

SUSTAIN programme round seven - application guidelines

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1. Introduction

SUSTAIN is a programme designed to develop the skills that are important to enable female researchers to thrive in their independent research careers.

Supported by the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Medical Research Council, the Royal Society, and the Royal Academy of Engineering, we are offering places to 24 women on the seventh cohort of the programme.

Scientists and engineers from all disciplines are eligible to join SUSTAIN, provided they currently hold a qualifying award or fellowship from one of the funding organisations.

The Academy is committed to working towards [equity, diversity and inclusion](#) and we actively encourage applications from candidates with underrepresented protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Programme content

SUSTAIN is part of the Academy's portfolio of activities aimed at developing talented researchers and it will include the following:

Interactive career development workshops

The programme will launch with an in-person residential at the Academy of Medical Sciences' Offices in London on **8-9 November 2022**, followed by a virtual mentoring workshop on **17 November 2022**. The launch will offer an opportunity to meet other participants and take part in training for the mentoring and co-coaching aspects of the programme, as well as on broader career development topics. Please note that in order to take up an offer of a place on the programme, you must be able to attend the launch and subsequent mentoring workshop.

To note: we are planning the programme launch as an in-person event. This may be subject to change nearer the time depending on COVID-19 regulations and the views of

programme participants. Additional programme events may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid, with firm decisions on the format to be taken closer to the event dates.

The November launch will be followed by a series of career development workshops spaced throughout the year. Each session will be tailored to support attendees through the challenges of combining research, teaching, clinical practice and caring and other responsibilities where relevant. Previous sessions have included topics on:

- Time management
- Negotiation
- Setting up a research team for success
- Developing your leadership style

The content will be developed in the coming months and will be tailored to the needs of the participants. The information you provide in your application form regarding areas that you are interested in covering will also feed into the content of the sessions.

A peer support network

The group will be matched in co-coaching triads to enable ongoing peer support and discussion of issues/challenges. Small group work at each workshop will help to embed and make learning practical.

One-to-one mentoring

Participants will have the opportunity to be mentored by a senior researcher through the Academy’s Mentoring Programme. Ongoing support will be provided to both mentees and mentors, and participants will receive mentoring training as part of the launch to ensure maximum benefit of the mentoring relationship.

3. Who can apply

The programme is open to female scientists and engineers (including both clinical and non-clinical researchers) who hold an active award or fellowship from one of the partner organisations.

To be eligible to apply you must hold one of the following awards:

Medical Research Council	Career Development Award
	Clinician Scientist Fellowship
	MRC Investigators (Programme Leader Track only)
	Clinical Academic Partnership Grant
	New Investigator Research Grant (NIRGs)

The Royal Society	Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship
	Sir Henry Dale Fellowship
	University Research Fellowship
Academy of Medical Sciences	Academy of Medical Sciences/The Health Foundation Clinician Scientist Fellowship
	Springboard Award
	Starter Grant Award for Clinical Lecturers
Royal Academy of Engineering	Research Fellow
	Engineering for Development Research Fellow

This award must be active at the time of your application. **All applicants must be available to participate in the career development workshops.** For the media training workshop, groups will be coordinated depending on participants' availability. Please see '**key dates**' section of this document for more details.

4. Selection process

All eligible applications will be stratified and randomly selected within the following categories:

- Funding institution
- Clinical and non-clinical/other background
- UK regions

The randomisation will be achieved by allocating a number to each applicant and using a random number sequence generator. We aim to achieve a balance of clinical researchers, scientists from other backgrounds, and engineers, as well as a fair distribution around the UK. A total of 24 places are available.

The selection process will be overseen by the SUSTAIN reference group chair, Professor Christine Harrison FMedSci, Professor of Childhood Cancer Cytogenetics, Newcastle University. The decision of the Academy is final.

Notification of decisions regarding SUSTAIN applications will be made in late September 2022.

5. Mentoring

SUSTAIN participants will be mentored by a Fellow of one of the academies. Bespoke training and ongoing support will be provided to both mentees and mentors over the course of the programme.

We promote a developmental model of mentoring to enable mentees to make critical career decisions.

Participants are asked to:

- 1) Attend mentoring workshop on 17 November
- 2) Commit to meet their mentor regularly over the period of one year (meetings may be virtual),
- 3) Complete short feedback surveys at key points during the programme.

6. Key dates

Date	
30 August 2022	Applications open
23 September 2022	Applications close
Late September 2022	Applicants are notified about the outcome of the selection process
8-9 November 2022	Residential launch at Academy of Medical Sciences' venue 41 Portland Place, London. To include career development and the Inspiring Women Celebration on the evening of 8 November, featuring guest speakers and networking opportunities with other SUSTAIN participants and senior researchers
17 November 2022	Virtual mentor meeting – during this workshop you will meet the SUSTAIN Round 7 mentors and get to nominate your preferred choices.
1, 10 and 22 March 2023	Media training workshop (full day event) – cohort split into three groups across different dates
July 2023	Virtual Career development workshop (two half days)
October 2023	Career development workshop and conclusion (full day event with evening celebration)

The full agenda for each event will follow for successful programme participants.

Please note that we plan to offer a mixture of in-person, virtual, and hybrid events. In-person events are subject to safety regulations and government advice pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will also take into account the preferences of programme participants closer to the time.

7. Accommodation, travel and childcare

For any in-person events reasonable travel expenses will be covered, and hotel accommodation will be offered to all participants. This will typically be for the night before subsequent workshops, to help participants to avoid rush hour travel.

Childcare support, when additional care is required above normal provision, will be available up to £80 per child per day during the workshops. Participants will be able to claim childcare support by completing a form and providing appropriate receipts to the Academy.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Feedback from participants will help us to assess the impact of SUSTAIN and inform future developments. **We expect participants to maintain close contact with the Academy and to complete feedback surveys after each workshop.**

The SUSTAIN programme is independently evaluated, and participants may be asked to complete surveys during or after the programme. You may also volunteer to provide further detail on your experience of SUSTAIN through interview or case studies.

9. Governance

The programme is overseen by a reference group. The role of this group is to advise the Academy on the development of SUSTAIN and oversee the application process as well as the evaluation of the programme.

Reference group members:

- Professor Christine Harrison FMedSci, Professor of Childhood Cancer Cytogenetics, Newcastle University (chair)
- Professor Eva Hoffman, Professor in Molecular Genetics, University of Copenhagen
- Professor Jim Smith FRS FMedSci, Director of Science, Wellcome and Visiting Group Leader, Francis Crick Institute
- Professor Elizabeth Sapey, Director of the Institute of Inflammation and Ageing, University of Birmingham and FLIER round two participant
- Dr Zania Stamataki, Senior Lecturer in Liver Immunology, University of Birmingham and SUSTAIN round one participant

10. Guidance notes for completing the application form

Please complete and submit an online application by **16.00 BST on Friday 23 September 2022** through our Flexi-Grant portal <https://acmedsci.flexigrant.com/>. If you have not used Flexi-Grant before, you will need to register and create a new user account.

This section guides you through completing the online application form for the SUSTAIN programme. Some notes on completing the form are integrated into the form itself.

Save and resume

Once you have started a section, you can click save at the bottom and log out of Flexi-Grant; your responses in that section will be saved. To return to your application log in to <https://acmedsci.flexigrant.com/>, click on 'My Account' in the top right corner, and select 'My Applications' to resume.

Submitting your application

When you have completed all sections of the application form a 'Submit application' button will become available at the bottom of the summary page which you will need to click to finalise the application. Once your application has been submitted, you will be able to view your application and its current status, but you will not be able to modify it. You can also download your form as a PDF at any point to keep for your records.

Each applicant should provide the following:

Section 1 - Your personal information: name, contact details, institution and job title.

Section 2 - Select the applicable researcher category. This information will be used to stratify applications.

Section 3 - Select your current research award. Your award must be active at the time of applying to the programme.

Section 4 - Information about why you are interested in SUSTAIN and any particular areas of career development you would like us to cover. **Your answer does not affect the selection process.** The information from selected participants is used to help us to further develop and tailor the programme of activities during the year.

Section 5 – Monitoring and marketing feedback. On this page we request monitoring and marketing information. Please note that monitoring information will not be used in the selection process. We request this information to monitor the Academy's activities with respect to the beneficiaries of proposals and awards, and the gender, ethnic origin and disability status of applicants will be kept anonymous. Marketing information is requested to help us monitor the effectiveness of our marketing activities. This information is also not used in the application review process.

If you have any questions or would like to highlight any specific information with respect to your application, please contact the Academy team at SUSTAIN@acmedsci.ac.uk.

The Academy of Medical Sciences

The Academy of Medical Sciences is the independent body in the UK representing the diversity of medical science. Our vision is to improve health through research and our mission is to promote medical science and its translation into benefits for society. Find out more: www.acmedsci.ac.uk

Medical Research Council

The UK's Medical Research Council mission is to improve human health through world-class medical research. To achieve this, the council supports research across the biomedical spectrum, from fundamental lab-based science to clinical trials, and in all major disease areas. Find out more: www.mrc.ukri.org

The Royal Society

The Royal Society is the national academy of science in the UK whose vision is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity. Find out more: www.royalsociety.org

The Royal Academy of Engineering

As the UK's national academy for engineering and technology, the Royal Academy of Engineering brings together the most talented and successful engineers – our Fellows – to advance and promote excellence in engineering for the benefit of society. Find out more: www.raeng.org.uk/