

Cross-Sector Experience Awards – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Here you will find answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about all stages of our Cross-Sector Experience Awards funding scheme.

More information is provided on the scheme [webpage](#), including a sample application form and our terms and conditions.

If you have any other questions about the scheme, eligibility or would like to discuss your individual circumstances or project, please contact the team at cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk.

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1. About the scheme

1.1 What is the Academy's Cross-Sector Programme and why have we developed the Cross-Sector Experience Awards?

The [Cross-Sector Programme](#), launched in 2022, brings together innovators and researchers from different fields to promote health innovation. It also offers support to overcome the challenges to collaborating across sectors. The programme runs networking events that are hosted by Cross-Sector Hubs around the UK and bring together people working on a health challenge who want to collaborate with others to develop their ideas.

The [Cross-Sector Experience Awards were launched in November 2023](#). In addition to providing the incentives and resources required to work in another sector, this scheme will support individuals to:

- gain new skills and share skills between different sectors
- generate novel ideas and collaborations that could lead to new innovations

The scheme is closely tied to the Academy's [strategy for 2022–2032](#), 'Making medical science work for everyone'. Our [second strategic priority](#) outlines how the Academy will champion transdisciplinary research and states that by 2032 we will have enabled and supported more productive collaboration between the NHS, academia, industry, and patients and the public. We hope that this scheme will directly support this priority, as

well as aspects of our [third strategic priority](#), associated with providing innovative career funding and support that builds the capacity of teams and individuals.

1.2 What do we mean by “cross-sector”?

“Cross-sector” working involves working in partnership with individuals and/or organisations that are based in a different sector to the one you currently work within.

Example sectors could include the following (applicants are encouraged to contact our team if they are unsure of their or their partner organisation’s sector):

- academia
- charity
- government
- industry
- NHS
- private healthcare
- public/private sector

Eligible movement between sectors for the Cross-Sector Experience Awards

Assuming all other eligibility criteria are met (see Sections 2.3, 3.3 and 4.3), applicants would be eligible to move to any sector other than those in which they currently work. A potential exception to this would be an individual working in the NHS wishing to move to the private healthcare sector, or vice versa; in this circumstance, the applicant should speak with our team to discuss their proposal before applying.

1.3 What does a Cross-Sector Experience Award offer?

The Cross-Sector Experience Awards support individuals to work in a new organisation(s) in a different sector to the one(s) they currently work in, for between 3 and 12 months, before returning to their original employer(s).

This scheme offers up to £100,000, which can be used flexibly to cover:

- salary costs to either (i) backfill the applicant’s position at the employing organisation during the award; (ii) cover the applicant’s salary if their position is unsuitable for backfill; **or** (iii) cover their PhD stipend if the applicant is a current PhD student with permission from their funder to put their PhD on hold
- activities performed by the applicant at the partner organisation
- travel, accommodation and subsistence for the applicant

(Please see Section 5.4 for more information on eligible and ineligible costs.)

If the applicant is unable to backfill their position and/or cover their personal salary during the award because, for example, they are a postdoctoral researcher or a self-employed individual and are the sole member of their business, they may be able to claim their salary through this award. **Applicants should speak to our team before applying to discuss this.**

PhD students must have permission from their funder to put their PhD on hold for the duration of the potential award. Alternatively, if the funder approves, this award could serve as their internship if this is a requirement of their PhD.

The applicant can apply **with two partner organisations** within one application; **however**, they **must**:

- be in the same sector; whilst the employing and partner organisations must be in different sectors, if applying with two partner organisations they must be in the same sector to one another, for example, an applicant in industry partners with two different NHS trusts

- be partnered with for a minimum of 3 months **each**, making the minimum award period for this type of award 6 months
- have a clear link; the applicant must be able to demonstrate in their application that working at both partner organisations is necessary and will have a greater benefit to them and their work compared with working with just one partner organisation

These awards are designed to provide the awardee with the opportunity to:

- experience working in a different sector
- develop their understanding of a new sector
- gain new skills
- foster collaborations

1.4 How long can a Cross-Sector Experience Award last?

Cross-Sector Experience Awards can last between 3 and 12 months. If the applicant is applying with **two** partner organisations, the minimum award length increases to 6 months (a minimum of 3 months at each organisation).

Determining the appropriate duration for this award

Prospective applicants should consult both the employing organisation and the partner organisation(s) when agreeing the duration of their proposal, and all organisations must agree to the proposed duration.

The applicant should consider all of the experiences and tasks they want to achieve during their time at the partner organisation, and plan the proposal to maximise the benefit and impact of the award on the applicant and their future work.

Applicants do not need to take up the maximum possible duration of the award, nor do they need to request the full £100,000 budget available. It is expected that shorter awards are unlikely to need the full award value – budget requests must be reasonable and realistic given the proposed duration of the award.

If applying with two partner organisations, whilst the applicant must spend a minimum of 3 months at each organisation, they can spend a different amount of time at each, e.g. 3 months at one partner organisation and 5 months at the other.

2. For applicants

2.1 Who is this scheme aimed at?

The Cross-Sector Experience Awards are aimed at individuals who want to experience working in a new sector. Your current work must have a clear link to the improvement of human health (see below) and the work you propose to do at the partner organisation must obviously benefit your work at the employing organisation.

2.2 What is a “clear link to the improvement of human health”?

To be eligible to apply, your current role and professional activities must have a clear link to the improvement of human health. Whilst you do not need to work in a health setting, you must be able to demonstrate in your application how your professional activities ultimately improve health. We encourage applicants to consider the World Health Organization’s definition of health: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

Examples of potentially eligible activities could include those associated with improving understanding of public health, influencing health policy, social care research and activities that help people achieve a better quality of life, tackling climate change, or

improving facilities and the built environment in communities. The scheme is open to all disciplines, and applicants are encouraged to speak with our team about their work if they are unsure of their eligibility.

2.3 Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for this scheme, you **must** satisfy the following:

- Be at a suitable stage of your career (appropriate for your discipline and/or sector) to work for a time in a different sector. You should be able to show why it is appropriate to strengthen your knowledge of, and connections with, another sector at this point in your career and how it will impact your work. You do **not** need to be at a specific career stage nor hold a PhD to apply, if all other criteria are met. However, if you are at a more senior career stage in particular, the Panel encourage you to consider submitting a more strategic proposal aligned with your senior responsibilities and employing organisation.
- Work in any discipline but have a clear link to the improvement of human health through your activities. You do **not** need to work in research to apply, but your work must have a demonstrable link to improving human health (see Section 2.2). You may currently work in any discipline or sector, as long as the point above is fulfilled.
- Be on a part- or full-time contract that is either:
 - permanent; or
 - fixed-term with an end date falling after the completion of the proposed award
- Have a minimum of 50% of your total working hours dedicated to this award.

Furthermore, you **must not**:

- be an undergraduate student; if you are currently completing a Masters degree or PhD, you must have permission to pause or include this award as part of your studies in order to apply
- currently hold, or have held, a contract of employment with the partner organisation; this includes previous internships and postgraduate education. **Please note**, in exceptional circumstances the Academy will consider some previous experience; these will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For example, in a large or multinational organisation, if the applicant previously held a short-term contract several years ago working in a different role, or if the applicant's previous contract had been for a vastly different role to the currently proposed. If you believe your circumstances could qualify for an exception, **you must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm your eligibility.
- hold 6% or more shares in the company if you wish to name them as the partner organisation; those who own shares less than 6% at the partner organisation will be asked to justify how this award will benefit the employing organisation
- have the means to work in another organisation or sector already; you should not use this scheme to free up existing funds for other activities
- accept a salary, fee or any form of payment from the partner organisation during the award; the awardee will continue to receive their salary from the employing organisation for the duration of the award, or through award funding where it is not possible to backfill the applicant's role.

University degrees

It is not a requirement of this scheme for applicants to hold an undergraduate degree, or any other specific level of qualification. However, you cannot be currently studying for your undergraduate degree. If you are currently completing a Masters degree or PhD, you must have permission to pause or include this award as part of your studies in order to apply.

Career stages

There is no requirement for you to have reached a specific career stage before applying. We welcome applications from individuals at all career stages, with the exception of (as mentioned above) those who are currently studying for their undergraduate degree. If you are at a more senior career stage in particular, the Panel encourage you to consider submitting a more strategic proposal aligned with your senior responsibilities and employing organisation.

2.4 I am not a researcher, am I eligible for this scheme?

Yes, this scheme is available to individuals working in all sectors, not just those in academic and clinical research.

Alongside researchers, we welcome applications from anyone whose day-to-day work has a clear link to the improvement of human health.

2.5 Can I hold a fellowship and/or other funding at the same time as a Cross-Sector Experience Award?

Yes, you can be in receipt of other grants and funding; however:

- you must have permission from the appropriate funder(s) to do this award
- you cannot have competing commitments; you must have at least 50% of your working time dedicated to this award
- this award cannot be used to free up existing funds; if the applicant already has funding to work in another sector, they should not apply to this scheme in order to free up these existing funds to use on other activities

2.6 I have previously undertaken a secondment, placement or internship similar to that stated in my proposal, is that allowed?

Yes, you can have undertaken a similar opportunity before but it cannot be at the same partner organisation. As long as the organisation is different, you will simply be required to justify how this proposed award would differ from your previous experience and have an additional impact on your work.

Please note, in some instances flexibility can be given to those that have had previous experience with their partner organisation if their previous experience was vastly different, the Academy will review these on a case-by-case basis (see Section 2.3). If you believe your circumstances could qualify for an exception, **you must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm your eligibility.

2.7 I want to relocate to the UK for this award, is that allowed?

Yes, you can be based outside of the UK and be proposing to relocate to the UK in order to take on this award, provided your employing organisation (that is, your current employer at the time of applying, and the host of the award) is already based in the UK. *Please note* that this award can only cover the travel and subsistence of the awardee.

2.8 I want to relocate outside of the UK for this award, is that allowed?

Yes, you are permitted to use this award to move to a partner organisation based outside of the UK, provided the employing organisation is based within the UK. *Please note* that this award can only cover the travel and subsistence of the awardee.

2.9 Can I receive my salary through the funding associated with this award?

Unless discussed and approved with our team prior to application (please see example circumstances below), you may **not** receive your salary via the funding of this award. Your salary must continue to be paid by the employing organisation throughout the

award. Award funds can be used to backfill your position at the employing organisation while you are working elsewhere.

Roles where backfill isn't appropriate/possible

If you are currently employed in a position where backfilling your role **isn't** suitable, you may be eligible to receive your salary through the award. **You must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm. Some examples of such circumstances include, but are not limited to, those with postdoctoral positions, those undertaking postgraduate studies and those with research-only positions where backfill wouldn't be appropriate.

PhD students

If you are a PhD student, the award funding *can* be used to cover your personal stipend, provided you have permission to put your PhD on hold for the duration of the award. Please see Section 5.4 for more information on eligible costs.

Self-employed applicants

If you are self-employed, freelance or receive payments/contributions from an organisation using public and patient involvement processes and are unable to backfill your position or cover your own salary from your business during the award, you may be able to claim your salary through the award. You **must speak with our team** prior to applying in order to confirm your eligibility and if you are able to claim your salary as part of your budget.

Please note, self-employed individuals must have a registered business/company, and in turn a bank account for their business, in order to apply and accept award funding.

The award holder is not permitted, under any circumstances, to receive additional salary, fees or payments from the partner organisation during their award period. Award holders are not permitted to receive double salaries during the award period.

2.10 Do I have to work full-time at the partner organisation throughout my award?

It is not a requirement for you to spend all of your working hours at the partner organisation. You must spend a minimum of 50% of your total working hours at the partner organisation.

You may choose to continue working part-time at the employing organisation (or your other places of employment, if multiple) and also work part-time at the partner organisation. Both the employing organisation and the partner organisation should agree to this ratio before the application is submitted.

2.11 What type of employment contracts must I hold in order to be eligible for this scheme?

We welcome applications from individuals who are on a variety of contract types.

Permanent vs fixed-term contracts

We will not discriminate between those who hold a fixed-term contract and those who hold a permanent contract. If you hold a fixed-term contract you will need to do one of the following:

- Confirm that your current contract end date is, at least, no earlier than the end of your proposed Cross-Sector Experience Award period; or
- If your current fixed-term contract end date is sooner than the end of your proposed award period, you must provide a signed letter from the employing organisation confirming that the contract will be extended at least to the end of the award period, should the application be successful. This letter would ideally be provided upon application, but at the very latest must be provided at the point

of award and will form part of the Award Conditions. Confirmation that the contract has been extended will be required.

Part-time vs full-time contracts

If you currently work part-time (less than 1.0 FTE) you are eligible to apply to this scheme. As a part-time applicant you would still be expected to complete your award within a timeframe of 3 to 12 months; we encourage those working part-time to consider requesting a longer award period within the range available if it will allow you to maximise the impact of the award on your future work. As with those working full-time, part-time applicants must also be able to spend a minimum of 50% of their total working hours at the partner organisation.

2.12 I work part-time in two different sectors, can I use this award to work for a partner organisation in a third sector?

Yes, you may use this award to work for any partner organisation, irrespective of how many current employers you have, as long as the partner organisation is in a different sector to any and all current employers.

As stated above, you must be able to spend a minimum of 50% of your total working hours at the partner organisation during this award. Therefore, if you currently spend less than 50% of your total working hours at the employing organisation you must have an agreement in place with your other employer(s) to make up this time.

2.13 I am a PhD student, can I apply to this scheme?

Yes, PhD students are eligible to apply but you must have permission from your funder to put your PhD on hold for the proposed award period. Award funding can then be used to cover your stipend for the duration of the award.

Alternatively, if your funder is agreeable, this award can be recognised as a type of "internship" as part of your PhD. In these cases, the PhD funder would normally continue to pay your stipend and thus award funding should not be utilised for this purpose; you cannot receive a double salary. **Students wishing to discuss their personal circumstances should speak with our team prior to application.**

2.14 I am self-employed/freelance/receive payments or contributions from an organisation using public and patient involvement processes, can I apply to this scheme?

Yes, as long as all other criteria are met, as a self-employed/freelance applicant you are eligible to apply. Note that the criterion regarding contracts of employment includes not having worked with and receiving payment from the partner organisation (see Section 2.3).

If you are unable to backfill your position or cover your own salary from your business during the award, you may be able to claim your salary through the award. **Applicants must speak with our team** prior to applying in order to confirm your eligibility and if you are able to claim your salary as part of your budget.

Completing the application form without contribution from invited participants from the employing organisation

Applicants are typically expected to invite two individuals from the employing organisations to contribute to the application form: the employing organisation representative and the employing organisation finance office representative (see section 3.8). For self-employed applicants, the applicant themselves represents the employing

organisation, and therefore these two roles are no longer needed. Therefore, self-employed applicants should select “not required” against these roles in the “Participants” tab on the application form. This will mark the pages that these individuals are required to complete as not required.

Please note, self-employed individuals must have a registered business/company, and in turn a bank account for their business, in order to apply and accept award funding. If claiming salary from the award, following approval from our team, you will also need to provide evidence that the salary you are claiming is in line with your normal salary.

3. Employing organisation

3.1 What is the employing organisation?

The employing organisation is the/a current place of employment of the applicant. In most circumstances this is the place where the applicant is primarily based, serving as their only or main employer. For postgraduate students, this is the organisation at which their studies are affiliated. Applicants with multiple current employers are welcome to apply and are encouraged to speak with our team regarding choosing their employing organisation.

3.2 What is the role of the employing organisation throughout the award?

The employing organisation will be the official host of the award.

The employing organisation will receive grant funding from the Academy and will be responsible for distributing this to the awardee and/or the partner organisation as dictated in the award proposal. The employing organisation may also utilise the award funds to backfill the applicant’s position while they are working at the partner organisation; please see Section 5.4 for more information on eligible costs.

Throughout both the application phase and the award period, the employing organisation should do its best to support the applicant and to facilitate the cross-sectoral relationship with the partner organisation.

3.3 Employing organisation eligibility criteria

The employing organisation **must**:

- be based in the UK, even if the applicant is based overseas
- agree to being the host of the award; in the event that the applicant is employed by multiple organisations, the employing organisation would normally be their primary employer (though this is not a stipulation) and must be able to host and manage the award
- ensure that the applicant’s contract extends beyond the proposed end date of the award; in the event that the applicant is on a fixed-term contract that is currently due to end before the proposed award end date, the employing organisation must issue a new contract ending after this date if the application is successful; this will form part of the award conditions
- work flexibly and collaboratively with the applicant before and during the award, including supporting them with their application
- work flexibly and collaboratively with the partner organisation to create new connections

The employing organisation can be based in any sector.

3.4 Can the employing organisation be based outside of the UK?

No, the employing organisation must be based within the UK; however, the applicant themselves may live outside of the UK.

3.5 Does my work at the employing organisation need to have a clear link to the improvement of human health?

Yes, in order to be eligible to apply for this scheme, applicants must currently be in a role that has a clear link to the improvement of human health, even if the overall activities of the employing organisation are not. As explained in Section 4.6, the role undertaken at the partner organisation does not itself need to have a clear link to the improvement of human health, as long as it can be demonstrated that the experiences, skills and knowledge gained through working at the partner organisation will positively impact the applicant's activities when they return to the employing organisation.

Please see Section 2.2 for more information on what we mean by a "clear link to the improvement of human health".

3.6 If I am employed by multiple organisations, who should be the employing organisation for this award?

The employing organisation would typically be the applicant's primary employer, where their role has a clear link to the improvement of human health. First and foremost, the employing organisation should be willing to take on the role (Section 3.2) and meet the eligibility criteria (Section 3.3).

As stated in Section 2.10, award holders for this scheme must be able to spend a minimum of 50% of their total working hours at the partner organisation throughout the award period, therefore it is recommended that the employing organisation be the place of employment where the applicant spends the majority (and at least 50%) of their working hours. If the applicant spends less than 50% of their total working hours at the employing organisation, they will need permission to reduce their working hours with their other employers in order to reach the 50% minimum.

Finally, we would encourage the employing organisation to be open to collaborating with the partner organisation, both during and beyond the Cross-Sector Experience Award, though this is not a condition of the award. The applicant's role at the employing organisation and the role they propose to undertake at the partner organisation should complement each other, and it should be clear how working at the partner organisation will positively impact the applicant's role at the employing organisation when they return.

3.7 Can the employing organisation have a formal partnership with the partner organisation?

It is not mandatory for the employing organisation and the partner organisation to have an existing formal partnership prior to the commencement of this award, though this is also not discouraged. The purpose of this scheme is to encourage and facilitate cross-sectoral collaborations, therefore if there is not an existing partnership between the two organisations, we would encourage them to be open to developing one during this award.

Where an existing partnership is in place prior to this award, this is acceptable so long as the following remains true:

- The applicant is not a previous employee of the partner organisation, nor have they taken up any period of work at the partner organisation. **Please note**, in some instances flexibility can be given to those that have had previous experience with their partner organisation if their previous experience was vastly different, the Academy will review these on a case-by-case basis (see Section 2.3). If you believe your circumstances could qualify for an exception, **you must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm your eligibility.
- The applicant will not financially gain from working at the partner organisation, including being a shareholder of 6% or more shares.

- The existing partnership has not previously, nor currently, provided other means by which the applicant could embark on a similar cross-sectoral work placement.

The applicant and the organisations involved in the application will need to justify in the application form how this existing partnership could not support an experience of this type and how it would only be possible through an award such as this. Applicants are encouraged to ensure this justification comes through clearly in their application, so the Panel still consider their application to be within the spirit of the scheme.

3.8 What role does the employing organisation play during the application process?

The applicant should approach both the employing organisation and the partner organisation prior to beginning an application for a Cross-Sector Experience Award; collectively, all three parties should agree on the details of the proposal before the application is submitted.

The employing organisation should do everything in its power to support the applicant during the application process; this should include proofreading the application proposal, if required. Additionally, two individuals from the employing organisation are required to contribute directly to the application form; these are:

1. the employing organisation representative, and
2. the employing organisation finance office representative

These individuals will be invited by the applicant to contribute to the application form on the Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant®. All individuals contributing to the form must first create a Flexi-Grant® account before they can add their contribution (see Section 5.3 for more information on this).

Please note: the roles of the employing organisation representative and the employing organisation finance office representative are noted as optional in the application form. This is to accommodate self-employed individuals who are themselves representing the employing organisation. Applicants that are **not** self-employed **must** invite the appropriate individuals to these roles. Academy staff will check that all required sections are completed correctly during the eligibility checking phase of this funding scheme. **Failure to invite the required individuals to contribute to the application form will cause a delay in the processing of the application, and may result in the application being rejected if the errors are not corrected in a timely manner.**

Contributing to the application form – employing organisation representative

One member of senior staff at the employing organisation, referred to as the employing organisation representative, is required to complete Section 8 of the application form on behalf of the employing organisation. To be eligible to take on the role of the employing organisation representative, the individual must hold a senior enough position at the organisation to act on behalf of the organisation and sign the Award Terms and Conditions, should the application be awarded.

Expectations for the support statement

The main role of the employing organisation representative is to sign the application declarations and provide a supporting statement expressing the employing organisation's enthusiasm for both the applicant and the proposal. The supporting statement will be assessed by the Cross-Sector Experience Awards Panel, alongside the applicant, the proposal and a supporting statement from the partner organisation, to make a judgement on the application. Within the employing organisation supporting statement, the Panel will be looking for:

- how the employing organisation will support the applicant, should they be awarded, and how they believe the award will benefit the applicant

- how the award would impact the employing organisation itself
- their commitment to cross-sector working and any next steps they hope to take following the potential award to continue the partnership

Contributing to the application form – employing organisation finance office representative

One member of the employing organisation finance office (or equivalent) staff, referred to as the employing organisation finance office representative, is required to formally sign off the application, by completing Section 10 of the application form. They will be expected to read and approve, on behalf of the employing organisation, the financial details of the application, including budget tables, and confirm the salary arrangements for the applicant during the award period. This individual will also be expected to acknowledge the responsibility of the employing organisation to distribute funding to the awardee and/or partner organisation where appropriate and in accordance with the award proposal.

Contributing to the application form – self-employed applicants

As mentioned in section 2.14, this scheme is open to applicants who are self-employed/freelance/receive payments or contributions from an organisation using public and patient involvement processes. For self-employed individuals who operate alone the applicant themselves represents the employing organisation, and therefore the roles of the employing organisation representative and the employing organisation finance office representative are no longer needed. These applicants should select “not required” against these two roles in the “Participants” tab on the application form. This will mark the pages that these individuals are required to complete as not required. Those who operate with other individuals as part of their company can nominate someone else at the company to act as the employing organisation representative and finance office representative. Applicants are encouraged to contact our team via email on cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk if they are unsure on how to apply.

3.9 What role does the employing organisation play during the award and in post-award reporting tasks?

The employing organisation will receive the total award value in one payment at the start of the award. It is the employing organisation’s responsibility to distribute the award funding as described in the application form between the employing organisation, partner organisation and the awardee as appropriate and in line with the budget proposal laid out in the application form. The employing organisation should continue to pay the awardee’s salary, National Insurance and pension contributions, as well as any other employee benefits. The employing organisation is also expected to work in partnership with the partner organisation to ensure the award is mutually beneficial for both organisations and the awardee.

The awardee will be expected to submit reports at the end of the award period (for final expenditure and award activities) and 1 year following the end of the award (to monitor progress and award outputs). The employing organisation will be expected to contribute and provide signatures on these reports. Furthermore, the employing organisation may be requested to complete surveys to feed into the scheme’s continued development.

4. Partner organisation

4.1 What is the partner organisation?

The partner organisation is the place to which the applicant proposes to move during their Cross-Sector Experience Award. The award holder may spend between 3 and 12 months at the partner organisation before returning to the employing organisation. If the applicant chooses to apply with two partner organisations, the minimum award period is 6 months, with a minimum of 3 months spent at each partner organisation. The

applicant can work at each partner organisation for a different length of time, as long as it is 3 months or more.

4.2 What is the role of the partner organisation throughout the award?

The partner organisation will not be the official host of the award – this role sits with the employing organisation.

The partner organisation will host the awardee for the duration of the award, allowing them to conduct activities in line with those stated in the proposal. Depending on the budget requests made within the application, the partner organisation may receive funds from the employing organisation to facilitate the awardee's activities during their time at the partner organisation. Please see Section 5.4 for more information on eligible costs.

Throughout both the application phase and the award period, the partner organisation should do its best to support the applicant and its cross-sectoral relationship with both the applicant and the employing organisation.

4.3 Can applicants choose more than one partner organisation?

Yes, as of Round 2 of the Awards onwards, applicants are able to apply with **two** different partner organisations; **however**, they **must**:

- be in the same sector; whilst the employing organisation must be in a different sector to the partner organisation, the two partner organisations chosen must be in **the same sector**, for example, an applicant in industry could apply with two different NHS trusts
- be partnered with for a minimum of 3 months **each**, making the minimum award period for this type of award 6 months. Applicants can vary the amount of time they spend at each partner organisation but it must be for a minimum of 3 months, for example, they could spend 3 months at one partner organisation and 6 months at the other, making the total award period 9 months
- have a clear link; the applicant must be able to demonstrate in their application that working at both partner organisations is necessary and will have a greater benefit to them and their work compared to working with just one partner organisation

4.4 Partner organisation eligibility criteria

The partner organisation **must**:

- be based in a different sector to the employing organisation; if the applicant is employed by multiple organisations, the partner organisation must be in a different sector to all current employers of the applicant
- work flexibly and collaboratively with the applicant before the award, including supporting them with their application
- support the applicant, if successful, during their award, providing any resources required to perform their role within the organisation; the applicant will be able to claim costs associated with activities performed during their award as part of their application; the awardee should be treated as an employee of the partner organisation throughout their award in all aspects bar those associated only with being a salaried employee
- work flexibly and collaboratively with the employing organisation to create new connections

Furthermore, the partner organisation **can**:

- be based in any sector, provided (as mentioned above) it is in a different sector to all current employers of the applicant

- be based outside of the UK; whilst the employing organisation must be based within the UK, the partner organisation does not need to meet this criterion; award funding can cover travel, accommodation and subsistence, including visa-associated costs, for the award holder only; by applying to a partner organisation outside of the UK, the applicant confirms their eligibility to work, travel and live in the partner organisation country in order to take on the award
- be an existing partner or collaborator of the applicant and/or the employing organisation; whilst there cannot be any contractual ties between the partner organisation and the applicant, the applicant or other employees at the employing organisation can have collaborated with individuals/teams at the partner organisation

Applicants are not permitted to apply to work at a partner organisation where they hold 6% or more shares in the company.

Applicants are not permitted to currently hold, or have held, a contract of employment with the partner organisation; this includes previous internships and postgraduate education. **Please note**, in some instances, flexibility can be given (see Section 2.3). If you believe your circumstances could qualify for an exception, **you must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm your eligibility.

The applicant can apply **with two partner organisations** within one application; **however**, they **must**:

- be in the same sector, e.g. partnering with two NHS trusts, or two universities
- be partnered with for a minimum of 3 months **each**, making the minimum award period for this type of award 6 months
- have a clear link; the applicant must be able to demonstrate in their application that working at both partner organisations is necessary and will have a greater benefit to them and their work compared with working with just one partner organisation

4.5 Can the partner organisation be based outside of the UK?

Yes, as mentioned above, the partner organisation can be based outside of the UK.

The award holder is permitted to travel and work in a different country for the duration of this award and they may use the award funds to facilitate this. This includes travel, accommodation and subsistence while abroad, as well as costs associated with visa applications. Please note that Cross-Sector Experience Award funds may be used for the applicant's travel, accommodation and subsistence only; partners, dependants and other family members are not eligible to receive these funds. Please see Section 5.4 for more information on eligible costs.

By applying to a partner organisation outside of the UK, the applicant confirms their eligibility to work, travel and live in the partner organisation country in order to take on the award.

4.6 Does my work at the partner organisation need to have a clear link to the improvement of human health?

Not necessarily – while the applicant's role at the partner organisation may have a link to human health, this is not a requirement of the award. The role undertaken at the partner organisation does not itself need to have a clear link to the improvement of human health, as long as it can be demonstrated that the experiences, skills and knowledge gained from working at the partner organisation will positively impact the applicant's role that does have this link, when they return to the employing organisation.

As discussed in Section 3.5, the applicant's role at the employing organisation must have a clear link to the improvement of human health. Please see Section 2.2 for more information on what we mean by a "clear link to the improvement of human health".

4.7 Can the partner organisation be somewhere I was previously employed?

No, the partner organisation cannot be a previous employer of the applicant; this includes but is not limited to previous internships, postgraduate education and short-term contracts/consultancy time. However, exceptions *can* be applied in some circumstances, if the previous experience was for example vastly different and historic. Please see Section 2.3 for further details.

If you believe your circumstances could qualify for an exception, **you must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm your eligibility.

4.8 Can I have previously worked in the same sector as the partner organisation?

Yes, the applicant can have previously worked in the same sector as the partner organisation provided they have **not** worked at the partner organisation (see Section 2.3). In this instance, the applicant would need to justify why working in this sector again would be beneficial to them and their work.

4.9 Can the partner organisation have a formal partnership with the employing organisation?

It is not mandatory for the employing organisation and the partner organisation to have an existing formal partnership prior to the commencement of this award, though this is also not discouraged; however, applicants themselves must have spoken to the partner organisation prior to applying. The purpose of this scheme is to encourage and facilitate cross-sectoral collaborations, therefore if there is not an existing partnership between the two organisations, we would encourage them to be open to developing one during this award.

Where an existing partnership is in place prior to this award, this is acceptable so long as the following remain true:

- The applicant is not a previous employee of the partner organisation, nor have they taken up any period of work at the partner organisation. **Please note**, in some instances flexibility can be given to those that have had previous experience with their partner organisation if their previous experience was vastly different, the Academy will review these on a case-by-case basis (see Section 2.3). If you believe your circumstances could qualify for an exception, **you must discuss this with the Academy team in advance** of your application in order to confirm your eligibility.
- The applicant will not financially gain from working at the partner organisation, including being a shareholder of 6% or more.
- The existing partnership does not provide other means by which the applicant could embark on a similar cross-sectoral work placement.

The applicant must be able to demonstrate in their application form how this sort of experience is only possible through this award, and justify how any formal partnership between the organisations does not provide them the opportunity to experience this new sector.

4.10 Can I own shares in the partner organisation?

Applicants are permitted to apply to a partner organisation as long as they do not hold 6% or more shares in the company. The applicant is not permitted to apply with a partner organisation if they are set to financially gain from the award.

Applicants who own less than 6% shares in a company are allowed to use this company as their partner organisation provided they can demonstrate how the employing organisation will benefit from the proposal and that neither the applicant nor the partner organisation will disproportionately profit from any activities funded by the award.

4.11 How much contact do I need to have had with the partner organisation before beginning the application?

The applicant should approach both the employing organisation and the partner organisation prior to submitting an application for the Cross-Sector Experience Awards. Collectively, all three (or four if applying with two partner organisations) parties should agree on the details of the proposal before/as the application is written. It is encouraged that the applicant and all organisations begin to build their collaborative relationship prior to the potential award commencing.

4.12 What role does the partner organisation play in the application process?

The partner organisation should do everything in its power to support the applicant during the application process, including proofreading the application proposal, if required. Additionally, two individuals from each partner organisation are required to contribute directly to the application form, they are:

1. the partner organisation representative, and
2. the partner organisation finance office representative

These individuals will be invited by the applicant to contribute to the application form on the Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant®. All individuals contributing to the form must first create a Flexi-Grant® account before they can add their contribution (see Section 5.3 for more information on this).

Please note: the roles of the second partner organisation representative and the second partner organisation finance office representative are optional. This is to accommodate applicants that choose to apply with two partner organisations.

- Applicants with **one** partner organisation should select "not required" against the partner organisation representative (2) and partner organisation finance office representative (2) roles in the "Participants" tab of the application form. This will mark the pages that these individuals are required to complete as not required.
- Applications with **two** partner organisations **must** invite the appropriate individuals to these roles. This includes a partner organisation representative and finance office representative from **both** organisations (four individuals in total, not including those invited from the employing organisation). Academy staff will check that all required sections are completed correctly during the eligibility checking phase of this funding scheme. **Failure to invite the required individuals to contribute to the application form will cause a delay in the processing of the application, and may result in the application being rejected if the errors are not corrected in a timely manner.**

Contributing to the application form – partner organisation representative

One member of senior staff at the partner organisation, referred to as the partner organisation representative, is required to complete Section 9 of the application form on behalf of the partner organisation. To be eligible to take on the role of the partner organisation representative, the individual must hold a senior enough position at the organisation to act on behalf of the organisation and sign the Award Conditions, should the application be awarded.

Expectations for the support statement

The main role of the partner organisation representative is to sign the application declarations and provide a supporting statement expressing the partner organisation's enthusiasm for both the applicant and the proposal. The supporting statement will be

assessed by the Cross-Sector Experience Awards Panel, alongside the applicant, the proposal and a supporting statement from the employing organisation, to make a judgement on the application. Within the partner organisation supporting statement, the Panel, in particular, will be looking for:

- how the partner organisation will support the applicant should they be awarded, what resources and other forms of support they would provide whilst they are working at the organisation
- how the award would impact on the partner organisation itself
- their commitment to cross-sector working and any next steps they hope to take following the potential award to continue the partnership.

Contributing to the application form – partner organisation finance office representative

One member of the partner organisation finance office (or equivalent) staff, referred to as the partner organisation finance office representative, is required to formally sign off the application, by completing Section 11 of the application form. They will be expected to read and approve, on behalf of the partner organisation, the financial details of the application, including budget tables and associated activities to be undertaken by the applicant during the award period. This individual will also be expected to confirm acknowledgement on behalf of the partner organisation that the employing organisation, as the official host of the award, will receive the award funds from the Academy and disseminate these to the awardee and the partner organisation where appropriate and in accordance with the award proposal. The partner organisation will not receive any funds directly from the Academy.

An applicant may choose not to allocate any funds to support their activities at the partner organisation during the award period. In this instance, the application form will still require sign-off from the partner organisation finance office representative; this individual will thereby confirm acknowledgment on behalf of the partner organisation that the partner organisation will not receive any funds in relation to this award.

4.13 Can the partner organisation claim funding from this award?

The partner organisation is not permitted to directly claim any funds from this award. If required, the applicant must request in their budget proposal to use some of the award funds to support their activities at the partner organisation during the award period. No additional funds will be given to the partner organisation during the award. The Academy will not reimburse the partner organisation for any additional costs associated with hosting the applicant during the award period; these should be included in the application form budget proposal to contribute to the total award value. No additional funding will be granted post-award, even if the full £100,000 is not awarded.

4.14 Can I vary the amount of time I spend at the partner organisation during the Cross-Sector Experience Award?

Yes, an applicant may request within their proposal to vary the amount of time spent at the partner organisation, provided at no point they spend less than 50% of the total working hours at the partner organisation. See Section 2.10 for more information on this threshold.

Furthermore, if an applicant is applying with two partner organisations, they are also able to vary the amount of time between the two organisations, provided they always spend 50% of their time at each organisation. For example, the applicant may spend 3 months at one partner organisation at 100% time, then 6 months at the other partner organisation at 50% of their time. Applicants must spend a minimum of 3 months at each partner organisation, working a minimum of 50% of their working hours during that time.

4.15 What role does the partner organisation play during the award and post-award reporting tasks?

The employing organisation will receive the total award value in one payment before the start of the award. It is the partner organisation's responsibility to work with the employing organisation to receive award funding, if included in the application form. The partner organisation is responsible for hosting the awardee during the award, ensuring they are supported whilst working at the organisation and fulfil the activities as outlined in the application form. The partner organisation is also expected to work in partnership with the employing organisation to ensure the award is mutually beneficial for both organisations and the awardee.

The awardee will be expected to submit reports at the end of the award period and 1 year following the end of the award. The partner organisation will be expected to contribute and provide signatures on these reports. Furthermore, the partner organisation may be requested to complete surveys to feed into the scheme's continued development.

5. Application process

5.1 What is the timeline of the overall application process for the Cross-Sector Experience Award scheme?

Applications for the Cross-Sector Experience Award scheme will open on 5 November 2024. A link to the application form will be added to the [scheme webpage](#) when the application form is launched.

The application window will close on **Thursday 27 February 2025 at 16.00 GMT**.

Eligibility checking followed by Panel review will take place between March and April 2025, with the Panel Meeting taking place between the end of April and May 2025.

Application decisions will be released to applicants between the end of May and June 2025. There will be an embargo on awards, meaning no public announcements should be made until the Academy specifically informs applicants, and their press offices, that they can do so. The public announcement of the awards, and thus when the embargo is lifted, is scheduled for July 2025.

5.2 How do I submit an application for this scheme?

Applications for all Academy grant schemes are to be submitted via our online application portal, [Flexi-Grant®](#). A link to the Cross-Sector Experience Awards application form will be added to the scheme's [webpage](#) on the Academy website once the application form is live, alongside information regarding the deadline for application submissions.

All prospective applicants will need to create a Flexi-Grant® account in order to complete the Cross-Sector Experience Awards application form, as will any individuals invited to contribute to their application (see Section 5.3).

Successful applicants will subsequently use Flexi-Grant® and their aforementioned account to manage their award once it is active, including to submit award-related reports and amendment requests.

5.3 Who else needs to contribute to the application and how will they be invited to contribute?

To submit an application, between two and six additional people are required to contribute to the application form. They are:

1. the employing organisation representative
2. the employing organisation finance office representative
3. the partner organisation representative, and
4. the partner organisation finance office representative

5. the partner organisation representative (2), and
6. the partner organisation finance office representative (20)

Self-employed individuals will only have between two and four contributors, all related to the partner organisation. They will not require employing organisation representatives.

Those with only one partner organisation will only have one set of partner organisation contributors.

Those with two partner organisations will be required to invite a senior and finance representative from **both** organisations, equalling four contributors in total.

Please see Sections 3.8 and 4.12 for more information on the specific roles these individuals will play in the application form.

Please note that the applicant will not be able to formally submit the application form if any section of the form remains incomplete. Extensions will not be granted for applicants who fail to get additional personnel to complete their sections on time.

All individuals mentioned above will receive an email invitation from Flexi-Grant® with a personalised link to the area of the application form to which they need to contribute. This will be automatically generated when their name and email address are added to the application form by the applicant.

- Individuals who do not have a Flexi-Grant® account will need to create one using the email address within the invitation in order to contribute to the form.
- Individuals who already have a Flexi-Grant® account will need to make sure that the applicant lists the email address that their account is associated with, otherwise they will not be able to access the application form via their invitation link.

For issues using and/or logging in to Flexi-Grant® please contact the team via cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk.

5.4 What can and can't be included in the budget proposal?

Applicants can claim up to £100,000 as part of their application; all costs must be itemised and justified in the application form. The following budget headings can be included in the application budget proposal:

Salary

- The salary costs to backfill the applicant's position at the employing organisation during the award.
- The applicant's stipend, **only** if they are a current PhD student and their PhD will be put on hold.
- The applicant's personal salary, **only** if the applicant has spoken with our team prior to applying. This is an eligible cost only for those who either cannot backfill their position or, in the case of self-employed applicants, for those who cannot cover their personal salary through their own business during the award period. Please see Sections 2.14 and 5.4 to read the criteria for this.

This award only covers **base salary, National Insurance and employer's contributions**; it does **not** cover indirect costs nor estate/facilities costs. National Insurance and employer's contributions must be factored into the total salary value requested in the application form. No further funding will be provided in addition to the award value so the total sum requested in the application form must include all of the costs required. The recruitment costs of the applicant's backfill are also eligible costs.

Activity costs at the partner organisation

Any costs associated with activities carried out by the awardee at the partner organisation can also be covered by the award. However, these funds **cannot** be used to hire additional staff; the only salary costs eligible for this award are listed above.

If the applicant claims any equipment or assets as part of their activity costs (i.e. something that outlasts the award), the applicant must also justify the ownership of these items after the award.

If the applicant chooses to undertake research activities at the partner organisation, the funds of this award can also be used to cover research costs, including the costs of animals, human tissue, participants or data, if these are to be used in the proposed research activities.

Travel and subsistence

The applicant, only, can also claim costs associated with their own travel and subsistence during the award. This award cannot be used to cover those of any partner or dependants of the applicant. Visa costs and other international fees can also be covered.

5.5 Are there any limits to how much can be spent under each budget heading?

No, the Academy has not set any limits on how much of the award funding can be spent under any particular budget heading. All budget requests will need to be explained and justified within the application form. The employing and partner organisation finance office representatives will be required to approve all budget requests, including salary arrangements during the award period and costs of activities to be undertaken at the partner organisation.

It is at the Selection Panel's discretion to decide whether the proposed budget is appropriate.

5.6 How detailed should the budget proposal be?

The budget proposal should include a detailed overview of how the award funding is to be spent; all costs should be itemised and justified. We will not accept grouped or vaguely labelled items in the budget.

For example, as opposed to "Activity 1 total costs – £X" being listed as a grouped budgetary item, this should be subdivided into individual categories. Examples could include venue booking, travel (see below), access costs, materials and consumables, equipment etc. Where possible, as much detail and justification of the costs should be provided.

Furthermore, if you are including travel costs, you should not group these as "Train tickets" or "All travel", the budget item should be labelled with the journey type and number of tickets, e.g. Birmingham to London x20.

Once awarded, awardees will not be able to claim additional costs above the total award value, even if the full £100,000 available is not claimed. Awardees may only request to move funds between budget headings; we are unable to consider supplementing grants after awards are made. Therefore, the application budget proposal should be as comprehensive as possible to avoid disappointment.

5.7 What is an intellectual property agreement?

Intellectual property is defined as "something that you create using your mind", which could include a story, an invention or a symbol. You own intellectual property if you:

- created it and it meets the requirements for a patent, copyright or a design
- bought the intellectual property rights from the creator or the previous owner
- have a brand that could be a trademark.

Intellectual property can have more than one owner and belong to people or businesses. The rights to intellectual property allow you to make money from the intellectual property you own.

As part of the application process, the applicant will be asked to confirm that they understand that if intellectual property is likely to be created during the award, the applicant and the employing and partner organisations are required to create an intellectual property agreement. This agreement should cover what rights to the intellectual property each party has. The applicant may be requested to provide a signed copy of this agreement as part of accepting their award.

5.8 What is subsidy control?

The UK subsidy control regime began on 4 January 2023. As part of this regime, the Academy is required to report to the UK Government on how award funding is being used when applications collaborating with commercial enterprises are awarded. The regime determines the lawfulness of monetary awards made using public sector resources when given to businesses and other organisations that are engaged in economic activity.

As part of the application process, applicants will need to identify if they are including a commercial enterprise in their application; this includes the employing and partner organisations. If awarded, the proposal will go through an additional set of checks in line with subsidy control rules and applicants may be required to answer additional questions.

5.9 Are there any other documents that I will need to submit alongside the application form?

Applicants will not be required to submit any further documentation outside of their application form, other than that which is detailed in the application form itself. We do **not** require applicants to submit a copy of their Curriculum Vitae (CV).

5.10 Will I receive confirmation of my submitted application?

Yes, once they officially submit their application, applicants will receive an automated email from Flexi-Grant® confirming their submission. This will be sent to the email address to which their Flexi-Grant® account is registered. Confirmation emails are automatically generated and are not sent by Academy staff. Applicants who have queries relating to their submitted application should not reply to their confirmation email; instead please contact our team via cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk.

5.11 Can I make any amendments to my application once it is submitted?

The Cross-Sector Experience Award application form cannot be amended once it has been submitted. Applicants should ensure that everything they wish to include in their application form is present at the time of submitting and that all information provided is correct to the best of their knowledge.

If an applicant notices an error on their application form once it has been submitted, they should contact our team via cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk as soon as possible. Academy staff will advise whether it is possible to amend the application form.

5.12 What review stages are involved in the application process?

All applications will be reviewed and scored by the Selection Panel only. This scheme does not include a peer review or interview stage.

5.13 When will I find out whether my application has been successful or not?

All applicants will receive the outcome of their application between the end of May and June 2025.

5.14 Will I receive feedback on my application?

All eligible candidates will receive feedback on their application, regardless of whether their application was successful or not. This will include feedback from the Cross-Sector Experience Award Selection Panel. All feedback will be sent to applicants at the final outcome release stage.

We cannot provide feedback for ineligible candidates declared prior to the Panel review stage, except to explain the reason for their ineligibility.

5.15 If I was previously unsuccessful in applying for a Cross-Sector Experience Award, can I reapply?

Yes, unsuccessful applications are eligible to reapply for the Cross-Sector Experience Award scheme in subsequent rounds. Applicants should consider the feedback they received from the previous round when writing their next application. For example, where the Panel has previously deemed the partner organisation to be unsuitable for the applicant and their proposal, those wishing to reapply should find another partner organisation to develop their subsequent application.

Applicants can only apply for this scheme with the same partner organisation twice. If both applications are unsuccessful, the applicant would need to select a new partner organisation in order to apply again. However, if the first application is successful, the applicant cannot reapply with that partner organisation again.

5.16 If I was previously successful in applying for a Cross-Sector Experience Award, can I reapply for another award?

Yes, previous award holders of the Cross-Sector Experience Awards are eligible to apply for a second award.

Reapplications of this nature will only be considered if the applicant chooses a new partner organisation in a different sector to that of the partner organisation of their original award, as well as being in a different sector to that of the employing organisation and any other employers. Should the applicant change employing organisation following their first award, the proposed partner organisation should be in a different sector to both their current and previous employing organisation.

Cross-Sector Experience Award holders should ensure their first award has fully come to a close before submitting their second application, and must thoroughly justify how and why a second award will be beneficial to their ongoing work at the employing organisation.

6. Award period

6.1 How soon after receiving the award letter can I commence my Cross-Sector Experience Award?

Cross-Sector Experience Awards must begin within 6 months of the award letter being received by the applicant.

Under extenuating circumstances, we may be able to accommodate a start date up to 12 months after the award letter is issued. Applicants experiencing circumstances that will affect their ability to begin their project on time should contact our team on cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk as soon as possible to discuss this before they submit their application.

6.2 How will award funding be delivered during the award period?

Cross-Sector Experience Award funding will be paid in full at the start of the award in one payment. Funds will be sent from the Academy's finance team to the employing

organisation's finance office. The Academy will not send any funds directly to the awardee or the partner organisation. As the official host of the award, the employing organisation will be responsible for disseminating funds to the awardee and/or the partner organisation, in accordance with the budget proposal laid out in the application form.

If the applicant is self-employed/freelance/receives payments or contributions from an organisation using public and patient involvement processes and thus acts as the employing organisation as well, they **must** speak with our team regarding these arrangements. Self-employed applicants **must** have a registered business/company and business banking account in order to apply. The applicant should be able to safely hold funds and transfer the award funding to the partner organisation as required, if acting as the employing organisation.

6.3 What is the timeline for completing progress reports during the award?

A Final Expenditure Report should be submitted by the awardee within 3 months of the end of the award. A secondary progress report will be due 1 year after the end of the award. The applicant, employing and partner organisations may be asked to complete additional surveys regarding the scheme; these surveys are not compulsory aspects of accepting the award.

6.4 Can I amend my project or budget proposal after the award has started?

We will allow Cross-Sector Experience Award holders to make amendments to their project and/or budget proposal, provided they are sufficiently justified.

Amendment requests, including those requesting virements across budget headings, must be submitted via Flexi-Grant® for approval prior to any changes being made; if the request is not sufficiently justified or if the changes to the proposal mean that it no longer meets the criteria and/or principles of the scheme, the amendment request will be rejected.

Any deviations from the original budget or project proposal need to be approved by Academy staff before being undertaken. Large amendment requests, including large budget virements, may need further approval by the Chair of the Cross-Sector Experience Award Panel.

6.5 Can I apply for an extension to my Cross-Sector Experience Award?

Under exceptional circumstances, we will allow Cross-Sector Experience Award holders to submit a no-cost, time-only extension request to extend their award period; both the employing and partner organisations must agree to extend the award. Awardees are encouraged to contact our team on cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk as soon as possible if they think they have sufficient reason for needing a no-cost extension and the resources in place to do so.

Extension requests must be submitted via Flexi-Grant® for approval prior to any changes being made; if the request is not sufficiently justified it will be rejected.

No additional funds will be available to those submitting an extension request, therefore any additional charges that occur as a result of the extension period (for example, extending the contract of the backfill position at the employing organisation) will have to be funded through other sources or covered by existing award underspend. Virements across budget headings can be requested and can be used to fund no-cost extension periods, provided the justification is sufficient.

6.6 What other opportunities are available to me through the Academy's career support programmes?

Through the [Cross-Sector Programme](#) we are establishing networking hubs across the UK. In collaboration with these hubs, we are hosting networking events around the UK to bring together people working on a health challenge who want to collaborate with others to develop their ideas. Awardees of the Cross-Sector Experience Awards will be encouraged to attend and take part in these events, and if appropriate, engage with their local Cross-Sector Hub and its activities.

Furthermore, we pride ourselves on the range of career support opportunities that we provide to our grant holders. Through our Cross-Sector Experience Awards, awardees will have access to the following:

- [PILLAR](#) – our community programme for all current grant awardees and programme participants, which is designed to provide additional career support to its community members. PILLAR is accompanied by [HIVE](#), our alumni programme. Through these networks the Academy provides events, training and resources, as well as an exclusive online hub where community members can interact with each other and learn more about the Academy and the wider community.
- [Mentoring](#) – our mentoring programme provides tailored support by pairing you with an Academy Fellow as a mentor. A mentor can help you work through challenges in the workplace. They can broaden your understanding of the opportunities available to you and provide encouragement to progress towards your career goals.
- [Career development events](#) – we host an ongoing series of career development events designed to develop the soft skills required to take careers to the next level.
- On occasion, we may also be able to offer opportunities to get involved in wider Academy activities, through links with other teams such as policy, engagement, fundraising and EDI, among others. Awardees are encouraged to flag to our team if they have an interest in particular opportunities they would like to hear about.

As this is a scheme supported by NIHR, our awardees are also eligible to apply for additional career support as an NIHR Academy Member, provided they also meet each activity's eligibility criteria.

NIHR Academy Members include those on an NIHR academic path and those who play a recognised NIHR role supporting academic career development. They form a key part of the national health and social care research system, from predoctoral level through to Professorships.

Members are able to access a portfolio of NIHR Academy development and support activities. This includes but is not limited to:

- [Leaders Support and Development Programme](#), including their leadership and mentoring programme and online leadership development resources
- in-person and virtual events, including their annual NIHR Academy Members' Conference
- [Reviewer Development Scheme](#) to gain experience of peer review for NIHR funding programmes
- opportunities to get involved in the strategic direction and development of the NIHR through representation on advisory groups

Contact information

Enquiries about this scheme can be made by email: cross-sectorawards@acmedsci.ac.uk.

Supporters

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