

Development and Skills Enhancement (DSE) award (Cohort 9)

Overview

Opportunity status: Open

Opening date: 3 December 2025 at 1:00 pm

Closing date: 11 March 2026 at 1:00 pm

Reference ID: 2025/464

Ready to apply?

Apply now

(https://awardsmanagement.nihr.ac.uk/s_Login.jsp?dest=/Apps/app_viewopportunity.jsp%3Fappid%3D105112%26nextlevel%3D1%26opportunityid%3D10198877)

The [DSE award](/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse) (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse) is a postdoctoral-level funding opportunity. If you are an early to mid-career researcher, it can support you to gain specific skills and experience to underpin the next phase of your 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 [our remit](/career-development/nihr-academy/remit-personal-awards) (/career-development/nihr-academy/remit-personal-awards) are not in scope for a DSE award.

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, which may include working with people and communities

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 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) (/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) (/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
 - if you are applying to the Addictions Healthcare Goals Programme partnership award, you must have an equivalent UK-wide contracting organisation in the devolved nations
- 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. The 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.

You should take into account your FTE rate when setting your award duration. For example, if the full-time duration for an award is 12 months and you will work at 50% FTE, your award duration would be 24 months. Visit our [personal award durations page](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/nihr-academy/apply-nihr-career-development-awards/personal-career-development-award-durations) (https://www.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/nihr-academy/apply-nihr-career-development-awards/personal-career-development-award-durations) for more information

Applications proposing a FTE duration that is less than 12 months or more than 24 months will not be accepted.

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.

Partnership awards

Partnership awards are funding opportunities offered jointly by the NIHR and partners from the charity and industry sectors.

Addictions Healthcare Goals Programme

The DSE is partnering with the Addiction Healthcare Goals (AHG), which supports UK-wide research into drug and alcohol addiction, with a focus on developing innovative approaches to treatment, recovery, and harm prevention across diverse care settings. Find more information on our [partnership awards page](/career-development/nihr-academy/partnership-awards) (/career-development/nihr-academy/partnership-awards).

This partnership award is available to individuals across the devolved nations.

Key dates

| 03 December 2025 to 1pm on 11 March 2026

Submit your application

April 2026 - June 2026

Funding committee review period

August 2026 - November 2026

Start date

Apply now

(https://awardsmanagement.nihr.ac.uk/s_Login.jsp?dest=/Apps/app_viewopportunity.jsp%3Fappid%3D105112%26nextlevel%3D1%26opportunityid%3D10198877)

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) (/research-funding/application-support/guidance/personal-career-development-award-without-research-funding)
- [DSE award page](/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse) (/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse)
- [DSE strategic themes](/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes/postdoctoral/dse/dse-award-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) (/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
 - 1 page maximum

- ‘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 complement and accelerate your career development to make you competitive for future NIHR funding

Do not use the flexible upload option to apply for this award. Funding committee reviewers will not consider anything that you upload into this section as part of your application. Read our application form guidance for more information on uploads.

Choosing a contracting organisation

Your proposed contracting organisation must be an:

- English Higher Education Institution (HEI)
- English NHS body
- other English provider of health and/or care services, for example, a commissioned social enterprise, local authority or hospice
- equivalent organisation in the devolved nations if applying for an Addictions Healthcare Goals Programme partnership award

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 \(/career-development/nihr-academy/apply-nihr-career-development-awards/choosing-contracting-organisation-career-development-awards\)](/career-development/nihr-academy/apply-nihr-career-development-awards/choosing-contracting-organisation-career-development-awards) page for more information.

ORCID

You must link an ORCID ID in order to submit your application. This is a free, unique, user identification number used by NIHR and other health research funders.

Please ensure that your ORCID profile is complete and up to date. It will be used as your CV by the NIHR and by the assessors of your application when considering your employment, previous experience and qualifications. We may also use your ORCID profile to confirm your eligibility for the funding opportunity.

Your ORCID profile should include your:

- career history
- education
- research outputs
- any relevant funding and prizes

Visit our [application form guidance](/research-funding/application-support/guidance/personal-career-development-award-without-research-funding) (/research-funding/application-support/guidance/personal-career-development-award-without-research-funding) for further information on linking an ORCID to your application.

Percentage of award time undertaking practice or clinical work

This award does not provide funding for undertaking practice or clinical work. Please state "0%" in this section.

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) (<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) (<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 in to [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 11 March 2026 at 1 pm. We will not consider applications that we receive after 1 pm 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 accounts 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.

Our commitment to research inclusion

At NIHR, we are committed to [creating a diverse and inclusive culture](/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>)

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 before starting your award.

Research Support Service

Got a research idea and not sure how to turn it into a funding application? Our free [Research Support Service \(RSS\)](#) (</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>)
- for more information, visit the [programme page](#) (</node/31526>)