



NRS Career Researcher Fellowships Background and Guidance Notes 2025

Potential applicants should read these notes carefully before completing the application form. Any forms which do not comply with the Guidance will not be considered.

Aims and overview of the scheme

To support General Practitioners and NHS-funded clinical staff in developing a research career within their post.

This includes - qualified doctors, nurses, AHPs, pharmacists, biomedical/clinical scientists, public health specialists, paramedics and psychologists.

The award provides funding for protected time to contribute to, conduct and lead clinical research. This will strengthen the research culture in the NHS and increase capacity in priority areas.

The NRS fellowship scheme is for staff who are not currently research active and who would like to incorporate research into their post. If you already have funded research sessions, then you are not eligible for further funded sessions through this scheme. The scheme will support fellows for three years. It is expected that, on completion of their Fellowship, successful candidates will be able to apply for Researcher support through their R&D office.

Those staff already running research programmes should apply directly to their R&D office for Researcher Support.

Award holder activities

The scheme will allow the successful applicants protected time from April 2025 to March 2028 to engage in the following activities:

- clinical research planning and protocol development
- grant writing
- carrying out clinical research

NRS - delivering research excellence

- leading or hosting multi-centre trials as Chief Investigator or local Principal Investigator
- participation in commercial research
- dissemination of research findings, such as writing papers and presentations at major national and international scientific meetings

Details

NHS Research Scotland (NRS) is inviting applications from General Practitioners and clinical NHS staff employed by a territorial NHS Scotland board, NHS National Waiting Times board or Scottish Ambulance Service special board for funding for 0.2 whole time equivalent (WTE). The award will be for a period of up to three years, subject to satisfactory review.

The Fellowship should start on 1 April 2025 or as soon after as is practical. Due to a delay in advertising the scheme in this round, it is likely that interviews will be a few weeks later than usual so a slightly delayed start date will be allowed if needed for suitable backfill to be arranged. Fellows will still receive the full 3 years of funding.

Please note that the requested sessions may replace or add to existing clinical commitments within the individual's work plan. The latter situation would apply to individuals currently working less than 100% WTE – the funding is not intended to support additional EPAs (Extra Programmed Activities).

Funding is available to cover direct salary costs of the Fellow. The successful candidates will receive the title of NRS Career Research Fellow.

Eligibility

General Practitioners

- Must be in receipt of their CCT
- Must not have research sessions paid for by any other means when taking up the fellowship.
- Must be working at least part/time in a GP surgery.
- The salary request must be in line with that of a consultant salary within the first 5 years – no additional bonuses

Consultants

- Must be in receipt of their CCT
- Must have been in post as a substantive consultant for less than 6 years FTE as of March 2025
- Must not currently have research sessions paid for by any other means when taking up the fellowship.

NRS - delivering research excellence

Non-medical applicants

- Must be registered with the relevant professional body.
- Must be band 6 or higher, but should not have been at band 8c for more than 6 years as of March 2025
- Must not currently have research sessions paid for by any other means when taking up the fellowship

All Applicants

Applicants will be likely to have had some research training. This may be demonstrated by a PhD, MD or other postgraduate qualification with a significant research component, but this is not a requirement. Applicants without such a higher degree are eligible to apply but will have to provide justification for their suitability for the award. The scheme is not designed to be a vehicle to obtain a PhD.

Applicants should identify a mentor appropriate to their clinical field and proposed research. This would normally be a senior full-time academic clinician within their department. In addition, it may be appropriate to have a mentor from a partner University.

Application Process

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

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

Please make sure you apply to the correct scheme.

Medics: [NRS Medic Application Form](#)

Non-Medics: [NRS Non-Medic Application Form](#)

You will need to

- get your mentors to fill in forms to upload to the system
- get financial information from the relevant R&D office
- give your clinical director access to your application to agree to provide the protected time if you are successful

So please ensure you leave enough time to complete this before the deadline of **midday 9th January 2025** as applications that are not complete will not be considered and you will not be able to submit the application with the clinical director sign off.

NRS - delivering research excellence

Potential applicants might find it helpful to discuss their applications with the relevant R&D office in the first instance.

North East

NRS North (NHS Grampian/Highland)

Seshadri Vasani Gram.RandD@nhs.scot

NRS East (NHS Tayside/Fife/Forth Valley)

Russell Petty r.petty@dundee.ac.uk

South

NRS South (NHS Lothian/Borders)

Andy Peters Andy.Peters@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

West

NRS West (NHS GG&C/Lanarkshire/Dumfries & Galloway/Ayrshire & Arran/NWTCB)

John Haughney John.Haughney@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Process of assessment

Applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

- The quality of the individual
- The quality of the mentor arrangements
- The quality of the proposed research or development projects/activities. It is envisaged that many individuals will, at least to begin with, be working to support existing high-quality research rather than starting new small projects/activities, however evidence of how the portfolio of studies will develop will be assessed
- Alignment of the proposals to areas of existing research excellence and national priorities OR evidence of a need to develop capacity in an importance 'orphan' area
- The proposed involvement in commercially funded research
- Commitment of the relevant NHS Board and clinical department towards the project / activities

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview in January/February. The selected interview date(s) will be confirmed as soon as possible by the relevant region or CSO.

Monitoring

Awards will be made for up to 3 years (end date March 2028) but will be subject to monitoring by the relevant R&D office and reviewed against set targets. The Monitoring process will be detailed to successful applicants. Fellows who fail to meet targets may be subject to an action plan to address the situation or the award may be withdrawn.

Question-Specific Guidance

Word limits are stated for some answers – for these answers a word count should be provided.

SECTION A – Your Details

Please supply your title, name, work contact details and your highest academic qualification. The majority of contact will be via email so please ensure you provide a current and regularly accessed email address.

SECTION B – Employment History

Please give details of your current and previous employment history.

SECTION C – Research Experience

1. This section is aimed at providing the panel with an overview of your Research experience/training to date including any other academic experience. This table should detail all research projects that you have participated in including non-commercially funded, commercial funded and projects without funding.
2. Please list any publications on which you are an author.

SECTION D - Use of Career Researcher Fellowship Time

3. Please provide a personal statement of why you are applying for the Fellowship and how it will benefit you personally both in terms of your clinical and research careers
4. This section should be completed to describe the overarching Programme of Research you intend to carry out over the duration of the Fellowship. You should also detail:
 - a. ongoing research you are currently involved in
 - b. additional ongoing projects you will be involved in if successful
 - c. new projects for which you would intend to submit grant applications, and the funder(s) you intend to apply to
5. It is important to note that applications which are successful are likely to propose a broad mix of both leading and collaborating projects from a variety of funding sources. Applications proposing a single project, rather than a cohesive Programme will not be successful.
6. Please note that Fellowships will not be awarded for Programmes which propose research involving animals being carried out in the protected Fellowship time.

NRS - delivering research excellence

7. This section should put the proposed research into the context of local and/or national NHS/clinical policy in your clinical area.
8. It is of importance that the research proposed to be carried out by NRS Fellows has the potential to lead to either benefits for patients, improved services, or other positive impact on the health of Scottish people. This section should describe how you would expect the outcomes of your Programme to lead to such benefits, and what they might be.
9. This section should give sufficient information for the selection panel to understand how you will be spending your protected time during the Fellowship (both weekly and over the course of the Fellowship).

SECTION F – Clinical Support

10. It is important that the selection panel understand your current working pattern and 1) whether there is any time already available for research 2) where there is scope for research sessions funded through the Fellowships to be slotted in.
11. The Sessions **MUST** fit into a 12 pa job plan – If you already have 12 pa's then you must replace clinical sessions.

Your current and proposed job plans should be included in tabular format with the sessions being given up/replaced for Fellowship sessions clearly indicated along with narrative.

12. This section should be fully discussed with the local head of service to ensure that if successful the proposed arrangements can be put in place in a reasonable timeframe. It is insufficient to merely state that you have the agreement that your time will be freed up and your sessions backfilled – how this will be done **in practical terms** should be detailed.

This is a very important part of the application process and Fellowships will not be awarded if the Panel are not confident that the sessions will be available.

SECTION G- To be completed by the Research finance office

13. Please ensure this is completed accurately by your R&D finance office. Make sure to leave plenty of time for this part of the process prior to submitting your application to CSO.

SECTION H – To be completed by the mentor

14. The NHS mentor should be selected as an appropriate person to guide your clinical research career during the tenure of the Fellowship (and beyond) in terms wider than just specific involvement in the proposed research.

NRS - delivering research excellence

15. It is important for the selection panel to be clear that sufficient support is going to be provided to the Fellow to allow them to be successful. The mentor should use this space to detail their skills and experience in supervising students and how they plan to supervise the candidate through the fellowship.
16. If a second mentor has been selected e.g. from a partner university then they should also complete the form.