, please contact csofellowships@gov.scot.

NMAHPS, Healthcare Scientists, Pharmacists, Physician associates and others employed in a clinical role (direct care) or a role that supports clinical practice (teaching, facilitation, leadership, management) but can demonstrate a commitment to research and the development of a research career. Salary requests for this category of applicant can be no higher than Band 7.

Medical and Dental Specialists

Applicants are required to hold a Scottish Speciality NTN. Successful applicants who are in training will remain on current salary scales and progress as normal for the duration of the award. The maximum salary payable is the top of the training scale - SpR9 (includes Public Health trainees who do not have a medical degree).

The time out of training for research (OOPR) will need to be agreed by your postgraduate dean before application. Please note that in line with the Gold reference guide for postgraduate specialty training in the UK, time out of programme (OOP) will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a training programme for at least one year of training and trainees in their final training year will not normally be granted OOPR.

GPs

In recognition of shorter training time GPs are eligible for a period of **up to 4 years** post CCT. **The maximum salary payable is the top of the training scale**

Dental Core Trainees

Applicants who are dentists may be considered if they do not hold a National Training Number (NTN), but they should have achieved satisfactory completion of DCT2 before they take up the fellowship. Prospective applicants should seek to discuss their application at an early stage with the Associate Postgraduate Dental Dean (Core and Specialty Training) and the Dean of Postgraduate Dental Education. Applicants should also show how they plan to get an NTN.

GDPs

GDPs can also apply. To be eligible they must have 2 years of clinical experience after graduation (one in vocational training, one in 'practice') and **a maximum of 6 years' experience** post-graduation.

General Requirements

- The proposed host must be a Scottish HEI.

- The candidate intends to register for and complete a PhD.
- Where already registered for a PhD (or MPhil with transfer to PhD), the applicant should not have been registered for more than 15 months at 100% WTE by the time the award starts.

Filling in the form

The application should be made via the application form on the application portal of the CSO Flexi-grant System.

[My applications - Chief Scientist Office \(flexigrant.com\)](https://flexigrant.com)

Please make sure you apply to the correct scheme as there will be a separate form for Medics and Non-Medics/NMAHPS.

Please check your application very carefully before submitting it to us to make sure that all sections are filled in correctly.

Participants

You will need to invite a Grantee and Finance Officer to complete or assist in completing certain sections of the application. Please use the participants tab to do this. If you are unsure who you should invite, please contact your Research Office. Participants will need to mark their contribution as complete for the system to register their input.

Section One - Application Summary

Host Organisation

Must be a Scottish HEI.

UK CRC Health Research Classification System

You must code your project with the [UK CRC Health Research Classification system](#). The strategic aim of coding using the Health Research Classification System is to capture the **main objective of the research taking place during the lifetime of the award** and not the background or future potential downstream applications of the research. Every research project is classified using the two dimensions of the coding system, both [Research Activity Codes](#) and [Health Categories](#) use the minimum number of codes to reflect the main focus of the research. If your proposed

project aligns with the Research Activity code '1. Underpinning research', your project will **not** be eligible for this scheme.

Plain English (Lay) Summary

This should be a clear explanation of your research understandable to someone without a scientific background. Many reviewers will use this summary to inform their view of your research as they will not necessarily be experts in your topic area. If your application is successful, this summary will be placed on the CSO website. You may find it helpful to involve patients or members of the public in developing this summary to ensure it is appropriately written.

Start Date

Successful fellowships can start between **1 April** and **1 September** following interviews in January. Please state your intended start date. If you are successful and cannot start between these dates, your offer may be rescinded so please take this into consideration and apply for the correct round of the scheme.

End Date

This should be three years' worth of time from your start date and should always fall on the last day of the month.

Previous Submission

You are allowed to apply for this scheme a maximum of two times. If you are applying for the second time, you are required to outline the changes you have made to your application in response to feedback from your initial application.

Section Two – Applicant Information

Specialism

For Medics and Dentists, please input your training speciality e.g. general surgery. - for NMAHPs and Healthcare scientists please input your Clinical Profession e.g. – Nurse, Physiotherapist, Biochemical engineer. If you are a medic or dentist still in training, please state your current state of training and give your NTN number.

If you are a GP, GDP, NMAHP, or Healthcare Scientist, please give the date you completed the training to evidence your eligibility for the role. Please state the number of years FTE of work since completion of training up to the application deadline. Work in your clinical profession and work in research both count. Time spent on extended leave does not count.

Training and Development Programme

Please use this section to detail the training and development you will need to undertake, and the resources required for this as part of the Fellowship. This should cover both the training you may need to undertake the research being proposed but also training designed to support your development as a future research leader.

Clinical Commitments

Please indicate what clinical commitments you will have during the fellowship and how/if these relate to the research being proposed. As this is a Clinical Fellowship, applications without a clinical component will not be accepted. You may allocate up to 20% of your time to clinical commitments.

Section Three – Proposed Research Plan

Please make sure your research plan is within remit:

- must be clinical and applied health research or social care research
- must have clear potential for directly benefiting patients/service users, carers or the public
- no basic research or work involving animals

Scientific Abstract

This should be a clear and concise scientific summary of the detailed research plan.

Detailed Research Plan

This is the main part of the application detailing your proposal please ensure the information is accurate, succinct, and clearly laid out. Please use all the headings with a total word limit of 5000. Please ensure this section includes your plans to involve patients and the public.

- **Outline** – provide a clear explanation of the problem to be addressed and the impact on patients and how this research will fill an evidence gap.
- **Why the research is important** – clearly identify the health need and outline the value this study will provide. Does the existing literature support this proposal?
- **Research Questions/Aims and Objectives** – please summarise the research questions.
- **Project Plan** – provide an expert description of the project plan of investigation plus any additional points required to support statements made in the previous sections, and include any key references required to justify the points made (e.g. in the use of particular outcome measures or methods of analysis). You should include, where applicable, study design, justification of sample size, selection and exclusion criteria, methods of data collection and analysis, and justification for your choice of methodology.
- **Project Management** - outline the processes put in place to ensure the research will be well managed.
- **Success Criteria** - please set out measures of success you intend to use and also the key risks to delivering this research and what contingencies you will put in place to deal with them.

Letters of Support

Other letters of support are not required. If you wish to submit other letters of support, they must be included here.

Section Four - Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)

By public involvement, we mean an active partnership between members of the public and researchers in the research process, rather than the use of people as 'subjects' of research. Public involvement means research being carried out with or by members of the public rather than it being something that is done to, about or for

them. Examples of public involvement include involvement in identifying research priorities; assisting in the design and management of a research project; being a co-applicant on a research grant or a joint grant holder; carrying out specific research activities; being members of a project advisory or steering group; disseminating research findings.

Patient and public involvement should have been included in the detailed research plan. This section provides more detail. You should describe who has been involved and why this is appropriate, what role(s) they have they played and what influence or change has happened as result of their involvement. Answer each section, you can signpost to the detailed research plan to help.

If you have not had PPI training, please include this in the training and development programme for the fellowship. If it is not considered appropriate and meaningful to actively involve patients/service users, carers and the public in your proposed research, a space is provided for you to justify this decision. For help and resources with PPI please see – [Patient and Public Involvement \(PPI\) Guidance and Training | NHS Research Scotland | NHS Research Scotland](#)

Dissemination, Outputs and Anticipated Impact

The purpose of this section is for the applicant to describe what the outputs of the research might be, how these will be disseminated and what impact there might be. Please consider the following questions when completing this section:

- What do you intend to produce from your research?
- How will you inform and engage the public?
- How will your outputs enter our health and care system or society?
- What will be the impact of your research?

Section Five – Finance

Funding will normally cover:

- Reimbursement of the basic personal salary (not out-of-hours bands) of the award holder (including superannuation and national insurance), with increments, based on an appropriate point for the individual on a relevant clinical pay scale. Request for salaries should be based on actual costs at the time of application, increases for inflation should not be included. In making requests for salaries please note this is a research training fellowship and maximum salaries apply. There will be an opportunity to apply for overspends resulting from pay rises in the final reconciliation of the project.
- All Medical Applicants – Current grade on the specialty registrar scale, the maximum salary payable is SpR9 even if you would progress above this during the fellowship or are GP with a higher salary.
- Other applicants – current grade as long as that is in Band 7 or below.
- Research costs up to £30k over three years (i.e. up to £10k per annum for three years or pro-rata for part-time awards) to cover the costs of the research. This budget is intended to cover any laboratory costs, fieldwork expenses, PPI expenses, minor equipment costs (e.g. computer software), printing, postage, travel and stationery. (Computers - desktops or laptops are not allowable). **These costs must be fully itemised and justified.** Training in clinical skills, even where related to the proposed research, will not be funded. Costs for attending conferences should not be applied for under this heading as these can be applied for later by successful Fellows and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Fees for registration for a PhD (at appropriate home student rates at the relevant institution)

Open Access Fees should **not** be included. All CSO grants are eligible to apply for up to £8,000 up to 18 months after completion of the award. The application is made separately after acceptance of the paper.

Conference Fees should **not** be included. Successful fellows will be eligible to apply for support to attend conferences with an allowance of up to £4,000 over the lifetime of the award.

NHS Service Support Costs will also need to be estimated separately and stated in [section 8](#) of the application.

Please note that the CSO financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and costs must be split by financial year.

Please fill in all relevant boxes in this section and ensure it is completed with the assistance of the finance officer.

Section Six – Support

Supervisor

All named supervisors must fill in the linked form and sign to show they have agreed to take on this role. The main supervisor should be based at the host institution, but any additional supervisors may be based at other institutions within or outwith Scotland. It should be clearly shown that supervisor support addresses all areas of the proposed work.

Head of Department

The prospective host institution's Head of Department must fill in the form and sign to indicate their formal approval of the application, their willingness to offer an appointment to the individual (if successful) for the tenure of the award subject to their normal employment practices, their approval of the salaries sought, and the acceptance of the terms and conditions associated with a Scottish Clinical Academic Training Fellowship.

Section Seven - Postgraduate Deans Statement

This must be completed for all medical and dental candidates who are still training. GPs do not need to complete this section.

Record of In Training Assessment

Your RTA may be a copy of your ARCP, for example.

Section Eight – Ethics and NHS Cost Declarations

This must be completed to show ethical considerations have been taken into account and all the relevant approvals have been sought. No payments can be made for research projects until all ethical approvals are in place.

The following link provides helpful guidance on ethics to help you work out what your project requires: [What approvals and decisions do I need? - Health Research Authority \(hra.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hra.nhs.uk/what-approvals-and-decisions-do-i-need/)

SoECAT

In line with other UK funders, all fellowship applications submitted to CSO which include NHS costs will now be expected to have worked with the R&D office of the lead Scottish Health Board to complete a Schedule of Event Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT). For non-commercial studies, it is important that there is clarity for participating NHS/HSC organisations about how the costs associated with participating in a study are attributed. Completing a SoECAT is the standard practice employed by UK funders to ensure that NHS costs are appropriately identified in grant applications.

If the fellowship application includes NHS research costs, the SoECAT needs to be reviewed and approved by an “Acord Specialist” within the R&D office of the lead Scottish Health Board. Please allow enough time for this to be processed ahead of the application deadline date.

The completed SoECAT does not need to be submitted as part of the grant application or shared with CSO at a later stage.

Section Nine - Reviewer Nomination Form

At least 6 potential people must be suggested for CSO to approach to obtain a peer review on your application. They should be people that can appropriately review either the clinical area of your research or the proposed methodology. Suggested reviewers should not be employed at the institution you are intending to do your research. They should also not be current collaborators of any of your supervisors. Suggested reviewers should not be contacted by the applicant.

Section 10 – Applicant Declaration

By signing the form, applicants are confirming that CSO may hold and process, by computer or otherwise, all personal information supplied with the application.

Section 11 – Grantee Declaration

Contact information for administration of a successful award must be given. This should not be your supervisor.

Assessment Of Applications

All applications are assessed by a process of peer review and assessment by a Panel assembled by the Chief Scientist Office for this purpose. Comments from the expert referees from the peer review process assist the Panel in reaching a decision in the shortlisting process. Candidates who are short-listed will be invited to an interview held by the Panel

Outcome of the Assessment

Applicants will be informed as soon as a final decision has been taken on their application. Candidates who are interviewed will usually be notified of the decision as soon as possible after funding arrangements have been confirmed. The decision of the Panel is final, and no appeals will be considered.

Re-application

Applicants who are unsuccessful may re-apply once. If you re-apply a covering letter stating how the previous proposal has been modified must be enclosed with the new application.

Assessment criteria

The selection panel will use the following assessment criteria when reviewing your application:

- **The Applicant**

The Panel will look for evidence of commitment to a clinical academic career. Supporting evidence will include productivity, e.g. any publications from previous research and proof of clinical skill e.g. prizes. The Panel will also look for evidence that the applicant has the potential to become a leader in their field and to lead a research team. Applications where the applicant wishes to gain a PhD purely for the purposes of career progression are unlikely to be successful.

- **The Project**

The Panel will wish to fund high quality applications both in terms of the individual and the project. The Panel will seek to judge the scientific merit of the research

taking into account its originality and importance and judging the extent to which it will increase knowledge relevant to improving health. The factors they will be considering include:

- Has the candidate been involved in the writing and design of the project?
 - Has PPI been used in the development of the project and is it a continued thread throughout the project?
 - Is the methodology appropriate?
 - Is the work achievable, feasible and deliverable within the timeframe?
 - Will the research benefit patients?
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- **Supervision and Research Centre**

The panel will look for confirmation that the supervision for the candidate and the research is of high quality and is able to cover all aspects of the training and supervisory requirements of the individual. They will also judge the standing of the proposed research centre in the field.