

University Hospital Southampton Research Leaders Programme (RLP) Award Scheme Application Guidance Notes for Cohort 5 – April 2025

Please complete the application form and submit via MS forms <https://forms.office.com/e/cE834Azafh> by no later than 5.00pm on Friday 25th October 2024 (This includes emailing completed annexes A and B to RLP@uhs.nhs.uk)

Applicants will be notified of the outcome by Friday 3rd January 2025.

Introduction

University Hospital Southampton Research & Development (R&D) secured a significant investment from University Hospital Southampton Trust Board in 2021 to establish a Research Leaders Programme (RLP), overseen and managed by the Southampton Academy of Research. This programme aims to identify staff of all clinical disciplines with research leadership potential, and provide them with time, training, and personal development to enable progression towards their agreed research career pathway.

The purpose of the programme is to enable substantively employed UHS health care professionals to build a portfolio of research activity that will attract funding and facilitate research to become a significant and sustainable component of the award holder's job plan within 3 years. The Awards are offered competitively.

We are now seeking applications for the fifth cohort only. Individuals must be in the position and have the support of their manager to start week commencing Monday 7th April 2025.

Types of awards

The RLP comprises 2 different types of awards (with an option for these to be combined if explicitly agreed by discussion, ahead of application, with the RLP team) (see Figure 1):

1. Group A - Research Delivery Focused/Growing Principal Investigators (PI)¹

To build capacity to enable delivery of clinical research by providing protected time to undertake PI- related activities on externally funded NIHR CRN portfolio research studies, supported by a research team funded by external study income.

Goal: To establish/significantly expand a portfolio of externally funded research studies, commercial and non-commercial.

2. Group B - Clinical Academic Focused/Growing Chief investigators (CI)

To support healthcare professionals with significant potential to become independent researchers and fulfil the role of Chief Investigator² by generating income through personal fellowships and/or leadership of grant applications.

Goal: To secure external funding and lead a programme of externally funded research, in the context of a clinical academic position.

OR: A combination of Group A and B (Mixed), explicitly agreed, with outcomes reflecting the blend. An application to this pathway MUST be discussed ahead of application with the RLP team.

¹ Principal investigator: An individual responsible for the conduct of the research at a [research site](#). There should be one PI for each research site. In the case of a single-site study, the chief investigator and the PI will normally be the same person.

² Chief Investigator: the overall lead researcher for a research project and the lead applicant on the grant application in addition to their responsibilities if they are members of a research team, chief investigators are responsible for the overall conduct of a research project. They are responsible for intellectual leadership of the research project and for the overall management of the research (some funders refer to this as the PI)

Successful applicants will commit to a programme of activity utilising RLP funded protected time, with the goal of recovering investment through writing their time into grant applications and/or securing commercial income. They will, in turn, be supported to develop/augment a research delivery team through the external funding generated by the research they pursue.

Participants will be selected through a competitive application process, with competitions spaced annually.

The Award Scheme

Each award will comprise several different elements – some are core (such as backfill, mentorship and leadership development) and others dependent on an individual’s learning, development, and support needs (e.g., fees for short courses, methodological support, coaching, explicit connections with UHS/UoS infrastructure).

Two types of costs will be met:

- Funds to cover the cost of salary backfill
- Funds to support access to learning and development

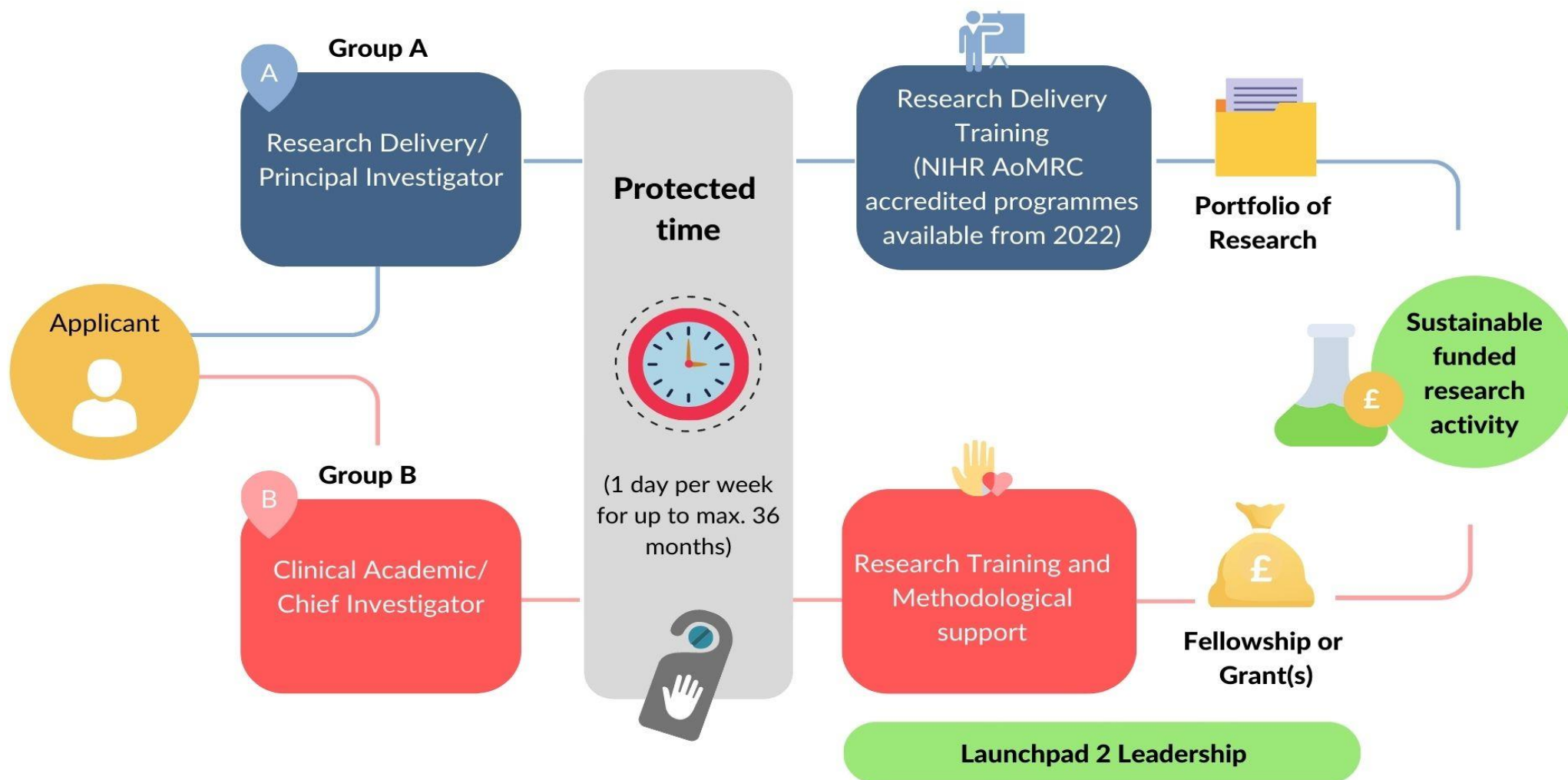
These are as follows:

Type of support	Type of RLP fellow	Notes	Funding allocation
Funded protected time (core)	Both i.e. Group A and Group B	<p>Minimum commitment expected of the award holder is 20% WTE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Medical Consultants, the protected time offered is 2PAs. Overall consultant PAs in job plan <u>including RLP PAs</u> must not exceed 12 PAs. • For other HCP a higher WTE of up to 40% WTE will be considered. <p>Even if the applicant works part time, they must be released for 1 full day per week. This will not be a pro rata arrangement.</p> <p>Please Note: If you choose to have protected time for less than the full 36 Months, you must still agree to attend the LaunchPad2Leadership Programme (L2L) for the full 3-year duration.</p>	Based on basic salary cost (Including employment costs) of individual.
Launchpad 2 Leadership Programme (core)	Both	<p>Affiliated to, and supported by, the Trust Leadership Programmes. The L2L will run one half day per quarter, with a facilitator supporting shared learning amongst those enrolled on the scheme. Attendance at L2L is <u>mandatory</u>.</p> <p>Attendance at SoAR Autumn/Spring Schools is also anticipated.</p>	No individual allocation. Costs of L2L met by programme budget.

		<p>The L2L team will signpost towards available programmes and resources (not funded as a component of the programme) bespoke to a training needs analysis for each person: e.g., AMS/NIHR Leadership Academy, UKRI Future Leadership, Florence Nightingale Foundation, Clinical Research Network (CRN) and local and national NHS Clinical Leadership Programmes. These can be undertaken in RLP time, personal time or SPA as agreed and recorded in the learning objectives of the award holder. Where required, these additional activities can be funded through either the RLP training budget (see below) or the individual’s existing study budget where applicable.</p>	
Type of support	Type of RLP fellow	Notes	Funding allocation
Fees to support training needs in specific areas not already available free of charge through SoAR, UHS or UoS	Both see notes	<u>Research Delivery (Group A)</u> PG Cert, PGDip, or MRes that meet requirements of NIHR AoMRC Credentialing framework	Applicants are expected to apply for NHS staff bursaries offered to support these activities where these exist. Should these not be available or the applicant be unsuccessful, funding support from RLP will be reviewed by the RLP team, based on the individuals needs assessment.
		<u>Clinical Academic (Group B)</u> Accessing short courses to extend skills and knowledge necessary to develop high quality grant/fellowship applications. This may also extend to conferences where research work is being presented, following prior discussion with the RLP team. Any proposed activity should have been agreed in advance in the individual training needs/scoping review with the RLP team and Research Advisor (RA) – see below.	Each RLP award holder can apply for up to £1,000 per annum. (max 3 yrs.) This will be allocated on a first come, first served basis via our RLP request for training and development funding form.
Methodological Support	Clinical Academic	<u>Clinical Academic pathway:</u> The RLP team will facilitate access to methodology and PPIE support from existing infrastructure where this is needed to support grant and fellowship applications. Funds to secure time from individuals with specific methodological expertise overcoming a specific barrier to grant/fellowship application success may be available on a case-by-case basis, following prior discussion with the RLP team. For example: complex statistics, health economics, trial design, qualitative methods.	Via NIHR Research Support Service (RSS SC)/to be individually determined

Coaching	Both	Should it be deemed by the RLP team that an individual is facing a specific challenge for which executive coach would be appropriate, the individual may be offered the opportunity to work with a coach. This will be offered on a needs basis only.	Up to £1000
Mentorship (core)	Both	<p>All applicants will be expected to have a named Research Advisor (RA) who will provide oversight, guidance, and mentorship. The RA will be expected to attend the training needs/scoping analysis at the commencement of the programme, and annual reviews of progress where appropriate.</p> <p>The RLP Research Advisor Role Descriptor document is available to download. https://www.soar-southampton.org/research-leaders-programme</p> <p>After enrolment individuals will be supported to identify an appropriate named career support mentor in addition.</p>	These roles will not be remunerated.
Access to support from UHS/UoS infrastructure (As appropriate)	Both As indicated by an individual's scope of RLP	<p>Including but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Southampton Academy of Research (SoAR) 2. Joint Research Function including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Grant application support b. Quality assurance and governance c. Finance d. Contracting 3. Southampton Centre for Research Engagement and Impact (SCREI) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Public and Patient involvement b. Specialist research Communications 4. NIHR Southampton Clinical Research Facility (CRF) 5. NIHR Southampton Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) 6. NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Wessex (ARC Wessex) 7. Research Support Service South Central (RSS SC) (see above) 8. Southampton Clinical Research Delivery teams and support departments 	Met by infrastructure

Figure 1: Schematic representation of Research Leaders Programme components



Award Length

Applications will be considered for up to a maximum of 36 months, and for no less than 20% WTE (irrespective of whether the person currently works full or part time). For Medical Consultants the allocation will be 2 PA. For other groups a greater WTE can be applied for but no more than 40% WTE. Applicants are advised to discuss their proposed WTE and Award Length with the RLP team, contactable via SoAR, prior to submitting an application.

Eligibility

The RLP programme is open to all healthcare professionals employed (who hold a substantive as opposed to honorary employment contract) by University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust, including nurses, midwives, pharmacists, allied health professionals, clinical scientists, and doctors (including Consultants, SAS, and Specialty Doctors). Individuals must have the explicit support of their manager for their application, who will agree to ensure arrangements are in place for backfill of RLP funded time. The manager must also agree that the individual will be released to attend all cohort meetings of the L2L Programme. Potential applicants are therefore advised to speak to their manager early to ensure this assurance can be provided in the application process.

The panel will consider applications for award stream Group B (Clinical Academic) from individuals who are already registered for, and currently completing a programme of work towards an MD/PhD. The expectation for these individuals, is that the MD/PhD will be submitted early in the RLP fellowship, with a view to proceeding towards a competitive postdoctoral fellowship application (or similar) to sustain funding beyond the RLP. RLP awards are not appropriate as full MD/PhD fellowships but are intended to enable transition to post-doctoral research and secure future research funding. As such, RLP fellowships will not fund MD/PhD fees. Applicants in this position are advised to contact SoAR to clarify eligibility.

Selection Procedure

Applications will be reviewed by a panel composed of representatives from across the Trust and University.

Detailed review of each application will focus on:

1. The potential for the applicant to become a health research leader of the future – the applicant will need to make a strong case as to why they would merit an RLP award.
For example: Outputs from previous research experience and training relative to career stage and background, suitability, and commitment of applicant to a career as an independent researcher or leader of a research delivery team.
2. Suitability and scope of proposed objectives for RLP and the alignment of these objectives with Trust research objectives. *(as set out in the [UHS Clinical Strategy 2020-2025](#), and [UHS Research For Impact Strategy 2023-2028](#)).*
3. Quality and relevance of training and development plans (research skills, experience, and research career).
4. Suitability and experience of research advisor in relation to the applicants proposed career pathway.
5. Quality of plans to support career progression and fund research activity beyond the award.

Please note: Costings will be done by UHS Research Grants team after the shortlisting has taken place, so there is no requirement to ask your line managers or contact UHS Research Grants team. This will be done using the information from your application form, and access to the nominal roll.

Conditions and Reporting

Successful applicants will be expected to agree to the following conditions upon acceptance of the award. If these conditions are not met, then the award can be terminated at any stage by the UHS R&D Director or Clinical Director.

1. Comply with the funding requirements of the scheme throughout the duration of the award

Individuals must remain backfilled during this period. Any proposed changes should be discussed and agreed in advance with the RLP team. Where individuals secure significant grant or fellowship income, this should be disclosed to the RLP team early, to facilitate discussion regarding the proportion and duration of RLP funded time alongside any other funded research time.

2. Engage with the core elements of the programme.

Attendance at the L2L Leadership Gatherings is a mandatory component of an RLP award. Individuals who miss more than one session in an annual cycle will be asked to justify non-attendance. The RLP Oversight Board will then review whether these individuals can remain on the programme.

3. Annual progress report and review meeting.

Individuals on the programme will also be expected to report outputs through the University of Southampton Pure system (award holders will be supported to gain access and training).

4. Provide evidence that the award holder's line manager will support changes to the individual's job plan which allow backfilled time to be devoted to the RLP.

A line manager signature and support statement will be required both at the time of application, and upon acceptance of an award if successful.

Capturing Return on Investment (ROI) resulting from the UHS Research Leaders Programme (RLP)

Return on investment (ROI) has several facets— including, but not limited to: financial, academic, clinical, cultural, and reputational impact.

RLP Award Holders are expected to communicate fully and in a timely way with the RLP team around the progress, and success, of any funding applications (including grants and fellowships).

The RLP relies on the contributions of its Award Holders to shape the future design of the programme and monitor its impact. RLP Award Holders will be asked to provide examples and evidence of activities, supported by, or allied to the RLP which have had an impact on areas including, but not limited to:

- Trust reputation
- Safety, quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of patient care
- Culture (aligned with Trust People Strategy)
- Workforce (e.g., attracting good people to work at UHS, retention and sustainability of the workforce)

As part of this activity, individuals will be asked to engage with a 'Strategic Task', which aims to raise the profile of research in their clinical area and provide evidence of how they are working towards research being a fully integrated part of day-to-day clinical care.

Contractual obligations

Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, extended Sick Leave or other period of prolonged absence

RLP payments will continue throughout the absence with an extension to the end date of up to 12 months. The RLP Award Holder's Manager would be informed of this decision and would be responsible, along with the RLP Award Holder, for liaising with the relevant Division accordingly.

AfC banding promotions during RLP Award

Consultant award holders already have salary scale progression automatically built into their RLP award at the outset. In line with this, any healthcare professional on an AfC contract, who applies for a promotion and is successful, would have the corresponding uplift to their salary as part of their RLP award.