

# CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS FOR SENIOR ACADEMIC GENERAL PRACTITIONERS 2021 ROUND

## RCGP GUIDANCE FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS FOR NATIONAL LEVEL AWARDS

This guidance has been prepared by the RCGP to assist senior academic GPs (SAGPs) considering applying for national level (bronze, silver or gold) Clinical Excellence Awards (CEA) in the 2021 round.

The current Clinical Excellence Award scheme round opened on 7 December 2020 with an announcement on the ACCEA website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clinical-excellence-awards-application-guidance>

There are some important changes to the award this year – please use the up to date forms on this website as these have changed. We encourage you to start working on your draft application forms now (also on the ACCEA website) in view of the tight deadlines.

### 1. Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA)

Clinical Excellence Awards are given to recognise and reward the exceptional contribution of NHS consultants and Senior Academic General Practitioners, over and above that normally expected in a job, to the values and goals of the NHS to patient care. Awards are given for quality and excellence, acknowledging exceptional personal contributions (*ACCEA home page and guide for applicants – use link above*).

In considering and ranking applicants, RCGP will pay particular attention to the contribution of individuals in clinical work, education, research, and service development. The RCGP will also take particular account of achievements in relation to academic representation/office bearer roles in RCGP, SAPC, NIHR, DH, BMA, ACCEA and other relevant organisations. We would welcome nominations from underrepresented groups,

The Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) is the body which administers the awards scheme. It is very important that potential applicants look closely at the criteria for awards to ensure that they realistically fit the profile that the ACCEA is looking for.

The application process is entirely online, including the submission of employers' and other supporting citations. Please familiarise yourself with the ACCEA website particularly with regard to the online process and registration.

The process described here covers awards at bronze, silver and gold level in England and Wales. Separate systems apply in Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Defence Medical Services.

There are various deadlines for applications for the ACCEA awards; both with the ACCEA and the College. Appendix I gives further details of these. Please note that the ACCEA's deadline for submission of applications is **not** negotiable.

The College's deadlines for reviewing and ranking applications are earlier than the ACCEA deadline. To allow ranking and citations to be carried out by the RCGP, you must register with the ACCEA once on line systems become open.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all necessary online documentation has been sent to the ACCEA. The College will ensure that its ranking and citation will be sent in time. However, you should not rely on those preparing employer statements to send them in on your behalf – it is up to you to ensure that employers complete these statements.

- 1.2 There are new application forms on the ACCEA website and you are encouraged to begin these in order to meet the College deadlines:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clinical-excellence-awards-application-guidance>
- 1.3 Notify the RCGP of your intention to apply by email to [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk) marked 'Confidential' as soon as possible. Include your GMC number when notifying the College: without this information, we cannot access your application to submit a citation on your behalf. The College will only provide citations and adjudications for its Members.
- 1.4 The deadline for sending your application to the RCGP for ranking and citation is **Thursday 18 February 2021 at 12:00**. Applications should be sent by email to [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk).

## 2. Indicative numbers of awards

The RCGP is invited to make a specific number of recommendations each year (indicative number of awards) and the College will be asked to provide a rank-order of nominations in line with that indicative number.

## 3. Guidance on awards

As a national body, the RCGP is involved only in national level awards: bronze (level 9), silver (level 10) and gold (level 11). Applicants should note that national level awards are unusual before 10 years have elapsed since appointment to senior lecturer (equivalent to consultant status), although this time period may be a little shorter in exceptional cases where particularly significant contributions to the NHS at national level can be demonstrated.

For consultants, it is very unusual to succeed in national level applications without an existing employer-based award. There is a recognition, however, that most SAGPs do not have access to an employer-based award scheme, and several have been successful in national level applications in recent years without an existing 'local' award. Applicants who have moved to the UK from abroad should note that it is unusual to be successful at national level before five years have elapsed since arrival.

Draft applications for platinum awards are considered by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. They are the only body allowed to support platinum applications and have a separate system for this support. We have not been advised of the Academy's deadlines yet – if you are intending on applying for a platinum award, please contact [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk) so that updated information can be sent to you.

- 3.1 **Review of existing awards:** National Clinical Excellence Awards are currently valid for 5 years. If you were awarded a Clinical Excellence Award, or had a previous Distinction Award renewed, in the 2016 Awards Round (valid from 1 April 2016) it is valid to 31 March 2021. In order for these awards to continue without a break, an application should be made to review these awards in the 2021 Round, as the review process takes nearly a year.

The ACCEA has stressed that renewals should not be seen as automatic – candidates need to provide clear evidence of their contributions, with dates showing contributions since the last award was made.

- 3.2 **Applying for higher levels of awards:** First applications for national level awards must be for bronze awards; holders of national awards may apply for awards only one

level higher than the existing award. SAGPs already receiving national level CEAs should note that it is unlikely that applications for higher level awards will be successful until four years have elapsed since the previous award. However, it may be possible in exceptional circumstances to move up more quickly than this (e.g. after three years) if particularly significant development can be demonstrated.

**3.3 Holders of employer based (local) awards:** In the past, the RCGP would not expect to support anyone for a new national award who has not received an employer-based (local) award. We recognise, however, that it has become increasingly difficult for SAGPs to obtain 'local' awards, particularly since April 2013. In these cases the applicant should explain in their email to [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk) why they have not had access to an employer-based (local) awards scheme.

**3.4 Applications made last year:** The results for last year have been published on the ACCEA website.

## 4. Eligibility

**4.1 Academic general practitioners** holding substantive contracts of employment as clinical academics at or above Senior Lecturer level (or equivalent) with a higher education institute and/or the Medical Research Council, and considered by the employer to be undertaking duties and responsibilities commensurate with consultant clinical academic staff, will be eligible for awards, provided that:

- they are registered general practitioners
- they work at least half of their total working week as an academic GP, i.e. their University / MRC contract is for at least half of the total number of sessions they work in the week, including all elements of their job plan, however they are funded
- they are practising clinicians providing direct clinical services, undertaking at least five programmed activities beneficial to the NHS, including teaching and clinical research.

Applicants who work less than full-time will receive awards pro rata to the whole time equivalent working week.

**4.2** The eligibility of **honorary contract holders** for awards will be based on the contribution made to the NHS defined in wider terms than direct care to patients. The entitlement to full eligibility for an award is based on five programmed activities (or equivalent sessional time) beneficial to the NHS, including teaching and clinical research. Applicants should summarise the job plan agreed at their (Follett) joint appraisal between their NHS appraiser and University. It is important to include in the job plan all programmed activities spent on NHS work, including face to face contact with patients (one PA = 4 hours), patient and NHS related administration, supporting professional activities (continuing professional development, College work and national committees), hands-on clinical teaching, and hands-on clinical research. These activities should be distinguished from academic programmed activities including regional, national and international commitments to R&D, and contributions to the organisation and management of teaching (undergraduate, postgraduate, and academic training pathways).

**4.3 Postgraduate Deans of Medicine and Dentistry** are eligible for CEAs<sup>1</sup>. Postgraduate Deans of General Practice are *not* eligible unless they fulfill the criteria in 4.1 above, or satisfy the terms of the 2013 Guide, i.e. are 'a definitive Postgraduate Dean appointed in competition from both General Practitioners and consultants and with responsibilities for postgraduate trainees across all specialties'.

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<sup>1</sup> Postgraduate Deans who by professional background are GPs and were appointed in open competition with Consultants

## 5. The RCGP process

The College is regarded by the ACCEA as the primary nominating body for SAGPs, and, as such, is asked to submit to the ACCEA a rank-ordered list of national level applications.

The College is responsible for providing citations and rank ordering applications and sending these directly to the ACCEA. You will receive confirmation that the citation has been sent through your on-line application form.

The College cannot guarantee to provide citations for applications sent after the College deadline and the applicant will not be included in its ranking. You may submit directly to the ACCEA without a College citation. Regional committees pay a good deal of attention to College citations and rankings, however, so applicants should bear this in mind.

### 5.1 Completed Applications

It is up to SAGPs to ensure that paperwork is completed in time for the College's deadline. The College will not chase those people who have submitted notification of intent to apply but not submitted completed paperwork.

Details of information needed by the RCGP are listed below. Please do **not** use abbreviations or acronyms in your documentation. Full applications to the RCGP should consist of:

- A copy of the **formal application form**. (If you have not already submitted your completed on-line application to the ACCEA by the RCGP deadline, you should nevertheless send a copy of your latest draft version to the College so it can be adjudicated).
- **Information for Citation:** Please send a covering letter/email of no more than 150 words reminding us of relevant achievements. This should not repeat and cover the same information given in your personal statement. Do not be over-modest; emphasise work you have done for patients, the NHS and the College (or other relevant organisations) on a national or international scale (examples include membership or chairmanship of committees, examiner appointment, published articles etc). Once the citation is submitted, the College would not normally show this to the applicant.

Both documents should be sent to [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk) by **Thursday 18 February 2021 at 12:00**.

- 5.2 The CEA advisory group responsible for preparing the College's rank-ordered recommendations is a sub-committee of the Awards Committee, chaired by the President *ex officio* with policy advice from the Chair of Council.

The advisory group for the 2021 round will consist of Professor Amanda Howe (RCGP President & Chair of CEA Panel) and four other representatives including senior academic GPs and a lay representative. The advisory group and the College's CEA activities are administered by Kate Messent ([cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk), 020 3188 7534).

- 5.3 Completed applications received in the College by 2021 will be considered by all panel members working independently, and the group's consensus rank order will be submitted to the ACCEA.
- 5.4 I'm sure you'll agree that canvassing of the advisory group would be inappropriate. The group will, however, know which are first-time applications and which are re-applications from previously unsuccessful applicants.
- 5.5 In accordance with the usual practice of other Royal Colleges, the RCGP rank order list will remain confidential.

## **6. Results**

Annual results will be publicised by the ACCEA.

## **7. Finally ...**

I, or Kate Messent, will be happy to try to answer any queries you have about the process.

**Professor Amanda Howe, President  
College Lead Officer, RCGP ACCEA Awards**

## Appendix I - Deadlines – ACCEA AWARDS 2021

### **As soon as possible**

Notify [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk) of intention to apply for award, including your GMC number.

### **7 December 2020**

ACCEA round opens. Further details and forms available on website:  
[www.gov.uk/accea](http://www.gov.uk/accea)

### **Thursday 18 February 2021: 12:00 (or in advance if possible)**

Application form and background information (citation) to [cea@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:cea@rcgp.org.uk)

**This deadline is non-negotiable**

### **Thursday 11 March 2021**

Completion of RCGP adjudication and ranking.  
Decisions, together with citations sent to ACCEA in time for their deadline.

### **ACCEA deadline Thursday 18 March 2021: 17:00**

ACCEA Deadline: Applications received even a few minutes after their deadline CANNOT be accepted by the ACCEA (the website will close at that point).