

## Appendix 8: Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. I wish to apply for a dental NIHR ACF post 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, Oriel, and potentially also in other professional publications, for example the British Dental Journal.

- **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:** ACF applicants who require clinical benchmarking if they were successful at the ACF interview will need to complete the relevant specialty training application when the national recruitment application window opens.

Following assessment of the ACF applications, shortlisted applicants are invited for an ACF interview (also sometimes known as the 'academic' interview) by the HEE local office hosting the ACF post. The ACF interview has several components assessing the clinical–academic potential of the applicant and the panel will include relevant clinical academic representatives from the hosting HEI. Appointable applicants at the ACF interviews will be ranked and, subject to national clinical benchmarking, the top ranked applicant will be offered the ACF post when offers are made.

*Please refer to Appendix 6 for a summary of the benchmarking process flow chart.*

Conditional offers will be given to successful applicants at the ACF interviews who did not already hold a NTN in the GDC specialty and level to which they are applying. The condition of the offer relates to the clinical benchmarking in the GDC specialty of the ACF post to which they are applying.

If the top ranked applicant at the ACF interviews requires clinical benchmarking, then reserve appointable applicants from the ACF interview will also be invited for clinical benchmarking if required. An unconditional offer to reserve applicants, who passed clinical benchmarking, is dependent on the applicants ranked higher at the ACF interviews withdrawing to failing clinical benchmarking.

ACF applicants will be ranked and offered on their performance at the ACF interview and **not** the national standard clinical interview where they just need to pass the clinical benchmark. If applicants require clinical benchmarking then the HEE local office hosting the ACF post will need to ensure that the HEE national recruitment team are made aware of this in a timely manner, applicants should have been advised to apply to the relevant national recruitment.

### 2. What is clinical benchmarking?

Clinical benchmarking relates to applicants reaching the threshold of appointability at the national standard clinical interviews/assessments for the GDC specialty and level of the ACF post for which they are applying.

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.

Applicants who fail clinical benchmarking and become ineligible are still able to reapply in future recruitment rounds.

### 3. Will all applicants need to attend clinical benchmarking?

No. If the applicant already holds a NTN in the same GDC specialty as their NIHR ACF application, there is no need for them to attend a national clinical assessment/interview as they will have previously met the required clinical standard.

**4. Will applicants who hold a NTN in a different GDC specialty to the ACF they are applying for be required to attend clinical benchmarking?**

Yes. Although they have met the required standard in a national clinical interview previously, it was not in the same GDC specialty. Different specialties assess different skills and competences at interview and therefore should not be assumed that success in one clinical interview is appropriate for all specialties.

**5. What is the required standard for NIHR ACF applicants undergoing clinical benchmarking?**

Applicants who do not hold a NTN will need to be assessed and interviewed through the relevant national process for the specialty. The applicant will be required to reach the threshold of 'appointability' at national selection assessment/interview. They **do not** need to have been ranked high enough to have received a specialty training post i.e. 'appointed'.

Applicants that do not reach the appointable score threshold at national selection assessment/interview will have their ACF offer (or place on reserve list) withdrawn.