NHS CONSULTANTS’ CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS SCHEME (WALES)

2008 AWARDS ROUND

Guide for applicants employed by NHS organisations in Wales

This guide is available online at:

www.wales.nhs.uk/accea

Please note: all applications for national awards must be submitted by 5pm on 18th January 2008

Published September 2007
Preface: What does this guide cover?

This guide is for NHS consultants and Academic GPs, applying for a Clinical Excellence Award.

It explains how the Scheme works, who is eligible and how to apply. It also explains how your application will be considered, and what to do if you want to appeal against the decision.

Please use it as background information, and as a reference guide while completing your application. You will not be able to complete this without the guide, so it is essential that you read it.

This guide should be applied in conjunction with the Department of Health policy document, published in August 2003. You will find this at www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea/annual.htm

You will also find a code of practice and a set of frequently asked questions about the Scheme at www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea
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Part 1: Introduction

The Clinical Excellence Awards Scheme

1.1 The Clinical Excellence Awards Scheme recognises and rewards NHS consultants and academic GPs who perform ‘over and above’ the standard expected of their role. Awards are given for quality and excellence, acknowledging exceptional personal contributions.

1.2 To be considered for an award, you will have to demonstrate a commitment to delivering high quality patient care, and to the continuous improvement of the NHS.

1.3 The Scheme is administered by the Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA). It is managed on the Committee’s behalf by a full-time secretariat that is currently part of the Department of Health.

1.4 The Clinical Excellence Awards Scheme continues to take account of the good practice developed by the Distinction Awards and Discretionary Points schemes that preceded it. If you already hold either of these, you can still apply for a Clinical Excellence Award – see page 8 for more details.

How does the Scheme work?

1.5 There are 4 levels of national awards – Bronze (Level 9), Silver (Level 10), Gold (Level 11) and Platinum (Level 12)

1.6 ACCEA and its regional sub-committees recommend individuals for Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum awards.

1.7 There is a core application form for all the awards, which means everyone who applies has the same opportunity to highlight their contributions.

1.8 Applicants will need to visit the Welsh ACCEA website, www.wales.nhs.uk/accea and download the applications in Word format. Applications will need to be sent electronically to: ian.owen@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Applications will need to be completed online for consultants employed by NHS organisations in England.

What does the Scheme reward?

1.9 The Scheme rewards individuals who perform over and above the standard expected of a consultant in their post, and who locally, nationally or internationally:

- demonstrate sustained commitment to patient care and wellbeing, or improving public health
- sustain high standards of both technical and clinical aspects of service whilst providing patient-focused care
• in their day-to-day practice demonstrate a sustained commitment to the values and goals of the NHS, by participating actively in annual job planning, observing the private practice Code of Conduct and showing a commitment to achieving agreed service objectives

• through active participation in clinical governance contribute to continuous improvement in service organisation and delivery

• embrace the principles of evidence-based practice

• contribute to knowledge base through research and participate actively in research governance

• are recognised as excellent teachers and/or trainers and/or managers

• contribute to policy-making and planning in health and health care

• make an outstanding contribution to professional leadership.

Please note: consultants and academic GPs applying for awards are not expected to meet every objective.

The Scheme aims to be completely open, and offer every applicant an equal opportunity. Individual applications are considered on merit and how competitive they are, but the Awards are also monitored to ensure there are no significant differences in quality between successful applications. The Annual Report of ACCEA records the conclusions of this monitoring.

How will your application be assessed?
1.10 Standard guidelines are used when recommending applicants for every level, and all awards are assessed against the same strict criteria. These criteria are set out in Part 4 of this guide, and there is also guidance for assessors on how to judge applications against these criteria, which you can view at: www.wales.nhs.uk/accea

The criteria apply to all levels of award, but take account of achievements possible at different stages of a consultant or academic GP’s career.

1.11 The sub-committees measure achievement within the parameters of an individual’s employment, and recognise excellent service over and above the normal delivery of job plans including the quality of delivery of contractual duties.

1.12 ACCEA receives additional advice from specialist societies and 'national nominating bodies' on the quality of applicants' work. A separate guide has been produced for these 'nominators'. They produce ranked lists indicating their views of the relative merits of those applicants who have asked to be considered by them.
These rankings are one of the pieces of evidence used by sub-committees to help evaluate applications. The lists are also considered by the chairman and medical director, when preparing the recommendations to go to the main committee.

About the ACCEA and supporting committees

1.13 The Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) is a non-departmental public body. It issues guides to the Scheme (such as this document), setting out the detailed criteria against which applicants will be assessed. The secretariat to the committee administers the application and assessment process for national awards.

1.14 The committee advises ministers on award nominations proposed by the chairman and medical director, and based on recommendations from sub-committees and national bodies.

Regional Sub-Committees

1.15 There are 13 regional ACCEA sub-committees. They are based on the boundaries of the Strategic Health Authorities for the different regions. London is split into three, while the North West is subdivided into two to make these areas manageable. There is also a sub-committee covering Wales.

1.16 The sub-committees consider all applications made from consultants and academic GPs in their area. They then produce a shortlist for the chairman and medical director to consider, for submission to the main committee.

Sub-committee members come from a wide range of backgrounds, with experience and expertise in numerous areas. They will come to a collective decision on who to shortlist for awards.

National nominating bodies

1.17 The chair and medical director also consider the applications of all those consultants who have been nominated by accredited national bodies, such as the medical royal colleges, the British Medical Association, Medical Women’s Federation and the British International Doctors Association. Those bodies are invited to submit a ranked shortlist in a similar way to that produced by the sub-committees. They are then considered, in consultation with the relevant sub-committee, for submission to the main committee.

A list of national nominating bodies is published on the ACCEA website.
Part 2: Eligibility

Who can apply for an award?
2.1 You can apply for a Clinical Excellence Award if you are:

a) A **fully-registered consultant** holding a medical or dental qualification and employed by organisations such as:

- NHS Trusts
- Local health boards
- Welsh Assembly Government (where you retain NHS terms and conditions of service)
- Universities
- Medical and Dental Schools
- Other bodies, which are approved from time to time as proper employers of consultants for the purposes of the NHS e.g. Wales Centre for Health

b) An **academic general practitioner** (GP) holding substantive contracts of employment as a clinical academic at the equivalent of senior lecturer level or above, with a higher education institute and/or the Medical Research Council.

You will only be eligible if your employer considers that your duties and responsibilities equal those of consultant clinical academic staff.

You can apply for awards, provided you:

- are registered
- work at least half your hours as an academic GP
- are a practising clinician providing some direct NHS services
- undertake at least six sessions on NHS work, or the equivalent of at least 21 hours per week, beneficial to the NHS including teaching and clinical research

c) A consultant who holds an **honorary NHS contract**. Eligibility for awards is defined in the contribution made to the NHS, using wider terms than direct patient care. The entitlement to full eligibility for an award is based on four direct clinical care sessions and two supporting professional activity sessions (see paragraph 8.6 of the Addendum to the Consultant Contract)

For whole-time clinical teachers and research workers with less than the above contribution there are special provisions regarding the proportion of award payable

d) A **consultant subsequently employed as a dean in medicine and dentistry**, on the basis of your work in this post.

e) A **consultant working as an NHS Trust clinical or medical director**. Awards committees will assess your clinical work and contribution over and above expected duties.
If you are a consultant almost exclusively in medical management, ACCEA will consider your application. However, you should undertake some clinical practice to ensure you continue to be eligible for appropriate revalidation by the General Medical Council. Consultants who move out of medical management into a general management role are not eligible for clinical excellence awards.

As a consultant in an NHS trust, you can apply for a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum Award, whether you are subject to nationally determined terms and conditions of service or have agreed terms with an individual trust.

**Eligibility for awards**
2.2 If you already hold Discretionary Points or a Distinction Award and successfully apply for a higher Clinical Excellence Award, you will no longer receive payment from your previous Points or Award.

The guidelines for applying for each level of award are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You already hold:</th>
<th>You can apply for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Award, however applicants are normally expected to have been in post for ten years</td>
<td>Bronze Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze Award</td>
<td>Silver Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Award</td>
<td>Gold Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Award or an A Distinction Award</td>
<td>Platinum Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Distinction Award</td>
<td>Either a Silver or Gold Award (see below*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If you hold a B Distinction Award you may apply for either a Silver or a Gold Award. The normal progression would be from B to Silver. Consultants who are considering applications for a Gold Award are encouraged to discuss the appropriate level with ACCEA’s medical director.

**Consultants and academic GPs nearing retirement**
2.3 Clinical Excellence Awards ensure that distinguished and experienced consultants are properly recognised and rewarded while continuing to work for the NHS. While there is no upper age limit for applications, ACCEA aims to reward continuing, sustained contributions, and so does not expect applications from consultants intending to retire in the near future.

**Who is not eligible to apply for an award?**
2.4 You are not eligible for an award if you are a locum consultant, or a consultant in a general management position (such as chief executive or general manager) who does not do clinical work under a separate contract.
Part 3: The application process

Making your application
3.1 You must complete and submit your own application form.

3.2 If you are applying for a national award (Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum), you will need to download the 2008 national application form from the Welsh ACCEA website at: www.wales.nhs.uk/accea

3.3 The character/word limit has been fixed on each section of the forms to ensure all applicants have the same opportunity to present evidence of excellence.

Support for your application
3.4 Any individual, university or professional body may support your application. To do so, they must write and submit a citation.

3.5 For national awards, the citation form for applications from NHS consultants based in Wales must be downloaded from the Welsh ACCEA website and completed in Word format; it must then be emailed to the address specified by the closing date.

We will not accept applications for national awards without a supporting employer’s statement (citation) from the chief executive. You should explain this to your employer if, for any reason, they have not completed Part 2 of the application on your behalf.

3.6 If you are employed by a university, the employer’s statement should be completed by the chief executive of the trust in which you do most of your clinical work. You may wish to ask your university to complete a citation, so it can comment on the significance of your contribution.

How do appraisals fit into the process?
3.7 To be eligible for an award you must take part in an annual appraisal exercise. It is your employer’s responsibility to confirm whether you have done this in the 12 months before your application.

ACCEA does not need information about the appraisal itself. But you will not be eligible for an award unless your employer confirms that you have undertaken a satisfactory appraisal, fulfilled a job plan, met contractual obligations and complied with the private practice code of conduct. It is important that you explain this to your employer, if they are delaying for any reason.

Deadline for applications
3.8 All applications and supporting documents for national awards must be submitted by 5pm on the 18th January 2008. Applications received after that time will not be accepted, under any circumstances.
Applying for a national award (Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum)

Arrangements for applicants employed by the NHS in Wales

3.9 Applicants employed by NHS organisations in Wales must apply by accessing the Welsh ACCEA website at:

www.wales.nhs.uk/accea

They should download the application form and accompanying optional forms in Word format and must send them, when fully completed, to the Welsh ACCEA Secretariat to: ian.owen@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

All citations must also be sent in this format. All applications/citations/ranked lists must be received in the Welsh secretariat by the closing date which is 5pm on Friday 18 January 2008

Things to remember when applying:

3.10 When making your application, please bear in mind the following:

- Whether completing the form online, or using a Word version, make sure it is intelligible to all those who are going to assess the application. Remember that people reading the application may not know you.

- When filling in the form:
  - follow the steps given in this guide;
  - write names of societies, groups, etc in full;
  - remain within box word limits;
  - use a new line for each entry.

- Do not change the font when completing your application.

- Your application must include an employer’s statement.

- Don’t sign your application electronically, as this may corrupt the forms.

- If you are applying nationally, you must inform ACCEA on the application form of any current or recently concluded complaint against you, or at any time after it has been submitted, if you become the subject of a subsequent complaint. We will take note of any disciplinary process underway and await the outcome so that appropriate action can be taken if necessary. ACCEA will assume you are innocent unless proven guilty. Your application will be processed as normal without regard to the complaint until it is concluded, when the outcome will be taken into account.
Part 4: Assessment criteria

Highlighting your achievements

4.1 You will need to highlight your achievements on the Domain section of the online application form. Your application will be assessed based on your achievements in these key areas.

As you complete this part of the application, please bear in mind the following:

- You need not demonstrate achievement over and above expected standards in all five domains to be worthy of an award. Much will depend on the type and nature of your post. It is possible to win a national award, based on an excellent local contribution.

- Use the domains to draw attention to the most important examples of your local, national and international work.

- Make sure you show when achievements started and ended, or if they are continuing.

- Do not include evidence submitted for an earlier award, unless it illustrates how initiatives have been further developed. This condition may be relaxed with employer-based award applications, when the interval between gaining awards can be shorter and you could expect some overlap with achievements.

Domains are scored by committee members using the following ratings:

- Outstanding 10
- Definitely over and above contractual requirement 6
- Some evidence of over and above 4
- Fulfils contract competently 2
- Not assessable 0

What sort of information should you include in each domain?

4.2 There are five domains, and you should group your achievements accordingly. The following pages show some examples of the type of information you might want to include in each domain, and the criteria against which your application will be assessed.

More specific guidance on scoring is provided to assessors. You can read this by downloading the Guide for Assessors from: www.wales.nhs.uk/accea
Domain 1 – delivering a high quality service

4.3 Give evidence here of your achievements in delivering a service which is safe, quality assured, and where opportunities for improvement are consistently sought and implemented.

This could, for example, cover the following:

- Excellence in delivering your professional commitments. You may refer to validated performance or outcome data. Present this comparatively, and/or with external or peer review reports assessing the quality of your service

- Exemplary standards in dealing with patients, relatives and all grades of medical and other staff. Here you may refer to validated patient or carer surveys, or service feedback

- Excellence in team leadership for which you take sole, rotational or shared responsibility

- A leadership role in relation to clinical governance

On a separate line, give any evidence of the quality and quantity of your service arising out of audit or assessment by patients, peers or outside bodies. For example:

“As a physician I have personally done six clinics a week. Since 2004, I have also done two additional monthly clinics, meeting defined national standards, dedicated to anklyosing spondylitis.”

“Since 2002 I have anaesthetised increasing numbers of patients, each year, to prepare them for elective aortic aneurysm surgery. There have been no complications and no increased length of stay in intensive care.”

“As a general surgeon I do two clinics and three operating sessions a week, matching very well with national outcome measures. I am also on call for emergencies 1:4.”

Domain 2 – developing a high quality service

4.4 Give evidence here of how you have significantly enhanced the quality and safety of your local service(s) more widely within the NHS.

Where possible, give audit or research evidence showing you have improved effective clinical outcomes. You need not have carried out these audits or research yourself. Indicate the developments you have been responsible for, either alone or in a team, with evidence that these have been of high quality and benefit. Do this separately for each post you hold.

This could, for example, cover information about the following:
• Developing and completing relevant audit cycles leading to demonstrable service improvements.

• Analysis and management of risk; this may include examples of specific improvements, reduced risk or enhanced safety.

• Improved service delivery, with a demonstrable effect. For example, how has your service become more patient-centred and accessible?

• Innovation in service delivery, with a demonstrable effect. Is there evidence of improved outcomes or the introduction of major prevention, diagnosis, treatment innovations or care models?

• Development of new health or healthcare plans or policies

• Major reviews, inquiries or investigations

• National policies to modernise health services or professional practice.

Domain 3 – managing a high quality service

4.5 Give evidence of how you have made a substantial personal contribution managing a local service, or national/international health policy development.

Include, for example, information about any change management programme you have led, aimed at improving service effectiveness or efficiency.

You should also list any posts you have held:

• in your trust (e.g. medical director, clinical director, lead clinician or other recognised positions);

• in your strategic health authority area (e.g. chairman or secretary of a standing committee or task force or special adviser)

• nationally or internationally (e.g. officer of committee, task force, college, specialist society or other employing organisation).

For each post, use one sentence to give evidence of outstanding contributions you have made. ACCEA recognises the quality of contributions made in a particular post, rather than the holding of that post in itself.

Just being a member of a committee will not usually be accepted as sufficient evidence of an awardable contribution. If you wish such membership to be considered, you must indicate why on your application. ACCEA is aware that membership of some national or international boards or advisory bodies is itself recognised as a marker of high professional status, but we recommend you still give evidence of your contribution.
Do not include educational responsibilities, such as chairman of a training committee. These should be entered in Domain 5.

Domain 4 – research and innovation

4.6 Use this section of the form to outline your research aims and activity in one sentence – e.g. “my research is clinically orientated and addresses problems arising due to chronic pulmonary disease.”

On a separate line, detail what you have achieved to date and what you hope to achieve, with supporting evidence, such as:

- grants held
- your contribution to the research and supervision of others
- other markers of standing in your chosen research field(s) such as office bearer of learned societies or visiting professorships
- peer-reviewed publications, chapters or books written/edited – please indicate editorial activity
- significant participation in multi-centre research studies, e.g. high levels of recruitment to clinical trials
- actual or potential impact of the research on health service practice, health service policy or on the development of health services.

Domain 5 – teaching and training

4.7 For some applicants, teaching and training will form a major part of their contribution to the NHS, over and above contractual obligations.

If you wish to focus on this aspect, give evidence of excellence that relates to:

- **Quality of teaching** – any medical undergraduate teaching, evidence of student feedback and other forms of teacher quality assessment that show students’ views

- **Leadership and innovation in teaching** – might include:
  - developing a new course
  - innovative assessment methods
  - introducing new learning facilities
  - authorship of successful text books or other teaching media
  - a contribution to postgraduate education and life-long learning
  - contributions to teaching in other UK centres or abroad.
• **Scholarship, evaluation and research contributing to national or international leadership in the educational domain** – might include:
  o presentations;
  o invitations to lecture;
  o peer-reviewed and other publications on educational matters;
  o a contribution to education of other health and social care professions.

• **Institutional success in regulatory body and quality assessment audits** of teaching in which you have played a key role. This could include under- or postgraduate examinations or supervision of postgraduate degree students.

• **Evidence of personal commitment to developing teaching skills** – Higher Education Academy membership, courses completed etc.

• **Evidence of unusual teaching and educational commitment** and workload not recognised in other ways.

You will not be expected to include examples in all of these categories.

**Additional information for Domains 3, 4 and 5**

4.8 For Domains 3-5, you will have an opportunity to include additional material to support your application, if you have been particularly active in a specific area.

4.9 If you are applying for Bronze, Silver or Gold, you can include additional information for either research or teaching – Form D and Form E. If you have been particularly active in both these areas, choose the one in which you have made the most significant contribution.

4.10 For Platinum applications, you also have the opportunity to include more information for Domain 3 using Form F. You can **select two** from Domains 3, 4 and 5 in which to include extra information.
Grounds for an appeal

5.1 Inevitably, some applicants will be disappointed with the final outcome of the awards. You cannot, of course, appeal simply because you disagree with the collective judgement of ACCEA or your employer’s award committee. However, where procedures have not been followed, or there is evidence of the process not being objective, you may appeal for a review.

The following would be considered grounds for an appeal:

- The relevant committee did not consider material duly submitted to support an application (i.e. application and citations).
- Extraneous factors or material were taken into account.
- Unlawful discrimination based on, for example, gender, ethnicity, age.
- Established evaluation processes were ignored.
- Bias or conflict of interest on the part of a committee.

5.2 Any appeal, for national or employer-based awards, must be lodged within four weeks of the award winners being announced.

Appeals for national awards

5.3 Appeals against decisions about national awards (Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum) are handled by ACCEA.

5.4 To appeal, you should put in writing, or email, a review request – stating why you believe the process followed by a committee was unfair.

5.5 ACCEA will seek to resolve any concerns informally, but you retain the right to proceed with a formal appeal. If you do, ACCEA may request a restatement of why you continue to believe the processes were unfair, to ensure only unresolved issues are examined.

5.6 Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, a panel of people previously uninvolved in your application will consider the appeal. The panel will include a professional (medical or dental), an employer and a lay member as chair. They will look at your complaint, the documents setting out prescribed procedures, and a written statement of the procedure actually followed by the committee in question.

5.7 You will have access to all documents for consideration by the appeal, and you will have the chance to make further representations in writing.

5.8 Appeals panels will usually proceed on the basis of the paperwork, without hearing oral evidence or representations. However, the chair of the panel will consider any written applications for an oral hearing.
What happens if your appeal is successful?
5.9 The panel may determine what action follows if your appeal succeeds. If the panel is not able to suggest a specific resolution, the relevant committee will be asked to reconsider the case, taking into account the panel's findings.