

Research Capability Funding (RCF)

Academic Career Award (ACA)



Shaping better health

Guidance for Applicants (26/27)

NHS Gloucestershire and NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Boards (G+BNSSG ICBs) are pleased to offer our academic colleagues based in University of Bristol and UWE Bristol an opportunity to secure funding to progress their career. The Academic Career Award (ACA) is funded through Research Capability Funding (RCF) allocated to the ICBs to maintain research capacity and capability.

Aim of this funding

This funding aims to support Research Fellows and Senior Research Fellows at the University of Bristol and individuals in senior academic/research positions at UWE Bristol, who are not core-funded by their university employer, to dedicate time to activities that support their career stability e.g. applying for research grants or Advanced Fellowships.

For the ICB, this scheme contributes to the following:

- [The NIHR's aims for Research Capability Funding \(RCF\)](#).
- The NIHR's mission statement: To improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.
- Drive the pan-Bristol Knowledge Mobilisation approach.
- Maintaining the RCF virtuous circle.

Award Terms & Duration

These awards are intended to help reduce the pressures of short-term contracts by awarding funding equal to £60,000 over an 18-month duration. Please note that this will **not** fund indirect and estate costs.

At 18 months post-award, there will be a review meeting between the recipient and ICB Research Team to assess how much, if any, funding is remaining. The expectation is that the recipient will secure other funding during the 18-month duration and therefore may not need to utilise all of their ACA Award within this timeframe.

If there is remaining funding at 18 months, the duration of the ACA award will be extended in direct proportion to the percentage of funding that is remaining, to a maximum of 18 months. The table below illustrates the extension process with some examples:

Original Award	% funding (RCF) remaining at 18 months	Extension duration	Total Award duration
£60,000 (18 months)	100%	18 months	36 months
	75%	13.5 months	31.5 months
	50%	9 months	27 months
	25%	4.5 months	22.5 months
	0%	No extension	18 months

Application process

This is a competitive process open to UWE Bristol and University of Bristol colleagues.

Following an internal selection process, UWE Bristol and University of Bristol will each be able to nominate **two** employees to interview for the Award.

The two nominated employees from each University will need to complete the [Application Form on our website](#) and submit this to the ICB Research Team by emailing bnssg.research@nhs.net.

Interviews will take place at 100 Temple Street, Bristol (the ICB's offices) with a 20-minute presentation followed by interview questions.

The interview panel will consist of:

- ICB Senior Manager
- ICB Associate Director for Research
- Senior academic representative from UWE
- Senior academic representative from University of Bristol

Dates for the scheme

Launch: 18th September 2026

Application deadline for nominated candidates: 27th November 2026

Interview: December 2026/January 2027 (TBC)

Award starts: 1st March 2027

Remit

As with all G+BNSSG ICB awards funded through RCF, the remit for the work must be **Health & Care in the community**, which includes primary care, community care, public health, adult social care and/or children's social care, and the work must support the [purpose of the Healthier Together Integrated Care System](#):

- Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare
- Tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access
- Support broader social and economic development
- Enhance productivity and value for money.

Eligibility criteria

UWE Bristol and University of Bristol are invited to submit up to 2 applications each.

Applicants must be:

- A Pathway 2 non-clinical academic or health and social care professional excluding doctors and dentists (to align with NIHR criteria*).
- A Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow (University of Bristol), or an individual in a senior academic/research position (UWE Bristol).
- Not core funded by their employer, so applicants must be employed on either:
 - a fixed term contract, or
 - open-ended basis linked to fixed external funding
- The applicant can be working either on a full-time or part-time basis.
- An exemplar of good citizenship and collegiality (please note, this will require evidence of a positive contribution, and the absence of negative feedback is not sufficient).
- Able to evidence excellent internationally leading research outputs that are of a standard to be submitted to future REF exercises.
- Able to evidence a sustained track record (> 3 years) in obtaining external research income either individually as CI or as a co-applicant leading substantial work packages.

* With apologies to Doctors and Dentists, these funds are explicitly to create an opportunity for staff who have limited opportunities and/or representation through alternative existing schemes.

Acknowledgement

This funding scheme was the idea of Chris Salisbury, Professor of Primary Health Care at University of Bristol and a Bristol-based GP. In 2023 Chris was awarded the George Abercrombie Award by the Royal College of General Practitioners 'for outstanding contributions to the literature of general practice', this scheme is a fantastic contribution to our local research environment.

Chris worked with the Research Team as a previous Head of the Centre of Academic Primary Care in Bristol, and as the Chief Investigator on several large NIHR funded research projects.

Chris suggested this funding scheme as a much-needed way of supporting academic colleagues working in health & care research through offering a chance for some stability in a career often filled with precarious contracts.

We're really pleased to be able to offer this opportunity, and thankful to Chris for what has proved to be a popular scheme and much-appreciated support for deserving colleagues.