

FAQs Round 1 2019 NIHR ACF – Applicants

2019 NIHR ACF Recruitment window 8th October 2018 – 31st March 2020

2019 ACF Timetable Round 1

Applications Window	8 th October 2018 to 5 th November 2018	
Interview Window	7 th November 2018 to 21 st December 2018	
Initial Offers Issued	7 th January 2019	Hold Deadline 14 th January 2019
No upgrades		

2019 ACF Re-advert timetable – January 2018 – 31st March 2020

Optional 2019 ACF Re-advert timetable enabling clinical benchmarking:

Application window	21 st January 2019 to 8 th March 2019
Interview window	10 th March 2019 to 8 th April 2019
No upgrades	

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 2019. What is the process?

NIHR ACF posts are allocated annually to Integrated Academic Training (IAT) partnerships comprising a 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 Oriol from October 2018. You will need to apply for NIHR ACF posts using the Oriol online application system (<https://www.oriol.nhs.uk/Web/>). The 2019 NIHR ACF recruitment window runs from October 2018 to 31st March 2020, this is divided into round 1 (October 2018 – December 2018) and re-adverts (January – 31st March 2020).

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

Specialty training application form: ACF applicants who would require clinical benchmarking, if they were successful at the ACF interview, will need to complete the relevant specialty training application, when the national application window opens. **Specialty training application form options and a definition of those applicants requiring clinical benchmarking is detailed in FAQ 2 and 3.*

Following assessment of the ACF application forms, shortlisted applicants will be invited for ACF interviews (November - December 2018) 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 (conditionally if

clinical benchmarking is required) when the offers window opens on 8th January 2019. This is summarised in Figure 1 the schematic of the NIHR ACF recruitment process.

Conditional offers 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. The condition of the offer relates to clinical benchmarking in the GMC specialty of the ACF post for which you are applying.

**Clinical benchmarking is defined in FAQ 2.*

If the top ranked applicant at the ACF interviews requires clinical benchmarking then reserve appointable applicants, at the ACF interview, 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 appointability threshold 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 be **only** 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 2019. 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 Oriol.

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 2018.

Standard clinical assessments/interviews for ST1 specialties will take place between January and March 2019. ST3/4 standard clinical assessment/interviews take place between March and April 2019.