

Appendix 6 – NIHR ACF Interview Guidance Notes

2020 NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships

Introduction

The interview for NIHR ACF posts should be at least 30 minutes long and appropriate for appointment to an ACF at the training level advertised. Each applicant should be rated as either ‘Appointable’ or ‘Not appointable’ to the particular Integrated Academic Training post. In addition, applicants should be ranked based on their total scores, with the highest scoring applicant being offered the post, dependent on clinical benchmarking. The remaining appointable applicants will be notified that they are appointable but are reserve applicants.

‘Average’, ‘Good’, ‘Very good’ and ‘Exceptional’ relate to comparison with ACFs already in the programme where appropriate (at the time of their appointment).

The non-linear scoresheets below should be used as a minimum for questioning under the various headings, however the proposed questioning are **examples only** and the actual questions used are down to the panel’s discretion, following Follet Principles.

All applicants to an ACF post should assess the same datasets/publication and be asked and scored on the same questions.

ACADEMIC: SCIENTIFIC

Understanding of data

Applicant provided with a generic dataset/publication (e.g. outcomes following an intervention) to consider for 10 minutes immediately prior to being interviewed. The dataset/publication should be appropriate for assessment in 10 minutes and should be no longer than 2 sides of A4.

Ability to explain a dataset concisely to a scientific audience

“Please explain the data you have been shown”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Little appreciation of issues such as experimental design, statistics, power calculations, appropriate controls.			Clear communication; Ability to summarise data/design succinctly. Discussion of relevant controls and confounders; discussion of statistical analysis			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	2	4	6	10	16
Comments						

Ability to explain the result to a lay audience

“Please briefly explain this data for a lay audience”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Inappropriate use of technical terms, technical language and complicated sentence structures.			Clear communication; clear, plain English summary; able to explain significance in lay terms.			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	5	8
Comments						

Evidence of academic achievements to date

This should reflect demonstrable achievements rather than ‘just’ posts held.

“Please summarise your academic achievements and your personal contribution”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Little demonstrable academic activity; academic activity without productivity			Degrees; publications; prizes; posters; presentations; projects completed (Scoring should reflect whether prizes etc. were at a local, national or international setting).			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	5	8
Comments						

Knowledge of science/academic medicine related to the advertised ACF post

“Can you tell us what area of research linked with this ACF post interests you?”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Little evidence of prior thought about specific projects; little evidence of knowledge of local expertise; little knowledge of relevant methodological approaches, does not know the research theme of the competition ACF post			Knowledge of area of endeavour; knowledge of local expertise; appropriate ideas for a possible project*; Understanding of relevant methodological approaches (e.g. strengths and limitations), research theme if competition post			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	2	4	6	10	16
Comments						

*Applicants are not expected to have planned a specific research project/programme since this will be achieved during the ACF time, but should be able to discuss possible themes, ideas, or research questions relevant to the academic/research environment. **Applicants should be aware of the research theme and potential projects of the competition posts.**

Experience of research

“Can you describe your personal practical experience of research (in any form)?”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Little experience; little or superficial understanding of challenges, pitfalls, need for funding			Relevant practical experience; understanding of the pitfalls and limitations from practical experience; ability to discuss how research activities proceed in principle (in any field); ability to discuss PPI/PPE (patient/public involvement/engagement)			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	5	8
Comments						

General/broad knowledge of other areas of science/academic medicine

“Can you share with us some aspect of academic medicine/clinical or basic research that you have read recently that excited you, outside of your immediate area of interest?”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Little evidence of reading or exploration; little understanding of relevant methodological approaches available across biomedicine			Knowledge and understanding of new findings in their field; evidence of reading across fields outside their immediate interest; evidence of ability to identify a research development outside their field which could be utilised in their area of interest. Understanding of relevant methodological approaches; (e.g. strengths and limitations)			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	5	8
Comments						

Balancing your clinical and academic responsibilities

“What do you see are the challenges to balancing the clinical and academic roles? Give an example of how you have overcome similar career challenges so far. What skills will you need and how will you develop them?”

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Little appreciation of issues such as time management, clinical / externally driven pressures, recourse to the support of others in protecting academic time			Clear communication; example of time management/ protecting time given; clear on need for skills to protect academic time; recourse to academic supervisor/programme director			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments						

APPOINTABILITY TO INTEGRATED ACADEMIC POST

The panel should consider the local academic research training environment and any academic research aspirations of the applicant and determine whether those aspirations can be fulfilled through appointment to this post.

Outcome	No	Yes
Score	Unsuccessful	0

Interview panel to determine whether applicant is appointable to the ACF post in the institution in which it is to be held

Academic Outcome	Unacceptable for appointment to ACF at training level advertised	Acceptable for appointment to ACF at training level advertised
Select	Unsuccessful	Successful

Applicants Name/Reference Number

Panel Member Declaration

I will ensure that I have read the relevant 2020 NIHR ACF Guidance for Recruitment and Appointment, and as a member of the Interview Panel, understand:

The requirements I have in respect to:

- Confidentiality;
- Storage of Personal Data;
- Declaring a potential conflict of interest; and
- Equality.

That in considering the applicant and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2010, the scores and comments I have provided will be used to:

- Provide an assessment for ranking purposes;
- Inform discussion at the meetings and may be used to provide anonymised information and feedback to applicants.

Panel member name (PLEASE PRINT):

Panel member signature:

Date:

Oriel privacy policy:

<https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/Home/InformationPage?Type=PrivacyPolicy>

Optional - Additional questions

The heading, questions, negative and positive indicators should be determined prior to interview.

Heading:

Question:

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments						

Heading:

Question:

Negative indicators			Positive Indicators			
Outcome	Little or no evidence	Acceptable	Average	Good	Very good	Exceptional
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments						