

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

NIHR SENIOR INVESTIGATORS

INVITATION TO SUBMIT FULL APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

1. National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Senior Investigators include the nation's most outstanding leaders of patient and people based health and social care research.
2. A total of 163 NIHR Senior Investigators have now been appointed through two competitions. The intention is to build and maintain a full complement of over 200 Senior Investigators through further annual rounds of competition.
3. This document sets out the detailed **process for the selection** of the NIHR Senior Investigators and invites eligible applicants from the NHS and Universities to **submit a Full Application**.

NIHR FACULTY

4. NIHR Senior Investigators are fundamental to the formation of NIHR Faculty, being NIHR's most prominent and prestigious researchers. Full information on NIHR Senior Investigators and NIHR Faculty is available at <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/>.
5. The Government's health research strategy *Best Research for Best Health* has as a key goal for the health research system to "attract, develop and retain the best research professionals to conduct people-based research". The objectives to deliver this are to:
 - Build a leading research capability - the National Institute for Health Research Faculty - to attract, develop and retain the best clinical, health service and public health research professionals with a national collegiate ethos
 - Focus the talents of faculty members on health research that meets the current and future needs of patients and the public
 - Value both leaders and collaborators in health research
 - Provide ongoing support to the academic training paths of all healthcare professionals and other key disciplines involved in health and social care research, including mentoring.
6. The NIHR Faculty underpins the achievement of these objectives. The NIHR Faculty encompasses research, clinical and support staff from all relevant professional backgrounds. Faculty members are those individuals:
 - who conduct or support patient- or people-based research; and
 - whose salary is funded, in part or in whole, from NIHR funding and/or DH Policy Research Programme (PRP) funding (whether paid direct to the employer or to a partner organisation); and
 - who are employed by an NHS organisation or by a University.

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP OF NIHR FACULTY

7. There are five categories of NIHR Faculty membership:

- **NIHR Senior Investigators:** the most prominent leaders of patient and people-based research selected from NIHR Investigators and NIHR Honorary Investigators, who form the NIHR College. This will:
 - be a prestigious body with a programme of events for members including an annual conference and awards ceremony;
 - provide research leadership to the NIHR Faculty, including help in planning and speaking at events, hosting visiting fellows and mentoring clinical trainees;
 - provide expert advice to the Director of the NIHR;
 - promote clinical and applied patient and people based research in health and social care.
- **NIHR Investigators:** the Faculty members who are directly engaged in doing NIHR or Department of Health Policy Research Programme (PRP) funded research. NIHR Investigators include all research staff working on a research project including lead researchers, other senior researchers, and research assistants, and others in scientific, technical and other supporting roles.
- **NIHR Associates:** Faculty members who support research led by others. Whilst funded by NIHR, the main element of their salary related to research will be a 'Service Support Cost' funded through NIHR Infrastructure funding, including through Clinical Research Networks and Topic Specific Networks.
- **NIHR Trainees:** the next generation of researchers, their salaries supported by NIHR Training schemes for Clinical Lecturers, Academic Clinical Fellows, Research Fellows and Research Students and all Personal Award Schemes administered through the National Coordinating Centre for Research Capacity Development (NCCRCD).

8. In addition to the above categories, Honorary NIHR Investigator status has been awarded to members of a number of established panels that advise NIHR on research. This is to recognise their unfunded contribution to NIHR. These Honorary Members have been informed of their status. We will make further announcements on Honorary Membership later this year.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY TO BECOME AN NIHR SENIOR INVESTIGATOR

9. Only NIHR Investigators and NIHR Honorary Investigators are eligible to apply to become NIHR Senior Investigators. NIHR Investigators are actively involved in research with part of their salary funded as a 'Research Cost'. However the NIHR contribution is often only one element of an NIHR Investigator's salary. NIHR Investigators' salaries are likely to be funded in part from other sources of research funding (including Research Councils, Research Charities or the Higher Education Funding Council for England), and from other sources of NHS funding including patient care funds, transitional R&D funding and education and training funds.
10. The NIHR and PRP funding streams which confer NIHR Investigator status and hence eligibility to apply to be an NIHR Senior Investigator are those for NIHR Projects, NIHR Programmes, NIHR Units, NIHR Centres, NIHR Schools, NIHR and Medical Research Council (MRC) Partnership Programmes or from the PRP. These sources of funding are administered mainly through NIHR's managing agents: the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) and through the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC). They include:
- Programme Grants for Applied Research
 - Research for Patient Benefit Programme
 - Invention for Innovation Programme including the former New and Emerging Applications of Technology Programme and the Health Technology Devices Programme
 - Challenge Fund for Innovation
 - Research for Innovation, Speculation and Creativity Programme
 - Health Technology Assessment Programme
 - Service Delivery and Organisation Programme
 - NHS Physical Environment Research and Development Programme

- Cochrane Review Groups
- Technology Assessment Review Teams
- Biomedical Research Centres
- Biomedical Research Units
- Research Centres for Patient Safety & Service Quality
- Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care
- NIHR Academic Units
- NIHR School for Primary Care Research
- Department of Health Policy Research Programme
- Department of Health Policy Research Programme Research Units
- Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) Programme
- Clinical Trial Units
- Methodology Research Programme (MRP)
- Patient Research Cohorts Initiative
- Hubs for Trials Methodology Research (HTMR)

11. Researchers whose **only** source of NIHR support is Flexibility and Sustainability Funding (FSF) are **NOT** eligible to apply.
12. Individuals who currently do not receive any funding for their salary through NIHR Projects, NIHR Programmes, NIHR Units, NIHR Centres, NIHR Schools, NIHR & MRC Partnership Programmes or from PRP, and who are not Honorary NIHR Investigators are **NOT** eligible to apply.
13. In order to obtain an application form individuals must confirm their eligibility to apply. For most applicants this will mean confirming their current source of NIHR or PRP funding. This will be checked within NIHR and the Department of Health. Individuals who are not identified as eligible to apply will be notified and withdrawn from the process.
14. Successful applicants, whether NIHR Investigators or Honorary NIHR Investigators will, if their main employer is based in England, receive the personal discretionary fund awarded to each NIHR Senior Investigators. Other successful applicants, whose main employer is in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland will **NOT** receive the personal discretionary fund.

NUMBER OF NIHR SENIOR INVESTIGATOR APPOINTEMENTS

15. As NIHR funding replaces NHS R&D Transitional Funding more of the nation's most leading researchers will become eligible to apply to become NIHR Senior Investigators. For this reason the appointment of 200 Senior Investigators is being rolled out over three years as the change in funding arrangements is completed. Thereafter there will be an ongoing annual competition for Senior Investigator posts.
16. NIHR Senior Investigators will normally be appointed for five years, however in order to build to a full complement of Senior Investigators within 3 years whilst ensuring a continuing programme of appointments, initial appointments will be for 3, 4 or 5 years. At the end of a term of appointment individual NIHR Senior Investigators will need to reapply.

BENEFITS OF BEING AN NIHR SENIOR INVESTIGATOR

17. The most tangible benefit of being an NIHR Senior Investigator is membership of the NIHR College and the award of a £15,000 a year personal discretionary fund to support his or her research work (details in Annex 1). The college will be a prestigious body with a programme of events for members including an Annual Conference. The inaugural conference took place on

24 September 2008 with an international panel of speakers, report at http://www.nihr.ac.uk/events/Pages/events_senior_investigator_conference.aspx

18. The NIHR College:

- provides research leadership to the NIHR Faculty including help in planning and speaking at events, hosting visiting fellows and mentoring clinical trainees;
- provides expert advice to the Director of the NIHR; promoting clinical and applied people-focused health research in health and social care.

19. The appointment of NIHR Senior Investigators:

- is a source of prestige providing an incentive for Investigators to achieve this status;
- acknowledges senior researchers and their work, enhancing esteem for applied clinical research;
- reflects internationally prominent people-focussed health researchers;
- provides a focus for NIHR Faculty.

SELECTION PROCESS

20. The process for selecting NIHR Senior Investigators is in two stages. The first stage is a review of written information provided by the applicant together with publicly available data. This includes:

- a bibliometric review of research publications based on their declared area of research
- a review of the data provided by the applicant on their template curriculum vitae

21. Applications who are successful at the first stage will be considered by an expert peer-review panel. The expert panel will recommend to the Director of the NIHR which applicants should be appointed as NIHR Senior Investigators.

22. More details on the NIHR Senior Investigators application and selection process are available in the relevant Frequently Asked Questions section of the NIHR CCF website: <http://www.nihr-ccf.org.uk/site/programmes/seniorinvestigators/faq/>. This will be updated as further questions are asked, and should be the first place to check for further information.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE FULL APPLICATION STAGE

23. The selection criteria for NIHR Senior Investigators are:

- a. quality and volume of internationally excellent research;
- b. relevance of the research portfolio to the health of patients and the public;
- c. impact of the research on improvements in healthcare and public health;
- d. impact of the leadership of the individual on patient and public research.

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED

24. Applicants should submit the following details and supporting evidence in a full application:

- the area of research in which they can demonstrate that they are one of the best researchers in their field in England, together with a list of **all** their research publications within this area over the previous ten years. These publications will be subject to an independent bibliometric analysis. These publications should be submitted in a format that has been agreed with RAND Europe to enable effective bibliometric review;
- research grant income over the past five years for which the applicant was principal investigator (please note that infrastructure funding is not eligible);
- the relevance of their research to the health of patients and the public;
- up to ten of their most important publications within their area of research from within the past five years;

- examples of how their research findings have been translated into improvements in healthcare and public health. The methods whereby research has been translated should be clearly explained;
- their role in providing research leadership. The selection committee will look for examples of leadership within their field internationally, nationally and institutionally.
- their role in engaging health care users and the general public, and also engaging health care planners and policy makers as appropriate;
- their track record in training researchers in their area of research;
- how the NIHR Investigator has involved patients and the public in their research.

25. The Department of Health may seek to publish selected extracts from application forms for successful applicants only, with their consent.

HOW TO APPLY

26. To apply to become an NIHR Senior Investigator individuals must first register with the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (NIHR-CCF) website at:

<http://www.nihr-ccf.org.uk/site/registration>

27. Once registered potential applicants should proceed to login to the secure extranet at:

<https://www.nihr-ccf.org.uk/extranet>

28. Once logged in further information and application forms can be obtained by selecting the "Senior investigator" link in the left hand menu.

29. Once logged in, applicants will need to submit details of their current NIHR or PRP funding in order to demonstrate that they are an NIHR Investigator. Once applicants have submitted this information it will be possible for them to download the application forms.

30. The application process for the NIHR Senior Investigators will be managed through the secure area (extranet) of the NIHR-CCF website. Applications will only be accepted when received through this route. Applicants should be aware that any fields left blank will render that application ineligible. It will not be amenable to bibliometric review nor reviewed by the expert panel.

CLOSING DATE

The closing date for electronic submission of full applications is 4.00 p.m. on Friday 31st July 2009. Please note that the last date for initiating a new application and downloading application forms is 11.59 p.m. on Tuesday 28th July 2009. Applicants are also required to print and submit a wet ink signed declaration, by post, before 4.00 p.m. on Friday 7th August 2009.

NIHR Senior Investigators Discretionary Award

1. The NIHR Senior Investigators Discretionary Award is designed to fund activities that support research that may be carried out by the NIHR Senior Investigator or by other individuals at the NIHR Senior Investigator's discretion. Typical examples could include:
 - 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) perhaps in the form of overtime payments.
2. In terms of governance and audit the NIHR Senior Investigator's employer is responsible for managing the award within their normal governance arrangements and making sure it is used for the purpose intended. Expenditure is based on regulations at the employing institution and is subject to the institution's financial regulations. Any misuse of funds would be subject to procedures governed by the employer's regulations.
3. The NIHR Senior Investigators Discretionary Award will be paid annually to a designated account of the NIHR Senior Investigator's employer. The NIHR does not expect overheads to be deducted from this award by the employer.
4. Where individuals who are in receipt of a discretionary award change employer the award will transfer to their new institution. Any surplus funds which have not been accounted for in contracted expenditure will also transfer to the new employing institution.