

HCP Internship Programme ARC KSS Frequently Asked Questions

Award Activities

Does my research need to correspond to our registration? For example, if I am registered with Social Work England, would I need to do social work, or could it be anything related to health and social care?

No, you don't have to build the internship around research plans that are linked with your registration, but keep in mind your career trajectory and sustainability after the fellowship. It is a good idea to show how your research development will link with your professional development.

Would this be suitable for people interested in doing the clinical doctorate rather than a PhD eventually?

Yes, that is fine.

Is this for one project only, or could I use it to help me publish a number of papers?

It is not restricted to only one area of research development; you could publish a number of papers.

Can I use the internship to help with creating a poster presentation?

Yes.

Do I need to have a clear idea of what I want to research/research question before applying?

No, but provide as much information as you can on your ideas. You don't have to carry out a research project with a research question. However, if you do want to do a research project, be as clear as you can on what questions and how.

Can I use the time to prepare for my application for the NIHR PCAF/DF?

Yes.

Does my research also need to be about the Sussex/Surrey/Kent area. For example, can I do research about a topic that is about other areas of the UK too?

Whilst topics can cover outside of the KSS area, we would want it to still benefit the region.

I have already done research modules, could I use the award for some of the MSc level modules related to my prospective PhD?

Yes.

If interested in the Associate PI Scheme, would it be better to apply via the HCP Internship? Could this support the time needed for the API?

Yes, you could apply to the HCP Internship to have time/resources to develop an API proposal.

Is the funding for a piece of research, or does that mean I can apply for funding to spend time with a researcher to shadow?

You can apply for funding to spend time with a researcher to shadow, or to do a small piece of exploratory research, and/or a wide range of other activities, see examples in guidance.

Mentors

Does your mentor have to be someone from your organisation?

No, they can come from elsewhere.

Does my mentor need to be connected to the NIHR/funding or can I pick any academic/researcher to be my mentor?

You can pick either NHS or health/care provider, NIHR or academic /researcher as your mentor.

Can the mentor be from industry partners?

Yes.

Eligibility

Can someone apply for this award if they have applied for other awards in the past such as the ICAP, springboard etc.

Yes, this is fine.

Is this internship limited to any NHS band range?

No limit on NHS band range.

I currently have a Health and Care Worker Visa. Am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, so long as your Visa covers you for the duration of the fellowship.

Am I ineligible for this internship if I am currently in an Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) MSc training?

You can't do additional modules if you are on the MSc and we won't duplicate funding. You could, however, add to a programme of study with additional development areas.

If I've completed a privately funded Master's Programme outside of Kent, Surrey or Sussex but I'm a registered professional in the region, am I still eligible?

Yes.

Is there any restriction about how long you have been in clinical practice, i.e. less than 5 years post qualifying?

There is no restriction. This is a different scheme to the INSIGHT MSc Programme which does have the 5-year stipulation.

Is a BSc qualification and current role as a clinical research nurse enough to apply?

Yes. There is no restriction on minimal qualification, we only stipulate you don't hold a PhD yet.

Budget

Does the £10k funding also cover backfill or substitution for my job while I'm doing the internship, or is it intended to be used for research-related costs?

It is intended to be used for both any backfill required and research-development related costs. Talk to your finance support to build your proposal.

How does the £10k funding usually work in terms of time off from work – would it mean cutting down on my hours and receiving less salary?

You should not need to cut down on work or receive less salary for holding an HCP internship. They are intended to provide a small amount of backfill time if needed, during the 9-month duration, while you participate in the elements you have chosen to develop your research skills.

What specifically does the funding cover? For example, does it covers courses, paying participants, travel costs etc.?

Please see the guidance. It can cover courses, travel, backfill, conference costs, participant payments but it does not cover organisational overheads.

What proportion of the funding can be salary? Is there a % cap with the £10k?

There is no cap but be realistic about what costs you'll need covered.

Would this be able to be used in conjunction with other funding for future/continued research?

Yes, so long as there is no duplication in funding.

Can the research project be undertaken entirely in 'spare time' to build my research career and have the time covered via the £10k funding per usual rate?

It is for discussion between the applicant and their employer as to how the scheme and budget would be managed. It is unlikely an employer would provide paid time over and on top of a full time equivalent by topping up from the internship award but, for instance, a part-time employee may be granted additional paid time via the award.

Outcomes

What will be the outcomes of the internship at the end of the research? Is it equivalent to a fellowship or a PhD?

This is a competitive NIHR funded opportunity which funders will look on favourably for future applications. It does not have a certification per se.

Examples

Do you have any examples of what some of the research projects look like? For instance, did they include participants or focus groups or was it more of a literature review they did? Would it be possible to share some examples of what areas of research the current September 2026 cohort are looking at?

Please see the link to the Cohort 1 Newsletter which has some useful examples.

[HCP Internship Cohort 1 Newsletter June 2026](#)

Scheme Timings

When does the next cohort run if I'm not ready to apply now?

There will be a further round in the Spring of 2027. Please sign up to our newsletter to receive the latest information [Subscribe to the ARC KSS Newsletter](#)

Help available for applicants

Will there be help in picking a subject or guidance from yourselves in what I want to achieve?

Yes, please get in touch with arckssacademy@kent.ac.uk with as much information as you have and we will connect you to a team member for advice.