



Clinical Academic Research Partnerships (CARP) Eligibility Questions from Webinar 1

If you have questions related to the application process not covered within this document we encourage you to read the [CARP Round 3 Guidance](#) thoroughly.

The slide deck and Q&As from the Webinar 2: 'How to apply' is available on the [CARP call page](#) website for all potential applicants.

Who to contact if you still have questions:

Scheme specific questions: CARP@mrc.ukri.org

Je-S questions: JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org, +44 (0) 1793 44 4164

General MRC funding policy and eligibility enquiries: RFPD@mrc.ukri.org

Applicant

General Questions

- Is it open for applicants outside UK?
[Applicants to this scheme are expected to be already working within the UK healthcare profession system. Any queries regarding residence eligibility or visa requirements should be addressed to the host research organisation and NHS \(or equivalent\) employer concerned.](#)
- Are there any limits of age? (I am 50-year-old)?
[There are no age limits on any MRC schemes](#)

Time since PhD/CCT etc

- How long from getting into consultant post before you can apply? can you be too late to apply?
[There are no eligibility rules based on time since applicants obtained their CCT/consultant-level position.](#)
- How long after obtaining a PhD can one apply? Is there a limit?
[There are no eligibility rules based on time since applicants obtained their PhD/MD however if you haven't had a significant break in research activity, we encourage you to investigate other existing schemes. For example, the MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship or the NIHR Advanced Fellowship.](#)

Profession/Position Held

- I doubt it, but can I just ask are social workers classed as an allied health professional?
[The CARP scheme is open to Doctors & Dentists & HEE/NIHR ICA Programme Eligible Professions. This includes social workers.](#)
- I am currently locum consultant. Can I apply?
[Applicants are expected to have an open-ended contract. The scheme aims to support applicants with a secure consultant-level post who would not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with research, in part due to the job security afforded by](#)

their current career track. Applicants on fixed-term contracts are unlikely to be competitive as it will be difficult for the employer to outline feasible plans to ensure the applicant's research time is protected and to afford the applicant a return to their position without any loss in career progression at the end of the award.

- I am a University lecturer and do not have a contract with the NHS or provide any clinical care at present. Would I be able to apply? or do I need to look elsewhere for funding? & I am a new lecturer in biomedical sciences teaching and research, can I apply with clinical consultant as a research partner in another university to the scheme?

The aim of the CARP scheme is for research trained healthcare professionals to form mutually beneficial research partnerships with a research professional (individual(s) with peer reviewed grant funding that outlasts the length of the CARP award). If you are not a healthcare professional you will not be able to apply as PI for the CARP scheme. Please consult the [MRC](#) and [NIHR](#) websites for available research grants and fellowships.

Research Qualification

- Would an MSc degree be acceptable? & Is it only MD and PhD that you accept, or would you accept for e.g. PG Diploma Clinical Research? & If the NHS consultants do not have MD or PhD, but has research in the form of publications, would they be supported? & My medical degree involved 1 year of research experience in a lab and having looked at it, this should qualify as MD. Can I apply for this program please?

Applicants must hold a PhD/MD or equivalent postgraduate qualification, for example ~3 years consolidated research time, where the applicant had been the intellectual drive behind a project and obtained strong outputs from their research experience. Applicants without a PhD/MD will need to demonstrate within their application equivalence. For further information on UK degree qualifications please see: <https://www.studyinuk.co.uk/client-menu/51/uk-degree-explanation>.

- I finished my PhD in 1995 and then read medicine after completing a 2.5-year post-doctoral fellowship. Other research has been done since becoming a doctor. How do you assess Research done since your PhD?

There are no eligibility rules based on time since applicants obtained their PhD/MD etc. Within the application it is expected that applicants would evidence their research capabilities, as demonstrated by the productivity and skills gained during their PhD or MD, and any other past research experience if applicable. Furthermore the applicant should demonstrated that the proposed project provides a mutually beneficial collaboration, enhancing the applicant's research experience and their contribution to the research partner's existing team.

Research Activity

- If one holds a time limited (6 month) institutional grant which buys out 2 PAs of my time as a consultant for me to focus on research, but which will have run out at time of carp application - will I still be eligible? & If you have been in receipt of commercial research funding either currently or in the past, are you eligible to apply for CARP?

There are no eligibility rules based on time since applicant obtained research funding/completed research. Applicants should ensure the added-value of the award is articulated, for example to support them in working in new environments or with new research partners.

- Can someone with 2 PAs in the job plan apply? & What is the opinion on those with exactly one PA of research time? Would that allow us to be eligible? & Would having a session a week as an LCRN specialty lead (even though that does not bring research time) count against an applicant?

Proposals from applicants with more than one research PA are welcome, but they should ensure the added-value of the award is articulated, for example to support them in working in new environments or with new research partners.

- Roughly how long on average is a 'significant break' from research post-PhD? Those without a significant break in research activity will need to articulate the added-value of the award, for example how this scheme will put them on a research trajectory they were not currently on and why this scheme is a more suitable option compared to other schemes they are eligible for. Applicants without a significant break in research activity are encouraged to investigate other existing schemes, for example: MRC's Clinician Scientist Fellowship or NIHR's Advanced Fellowship.
- Would being PI on a project even though I have no allocated time beyond my two SPAs count against an application? & Would trial funding (20% but no Fellowship funding) make me ineligible?

Applicants are expected to not be undertaking any substantive research activity and will generally have no or very limited research funding. Applicants undertaking research activity should ensure the added-value of the award is articulated. E.g. how this scheme will put them on a research trajectory they were not currently on, how it would support them in working in new environments or with new research partners etc.

Resubmission

- For previously unsuccessful applicants, might individual feedback on their previous application be available?
As stated in the Guidance for the Pilot scheme: "Detailed individual feedback will not be provided". We recommend applicants consider the Chair's summaries from [Round 1](#) and [Round 2](#) of the pilot.
- Can you apply to the CARP scheme if you have applied before once?
If you have previously applied to the scheme, your current application must be substantially different from the previous, unsuccessful submission. Please contact the CARP team (CARP@mrc.ukri.org) to discuss your new submission. In a covering letter accompanying your new proposal, you will need to indicate how the application has been changed and how you responded to any feedback received. Please refer to [MRC Guidance](#) regarding resubmissions.

Research Partner

General Questions

- Will I have to choose a research group to collaborate?

Yes, please note that when considering your research partner be open-minded and look across/beyond your institution. The proposed project should align to research strengths and interests of the applicant and research partner.

- Is it okay to for the research partners to known to the applicant through previous work, or are your specifically looking for new collaborations? **&** If I already have a research partner but the time of the collaboration was not funded, and the project is specific (and separate from the previous collaborations) can I apply?

Applications for funding for existing collaborations should ensure the added-value of the award is articulated E.g. how this scheme will put the applicant on a research trajectory they were not currently on, or how it would support them in working in new environments or with new research partners etc.

- Can I join a research partner who is not in my specialty? E.g. if I am neonatologist can I join with someone who is a foetal medicine professor? **&** I wish to collaborate with an established engineering/physics group as opposed to a healthcare group - would this be eligible?

Yes, please note that the proposed project should align to research strengths and interests of the applicant and research partner and would need to be within the partnering funders' remit.

- Could my research partner be a member of our staff team? She holds a split NHS / NIHR grant post. She is exceptionally talented at research, but I supervise her clinically!

Research partners require a proven track record of securing peer-reviewed research programmes from funders such as UKRI, NIHR, or significant third sector research funders for the duration of the planned partnership. They must also be based at an organisation eligible to hold research council funding. Applications for funding for existing collaborations should ensure the added-value of the award is articulated E.g. how this scheme will put the applicant on a research trajectory they were not currently on, or how it would support them in working in new environments or with new research partners etc.

Research Activity

- My proposed collaborator's main programme grant will expire around the middle of any CARP award I might receive - does this preclude applying? **&** Does the research partner have to have an active grant of some sort at the time of application? For example, what if they have just moved to a new institution and are between active grants?

The research partner must hold funding for the duration of the proposed partnership. This is to ensure the applicant is adequately supported over the course of their award.

- Does the research partner have to be a professor? Can they be a senior research fellow, for example?

Research partners must have a proven track record of securing peer-reviewed research programmes from funders such as UKRI, NIHR, or significant third sector research funders for the duration of the planned partnership.

Number of research partners

- Is it acceptable to have two main collaborators for two arms of a proposed project?
Yes, you can have multiple research partners (Co-Investigators) on your application. You will need to have one host RO who will accept responsibility for administering the award. I would also encourage you to demonstrate within an application how the proposed project aligns with the research strengths and interests of both yourself and your research partners.
- Can collaborations/project partners be across more than 1 institution? for example if you have a primary partner in your host organisation, can you have an additional project partner in another university (I'm thinking of 2 partners who are in neighbouring cities, so not very geographically distant). **&** Are multiple organisation collaborations encouraged (e.g. your own academic health science centre linked academic institution and linked with an external academic institution to access other techniques, supervision and expertise)
Yes, you can have multiple research partners (Co-Investigators) on your application. You will need to have one host RO who will accept responsibility for administering the award. You will need to demonstrate within an application that you have considered how you would work with two research partners located at distinct institutions.
- If more collaborators are required to support me on carrying out the project, for example as more methodologies are involved, how can their time be accounted for and funded under the CARP?
Co-I time on the grant can be indicated within the application. However, no additional support for salaries other than the applicants should be costed within the application.
- Can organisational links abroad in addition to local organisations be included? (for projects that do not need on site working but allowing access to remote supervision, data registries etc)
Project partners can be listed within the application. Their details should be listed, along with their contribution which may be financial, in-kind etc. An organisation should only be named as a project partner if it is providing specific contributions (either direct or indirect) to the project.

Host RO

- Are institutions encouraged to hold an internal selection process to triage potential applicants?
This is a decision for the relevant research organisation.
- The RO you decide to collaborate with - should they be holding a lot of major grants like NIHR BRC, MRC, Wellcome?
The host research organisation must demonstrate appropriate support (such as access to facilities) to enable the applicant to successfully undertake the project described.

Project

General Questions

- Does the application title need to be similar or related to the PhD subject? **&** Is it better to go for a basic science project or clinical one as a Consultant?

The proposed project should align to research strengths and interests of the applicant and research partner and would need to be within the partnering funders' remit.

- My research interest is respiratory failure (ARDS and COVID-19) and my project is on ventilation during extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and respiratory drive. Is this subject within the scope of the scheme?

Projects are welcome across all areas of the partnering funders' remits and interests. Applications may range from basic discovery science to translational and applied health research. If you are uncertain that your proposed project is within remit please send a one-page outline to CARP@mrc.ukri.org.

- How ambitious should we aim to be in terms of our research project? It's hard to get the balance right between ambition and pragmatism.

The MRC has commissioned a set of videos for our early career researcher discussing what a good proposal looks like. Many points covered in these are also applicable to applicants to the CARP scheme.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSus4fp7v7sR0mtFcCVaTJauyuC0kwWHA>
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSus4fp7v7sQIaH1g3sN4tPXwC612UPpN>

Clinical Trials

- Given the comments about pilot clinical trials, is working up a clinical trial proposal (on the back of laboratory results) acceptable as part of the application? **&** Could you expand on the question about whether an application is eligible if it includes a CTIMP or non-CTIMP study?

We do not envisage that proposals seeking to continue clinical trials or to undertake pilot or feasibility studies to be competitive, especially as other routes to support pilot and clinical trials are available. However, if you are able to establish a collaboration with a research partner who is a leader in this area, and can develop an interesting project around the pilot study it may still be suitable for consideration.

Application

The slide deck and Q&As from the Webinar 2: 'How to apply' is available on the MRC website for all potential applicants.

Success Rates/Award Holders

- What was the success for applying? **&** Did you look at ethnicity/area of applicants for success?

Please see the UKRI website for information on funding decisions:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/funding-data/decisions-on-competitive-funding/> and UKRI diversity data <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-data/>

- Are the details of previous successful award holders available?

MRC Board/Panel outcomes are available on the website:

<https://mrc.ukri.org/research/funded-research/board-panel-meeting-outcomes/> and details of the successful awards are published on Gateway to Research: <https://gtr.ukri.org/>

What next?

- What is next after CARP, because 3 years 50% is not a lot of time; is there a specific trajectory to follow or just apply for other schemes? **&** Is it ok to want to continue to be a research-active NHS consultant after the award, rather than heading down the academic (e.g. clinician scientist) pathway? **&** Can CARP funding be used to support data generation for a bigger grant like NIHR EME later.

This scheme provides research-qualified healthcare professionals an opportunity to increase their research skills and experience by engaging with groups and centres of biomedical and health research excellence, enabling the cross-seeding of perspectives, ideas and connections needed to underpin future translational biomedical and health research. We expect that once the award is finished that applicants will go on to have a range of research contact. We do encourage you to articulate within your application how this award will support your career aspirations. You may also include information on how you intend to continue engagement with research beyond the CARP award or how the award may support your work as a healthcare professional after the award.

Future Calls

- Do you think the programme will have a call also next year (2021)? **&** How many times a year does the grants process run? If successful, are deferred start dates accepted? (e.g. if going on mat leave etc.?)

A commitment has been made to have an annual call for applications. The anticipated start date should be realistic and would normally be between one month and six months after the date of the decision-making board or panel. Applicants wishing to start their project significantly after this period may wish to discuss their plans with the CARP team (CARP@mrc.ukri.org) prior to applying.

Other schemes

- The need for a specific partner is a problem. Many doctors are very active in clinical research (designing and running trials) in their spare time and it would be so good to have dedicated time for this. But there is no specific partner. If not CARP, where would they get funding for this?

Information on other funding schemes is available on the MRC and NIHR websites. Please contact either funder directly for advice on schemes available.

<https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/>

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/apply-for-funding/>

Contact

- Is there an opportunity to have a 1:1 discussion with CARP team? My job plan is complicated, and I would value a direct discussion to ensure I am eligible **&** I don't know if my "outputs" are good enough. Can I get individualised advice if I send my CV to you? **&** I am debating between 2 project one basic science and one more genomic focused, would it be possible to discuss this and find best one, please?

The CARP team are happy to be contacted, please email in the first instance with your query and a follow-up call can be arranged if required. CARP@mrc.ukri.org