

# **2020 NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships (ACFs) Recruitment Information Pack**

## **Applicants Guide**

# **Contents**

- NIHR ACF Recruitment FAQs
- Structured Reference Form
- Clinical Person Specification
- NIHR ACF Academic Person Specification
- Shortlisting Scoresheet

## NIHR ACF Recruitment FAQs

<b>2020 ACF Round 1 Timetable</b>			
Application Window	<b>07/10/2019</b>	to	<b>04/11/2019</b>
Interview Window	<b>06/11/2019</b>	to	<b>20/12/2019</b>
Initial Offers Issued	<b>06/01/2020</b>		
Hold Deadline	<b>13/01/2020</b>		
Return recruitment status updates to NIHR Academy	<b>17/01/2019</b>		
<b>No upgrades</b>			

<b>2020 ACF Re-advert Timetable</b>			
Application window	<b>20/01/2020</b>	to	<b>31/03/2021*</b>
Return recruitment status updates to NIHR Academy on the <b>1st of the month</b> until all posts are unconditionally filled			

<b>Optional – 2020 ACF Re-advert timetable allowing clinical benchmarking</b>			
Application Window	<b>20/01/2020</b>	to	<b>06/03/2020</b>
Interview Window	<b>09/03/2020</b>	to	<b>06/04/2020</b>

*\*Successful 2020 NIHR ACF applicants must be in post by 31/03/2021*

The following guidance is for NIHR ACF recruitment into all General Medical Council (GMC) specialties.

**1) I wish to apply for an NIHR ACF post to commence in 2020. What is the process?**

The ACF recruitment process is summarised in Figure 1.

NIHR ACF posts are allocated annually to Integrated Academic Training (IAT) partnerships comprising an HEE local office, Higher Education Institute (HEI) and NHS organisation.

The recruitment process is managed by the relevant HEE local office in the IAT partnerships, and advertisements will appear on their websites and Oriel from

October 2019. You will need to apply for NIHR ACF posts using the Oriel online application system (<https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/>).

The 2020 NIHR ACF recruitment window runs from October 2019 to 31 March 2021, this is divided into round 1 (October 2019 – December 2019) and re-adverts (January 2020 – 31 March 2021).

### **ACF Application Form**

Applicants will need to complete the ACF application form for the ACF posts advertised in the relevant specialties and levels through Oriel.

### **Specialty Training Application Form**

When the national application window opens, ACF applicants successful at interview who require **clinical benchmarking** (defined in FAQ2) will need to complete the relevant **specialty training application form** (options are defined in FAQ3).

Following assessment of the ACF application forms, shortlisted applicants will be invited for interviews (November - December 2019). The interviews are organised by the HEE local office hosting the ACF post.

The ACF interview has several components assessing the clinical–academic potential of the applicant. Appointable applicants at the ACF interviews will be ranked, with the top ranked applicant being offered the ACF post. A **conditional offer** is given if the applicant requires clinical benchmarking when the offers window opens on 6 January 2020.

A **conditional offer** will be given to successful applicants at the ACF interviews that do not already hold a National Training Number (NTN) or Deanery Reference Number (DRN) in the GMC specialty and level to which they are applying. These applicants require clinical benchmarking (defined in FAQ2) before they can accept the ACF offer.

Applicants with appropriate NTN/DRNs for the advertised ACF receive an **unconditional offer**. If the top ranked applicant at the ACF interviews requires clinical benchmarking then ACF applicants that were deemed appointable at the ACF interviews will also be invited for clinical benchmarking, if required.

An unconditional offer to the reserve applicants, who pass clinical benchmarking, is dependent on the applicants ranked higher at the ACF interviews withdrawing or failing clinical benchmarking.

## **2) What is clinical benchmarking?**

Clinical benchmarking relates to reaching the “*threshold of appointability*” at the national standard, clinical interviews/assessments for the GMC specialty and level of ACF post for which you are applying. Only applicants successful at the ACF interviews that do not hold an NTN/DRN at the appropriate level in the GMC specialty and level to which they are applying need to be clinically benchmarked. For example:

- Applicants who hold a DRN in a core specialty, who are applying for an ACF at ST3/4 will be required to attend clinical benchmarking at the higher level. The clinical interview that resulted in the award of the DRN will not be acceptable for clinical benchmarking.
- Applicants who hold an NTN at ST3 in Cardiology, who are applying for an ST3 cardiology post do not need to attend clinical benchmarking as they would have already passed the clinical benchmarking for this post.

Applicants who fail to reach the “*threshold of appointability*” at clinical benchmarking, will be ineligible for appointment to the ACF post in that recruitment round. Under these circumstances the conditional ACF offer will be withdrawn. If applicants require clinical benchmarking at national clinical assessment/interviews then the HEE local office hosting the ACF post will arrange this.

Withdrawal of a conditional ACF offer does not prevent the affected applicants from reapplying in future recruitment rounds.

**3) Do I need to submit a separate application for standard clinical training in that specialty in order to be able to attend an interview for clinical benchmarking?**

If you require clinical benchmarking then you **must** also complete a separate standard clinical application form. You will be asked on your standard clinical application form whether you wish to be considered for academic recruitment only (i.e. clinical benchmarking only) or whether you wish your standard clinical application to be considered for both academic and clinical appointments. The two options are described below, once you have made your selection and submitted the standard clinical application form you will not be able to change this decision.

**Standard clinical application form options:**

**Academic Recruitment Only**

This option informs the national recruitment office that you wish your standard clinical application form to **only** be used for clinical benchmarking for the ACF post you have applied for. You will only be invited to standard clinical interviews if you were appointable at the ACF interviews, and thus invited for clinical benchmarking. This selection informs the national recruitment office that they should remove you from the offers process for the standard clinical training posts. Your score will only be used to assess whether you reached the level of appointability, you should be informed of the outcome as soon as possible.

**Academic Recruitment and Specialty Training**

This option advises the national recruitment office that in addition to using the standard clinical application for clinical benchmarking as part of the ACF recruitment process (Option 1), you would also like to be considered for a standard clinical training post in the related specialty. Your score will be used to assess whether you reached the level of appointability for the ACF post offer, and you should be informed

of the outcome as soon as possible. If your score is also high enough to be appointed to a standard clinical training post then you will receive this offer when the national standard, clinical training offers window opens. Guidance on accepting ACF posts is detailed below.

**4) I currently hold a clinical NTN at the appropriate level in the GMC specialty associated with the ACF I am applying for; do I need to be clinically benchmarked?**

No. You will have already passed the assessment at the national clinical interview for this GMC specialty and therefore will not have to do so again.

**5) I currently hold a Deanery Reference Number (DRN) having previously successfully applied for core level training. Will I still need to be clinically benchmarked?**

It depends on the level of training of the ACF that is being applied for.

If you hold a DRN whilst applying for a post linked to a GMC specialty that has relevant core level training (e.g. core trainee in Anaesthetics, Core Medical Training for medical specialties and Core Surgical Training for surgery), then you will have already passed the assessment at the clinical interview previously and therefore will not have to do so again.

However, if you hold a DRN for core training but are applying to academic training at a higher training level (i.e. ST3/4) you will need to attend a national clinical assessment/interview at the appropriate level.

If the core level training you are undertaking is not relevant to the GMC specialty you will be applying for in the NIHR ACF round, then you will need to undergo clinical benchmarking.

**6) I hold a National Training Number but not in the same GMC specialty that I am applying for academic training. Will I still need to be clinically benchmarked?**

Yes. Although you have met the required standard in a national clinical interview before, it was not in the same GMC specialty. Therefore, to ensure a consistency of approach with all applicants, you will need to undergo clinical benchmarking for this GMC specialty.

**7) When will ACF offers be released?**

Academic Round 1 offers will be released in January 2020. If you already hold an NTN in the relevant GMC specialty and are the preferred applicant following the ACF interview, then you can be offered the post. If you require clinical benchmarking, then the offer will be conditional upon meeting the required standard in the clinical assessment/interview.

**8) What is the process of accepting an ACF post after clinical benchmarking?**

If, after confirmation of clinical benchmarking, you choose to accept your ACF post, you must ensure that you withdraw from all other applications that you have submitted. It is your responsibility to contact the appropriate lead recruiter(s) and inform them that you would like to withdraw your application. This should be done within 5 working days of confirmation of clinical benchmarking. Withdrawal from other applications will not automatically occur through Oriel.

**9) What happens if I do not reach the required standard at clinical benchmarking?**

Your NIHR ACF offer will be withdrawn by the relevant HEE local office.

**10) Would I receive a rank at clinical interviews when being clinically benchmarked?**

It depends on the option selected in the standard clinical application form. ACF applicants who select:

- **Academic recruitment only** will not receive a rank at the standard clinical assessments/interviews.
- **Academic recruitment and specialty training** will receive a rank at the standard clinical assessments/interviews.

**11) What will be the likely delay between my round 1 ACF interview and clinical benchmarking?**

It depends on the level of the NIHR ACF post that you are applying for. Round 1 NIHR ACF interviews will take place in November/December 2019.

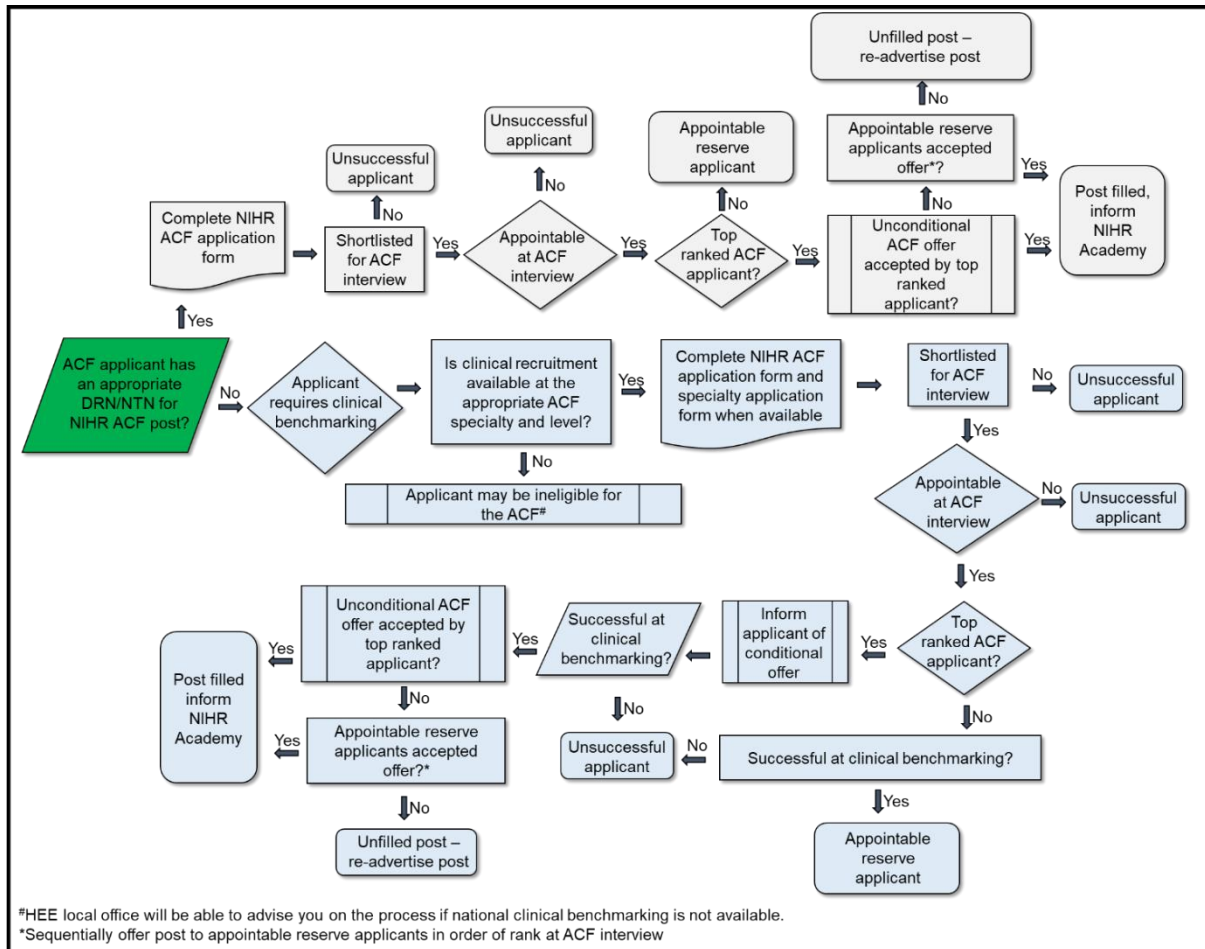
Standard clinical assessments/interviews for ST1 specialties will take place between January and March 2020.

ST3/4 standard clinical assessment/interviews take place between March and April 2020.

**12) I am undertaking higher specialty training but the ACF is advertised at a lower ST entry level; will I have to repeat my clinical training when I start the ACF?**

Yes. Applicants at e.g. ST5 are eligible to apply for an ACF advertised at ST3 entry; however, if such applicants were to accept the ST3 ACF post, they are required to repeat their ST3 clinical training.

Figure 1. Schematic showing the NIHR ACF recruitment process



## Structured Reference Form

The ACF structured reference forms are available for download [here](#).

## Clinical Person Specification

All clinical person specifications are available for download [here](#).



## NIHR ACF Academic Person Specification

	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>	<b>WHEN EVALUATED<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	Evidence of achievement of medical Foundation competences	<p>Evidence of commitment to the specialty- Intercalated honours for BSc and/or additional qualifications e.g. MSc etc.</p> <p>Distinction or honours during MBBS programme</p> <p>Completion of Academic Foundation Programme or equivalent</p>	Application Form
<b>KNOWLEDGE &amp; ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<p>Demonstration of acquisition of the level of knowledge and skills necessary for the completion of F2</p> <p>Demonstration of, understanding of, and commitment to, an academic career</p>	<p>Demonstration of good general knowledge / broad interest in science and academic medicine</p> <p>Prizes or distinctions</p> <p>Presentation of work at a national or international meeting</p> <p>Publications in peer reviewed journals</p> <p>Additional degree or MSc in relevant subject area</p> <p>Research experience</p> <p>Demonstration of knowledge of the clinical academic career pathway</p>	Application Form and selection centre
<b>EDUCATIONAL &amp; PERSONAL ASPECTS</b>	<p>Demonstration of understanding and commitment to academic career</p> <p>Support of an academic referee for this application</p>	<p>Demonstration of educational reasons for applying for this Academic Clinical Fellowship programme</p> <p>Demonstration of personal reasons for applying for this Academic Clinical Fellowship programme</p>	Application Form and selection centre
<b>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</b>	As for standard person specification criteria	<p>Evidence of team working skills</p> <p>Evidence of leadership potential</p> <p>Evidence through scientific publications and presentations</p>	Application Form and selection centre

<sup>1</sup> 'when evaluated' is indicative, but may be carried out at any time throughout the selection process

# Shortlisting Scoresheet

## 2020 NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships

### Introduction

The shortlisting assessments for NIHR ACF posts should be appropriate for appointment to the ACF in the specialty and at the training level advertised. Each application should be rated as either "Shortlisted" or 'Not Shortlisted' for interview to the particular Integrated Academic Training post.

<b>Medical/Clinical experience:</b> Select appropriate evidence of experience relevant to ACF post entry level						
Criteria	i) No evidence	ii) Minimum relevant clinical experience	iii) Average relevant clinical experience	iv) Above average relevant clinical experience	-	/ 3
Score	0	1	2	3		

<b>Degree in a relevant subject area:</b> Only score the highest degree awarded * BSc/BA/MSc/MRes or equivalent						
Criteria	i) No evidence	ii) 2-1 Intercalated Degree*	iii) 1st Intercalated Degree*	iv) Masters/MPhil/PhD/M D in a relevant subject area	-	/ 3
Score	0	1	2	3		

<b>Prizes:</b> Awarded appropriate prizes indicating excellence /potential excellence for ACF						
Criteria	i) No evidence	ii) One or two undergraduate/ post-graduate	iii) More than two undergraduate/ post-graduate	-	-	/ 2
Score	0	1	2			

<b>Teaching experience:</b> Score formal teaching role where evidenced or higher education teaching qualification such as a FHEA						
Criteria	i) No evidence	ii) Formal teaching role	iii) Any higher education teaching qualification	-	-	/ 2
Score	0	1	2			

<b>Evidence of Scientific publications</b>						
Criteria	i) No evidence	ii) Good quality published	iii) Several good quality published	iv) Publication(s) in a major journal as a co-author	v) Publication(s) in a major	/ 4
Score						

		abstract(s) as a co-author	abstracts as a first author		journal as a first-author	
Score	0	1	2	3	4	

Evidence of Scientific Presentations						
Criteria	i) No evidence	ii) Limited to local/regional levels	iii) National level	iv) International level	v) Several presentations at international level	/ 4
Score	0	1	2	3	4	

Language Skills and content of evidence: Assess the written English and how applicants link their experience to the post they are applying for						
Criteria	i) No evidence of competence in written English	ii) Competence in and reasonable use of written English	iii) Criteria ii) with some relevant evidence linked to the application	Clear and concise use of appropriate written English, providing relevant evidence throughout	-	/ 3
Score	0	1	2	3		

Academic experience: Rate a subjective assessment of academic experience balancing achievements with career stage. For example, an applicant currently in their FY2 year with the same quantifiable academic achievements (publications, prizes, degrees etc.) as an applicant at ST3 level would score highly						
Criteria	i) No evidence of relevant academic experience	ii) Evidence of minimum relevant academic experience	iii) Evidence of average relevant academic experience	iv) Evidence of above average academic experience	-	/ 3
Score	0	1	2	3		

Academic potential: Rate a subjective assessment of academic potential balancing achievements with career stage.						
Criteria	i) No evidence of relevant academic potential	ii) Evidence weak	iii) Evidence limited	iv) Evidence ample	v) Evidence outstanding	/ 4
Score	0	1	2	3	4	

**Shortlisting Outcome**  
/28

**Total score =**