Development and Skills Enhancement (DSE) award cohort 8

Overview

Opportunity status:	Open
Type:	Career development
Opening date:	30 July 2025 at 1:00 pm
Closing date:	4 November 2025 at 1:00 pm
Reference ID:	2025/378

Ready to apply?

Apply for this funding opportunity through our online application form

Apply now

(https://awardsmanagement.nihr.ac.uk/s_Login.jsp?dest=/Apps/app_viewopportunity.jsp%3Fappid%3D105112%26nextlevel%3D1%26opportunityid%3D10170708)

Overview

The DSE award is a postdoctoral level funding opportunity. It supports early to mid-career researchers who want to gain specific skills and experience to underpin the next phase of their research career.

A DSE award must help you to develop the relevant and required skills to make a competitive NIHR personal award or NIHR research grant application. Applications to develop skills that are suited to research outside NIHR's remit are not in scope for a DSE award. Visit our [remit page (/career-development/nihr-academy/remit-personal-awards)](/career-development/nihr-academy/remit-personal-awards) for more information.

What funding is available through a DSE award?

The DSE provides funding for:

- the salary of the award holder for up to 2 years
- training and development costs, including any related travel and subsistence, up to £5,000 per year FTE
- conference costs up to £1,000 per year FTE
- mentorship costs up to £3,000

These are the only costs that we will fund through a DSE award.

You can use mentorship costs to facilitate the time that you spend with mentors or supervisors. It may cover various expenses related to mentorship such as travel expenses, meeting costs, mentor fees and professional development events.

Although you can use a DSE award to fund development and leadership skills within a clinical setting, we will not support practice time. Visit our [DSE award page (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse)](/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse) for more information on practice time.

How much can you apply for?

You will be able to choose a 12, 18 or 24-month duration. The limits on what you can apply for are regardless of extensions in duration due to a lower FTE percentage.

The limits are:

- 12 months
  - £5,000 training costs
  - £1,000 for conference or meeting costs

- up to £3,000 towards mentorship costs
- 18 months
  - £7,500 training costs
  - £1,500 for conference or meeting costs
  - up to £3,000 towards mentorship costs
- 24 months
  - £10,000 training costs
  - £2,000 for conference or meeting costs
  - up to £3,000 towards mentorship costs

DSE award costs will be funded at 100% and full economic costings (FEC) are not covered by this award. Visit our finance guidance (/research-funding/application-support/guidance/finance-guidance-for-applicants) for more information.

Eligibility

Visit the 'Who can apply?' section on the DSE award page (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse) for full eligibility information.

To apply, you must:

- have completed any relevant pre-registration training (, if you are applying as a clinical academic)
- have a proposed English contracting organisation that is an HEI, NHS body, or other provider of health and/or care services
- hold a relevant PhD or MD, or have submitted your thesis for examination at the time of application; you must have been awarded your PhD or MD by the time you start the award
- have not submitted a DSE application in the previous submission window

This award does not fund research or large portions of time to develop funding applications. Activity that you undertake as part of the award should be focused on your personal career development.

You must not propose time to undertake research or large portions of time to develop funding applications.

Duration

You can hold a DSE award full-time equivalent (FTE) for:

- 12 months
- 18 months
- 24 months

You can undertake a DSE award on a part-time basis of between 50% and 100% FTE.

Requesting a 24-month duration

A 24-month FTE duration is only available to those from a nurse, midwife, AHP, healthcare scientist, pharmacist or social care background. Contact us before starting your application if you are from another professional background but feel there are exceptional circumstances for a 24-month duration.

Visit our personal award durations page (/career-development/nihr-academy/apply-nihr-career-development-awards/personal-career-development-award-durations) for more information.

Partnership award

This funding opportunity is not offered through a partnership award.

Key dates

30 July 2025 - 1pm on 04 November 2025

Submit your application

November 2025 - February 2026

Funding committee review period

Start dates

April 2026 - July 2026

You must submit your application on our awards management system. Click the link below to log in to the system and start your application.

Apply now
(https://awardsmanagement.nihr.ac.uk/s_Login.jsp?dest=/Apps/app_viewopportunity.jsp%3Fappid%3D1
05112%26nextlevel%3D1%26opportunityid%3D10170708)

Strategic themes

We are particularly interested in receiving applications that will develop skills and experience within our DSE award strategic themes (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse/dse-award-strategic-themes):

- health and care professionals (HCPs) developing practitioner academic career

- knowledge mobilisation and implementation science

- health data science (HDS)

- clinical trials

- entrepreneurship and working with industry

Please state in your career development plan if you are proposing an application for a specific DSE strategic theme.

Application guidance

This page includes information specific to cohort 8 of the DSE award.

Please read our guidance to help you complete all aspects of your application. You must read the application form guidance alongside the information on this tab, which details specific requirements for this award. You must also check our award page for additional application guidance, including eligibility:

- application form guidance (/research-funding/application-support/guidance/personal-career-development-award-without-research-funding)

- DSE award page (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse)

- DSE strategic themes (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse/dse-award-strategic-themes)

- DSE award assessment criteria (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse/assessment-criteria)

Application form uploads

You must provide the following uploads as part of your application:

- 'Research area of interest'
- 'Career development programme'
- Gantt chart of project plan document
- 'Letters of support'
    - in addition to a letter of support from your contracting organisation, and partner organisation if applicable, you may also use this section to upload separate letters of support from placement providers or supervisors
- 'Narrative CV'
    - please ensure that your narrative CV explains how your career to date makes you a strong candidate for a DSE award. Use the 'Your suitability for the award' section to explain how a DSE award will compliment and accelerate your career development to make you competitive for future NIHR funding.

Choosing a contracting organisation

Your proposed contracting organisation must be an:

- English HEI
- English NHS body
- other English provider of health and/or care services

You must be based in the UK at your contracting organisation for the duration of the award, except for travel for research, training or development activities as outlined within the proposal.

We will not support applications in which the fellow is living overseas from their contracting organisation.

Visit our [choosing a contracting organisation](/career-development/nihr-academy/apply-nihr-career-development-awards/choosing-contracting-organisation-career-development-awards) page for more information.

How to fill in the 'Budget' section of your application

You must request funding under the relevant heading in the 'Budget' section of your application.

You must request:

- the salary of the applicant on the 'Lead and co-applicants' line under the 'Staff costs' (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/research-funding/application-support/guidance/finance-guidance-for-applicants#tab-375176:~:text=Staff%20costs-,Include,-an%20overview%20of) heading
- training and development costs on the 'Training and development' (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/research-funding/application-support/guidance/finance-guidance-for-applicants#tab-375176:~:text=Research%20inclusion-,Include,-any%20costs%20related) line under the 'Other research/award costs' heading
- conference costs on the 'Travel and subsistence' (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/research-funding/application-support/guidance/finance-guidance-for-applicants#tab-375176:~:text=activities%2C%20and%20facilitation-,skills,-)) line under the 'Other research/award costs' heading
- mentorship costs on the 'Other direct costs' (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/research-funding/application-support/guidance/finance-guidance-for-applicants#tab-375176:~:text=Other%20direct%20costs-,These,-are%20any%20other) line under the 'Other research/award costs' heading

These are the only costs that will be funded by the award. For all organisations, we will fund DSE award costs at 100%. Full economic costings (FEC) are not covered by this award.

Visit our finance guidance (/research-funding/application-support/guidance/finance-guidance-for-applicants) for more information.

Application process

Find out how to apply for this funding opportunity and what you need to do to get your application ready. Please read all the information and guidance carefully before submitting your application.

How to apply

Log into our awards management system (https://awardsmanagement.nihr.ac.uk/s_Login.jsp) to apply. You will need to create a new account if you do not have one already.

The closing date is 04 November 2025 at 1pm. We will not consider applications that we receive after 1pm on the closing date.

Please read the information in the 'Application guidance' tab of this funding opportunity before you start your application.

All participants and signatories named in your application must validate their account in our award management system. You will not be able to submit your application if all participants in your application have not validated their accounts. Please see the 'Support and mentorship' section of the application form guidance for further details.

Research inclusion

At NIHR we are committed to [creating a diverse and inclusive culture (/about-us/who-we-are/research-inclusion)](/about-us/who-we-are/research-inclusion). We encourage applications from people from all backgrounds and communities bringing diverse skills and experiences.

Additional support

If you would like to discuss reasonable adjustments to support your application or the undertaking of your award, if successful, please email [personal.awards@nihr.ac.uk (mailto:personal.awards@nihr.ac.uk)](mailto:personal.awards@nihr.ac.uk)

You should not provide details of this request in your application. You will be able to include costs for reasonable adjustments to undertake your award. Should your application be successful, you will be able to discuss your needs with us prior to starting your award.

Research Support Service

Got a research idea and not sure how to turn it into a funding application? The free NIHR [Research Support Service (RSS) (/node/48001)](/node/48001) supports researchers in England to apply for funding. It can help you develop and deliver clinical and applied health, social care and public health research post award.

Contact Details

- for help with your application contact: [personal.awards@nihr.ac.uk (mailto:personal.awards@nihr.ac.uk)](mailto:personal.awards@nihr.ac.uk)
- for more information, visit the [programme page (/node/31526)](/node/31526)