

Publication withdrawn

This guidance was withdrawn in January 2025.

The Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) was replaced by the [Advisory Committee on Clinical Impact Awards](#) in 2022.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NATIONAL AWARDS

1. When should I apply for a national award?

There is no fixed time limit that determines whether a consultant should be considered for a National Bronze award. It takes time to develop the over and above achievements necessary to succeed competitively. In practice most successful candidates achieve this after approximately ten years as a consultant. However there are exceptions to this. Details on the length of time new national award holders have spent as consultants have been published in the Annual Reports of ACCEA.

2. What level of Employer Based Award should be held before applying for a national level award?

There is no formal requirement for applicants to hold an employer based award in order to apply for an award in the national process. A few consultants each year are given Bronze Awards without an employer based award, and this is likely for consultants who work in Wales where no employer based scheme is in place although Welsh employers do make commitment awards. Most commonly, however, consultants who successfully apply for a national award will have at least a Level 4 employer based award. Details on the pattern of previous awards held by new Bronze award holders have been published in the Annual Reports of ACCEA. It is unlikely that national awards will be made on the basis of the wider impact of work done directly for employers unless the employer has recognised its value through employer based awards, but where the case for an award lies in work outside the employing organisation this is possible.

3. What level of national award should a consultant apply for?

You already hold:	You can apply for:
Discretionary Points or Level 1-8 Award or commitment awards in Wales or exceptionally no award	Bronze Award through the national process and/or Level 9 from your employer if you work in England
Bronze award or Level 9 Award or B Distinction Award	Silver Award
Silver Award	Gold Award
Gold Award or A Distinction Award	Platinum Award

4. What happens to an award when a Clinical Excellence Award holder retires?

When a consultant retires, Clinical Excellence Awards, once taken into account in payment of pension, cannot be reinstated if the Consultant returns to work.

5. If I leave the NHS for a period to work overseas, can my award be reinstated when I return?

If a consultant with a Clinical Excellence Award or Distinction Award leaves the NHS to work abroad the award will cease. ACCEA will consider reinstating the award subject to the consultant returning to awardable work. Consultants who are away for less than one year will normally have the award reinstated at the same level; consultants who are away for between one and five years can apply to have the award reinstated; consultants who are away five years or more must apply at Bronze Level competitively in the next awards round.

ACCEA considers each case on its merits.

6. I am about to move Trusts, does my award move with me?

Yes this is usually the case. Both national and employer based awards are transferable between Trusts. For national awards you need to submit a signed off job plan for your new role which will be passed to the ACCEA Medical Director for approval. Where the award to be transferred is a national award, you must notify the Secretariat of your change of employer in order for them to redirect payment of your award.. Usually the award is continued as it would have in the previous employment, but in exceptional circumstances where the new job is very different from the old one a shorter review period of 2 years may be required in order to ensure that you are still undertaking awardable work. If the award to be transferred is an employer based award, the new employer should take over the payment of your award and you would be eligible to apply for the next level of award in your new Trust.

7. I am leaving my job in England and transferring to Scotland or Northern Ireland, what happens to my award?

Scotland, Northern Ireland and England have different Schemes. The Secretariats in those countries aim to ensure mutual recognition of awards to facilitate transfers between countries. You should contact the Secretariat of the country to which you are moving to discuss the process. For employer based awards your Trust should notify details to your new employer, who will let you know what they intend to do about payment of your award.

HOW TO APPLY

8. Which form should I use to apply for an award?

Consultants who apply for a National award must apply using the online ACCEA application system www.nhsaccea.dh.gov.uk.

Consultants who are applying for an Employer Based Award should use downloadable word documents. The forms are only accessible on the ACCEA website at www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/05/employer-based-forms/

9. I applied for a national award last year via the online system, I was unsuccessful and would like to apply again this year, does my account still exist? Are my log in details the same?

Yes, your account should still be active and the username and password will be as they were last year. Please be aware that the username and password are case sensitive.


10. I need to submit a renewal application for my existing award but would like to apply for the next level of award at the same time, do I have to make two separate applications?

No. One form can be submitted as a renewal of your existing award and a new application. Please select 'Both' from the drop down list when asked what type of application you wish to make.

11. I am completing my application form – are spaces included in the character count?

Yes, along with carriage returns.

12. I have already prepared my application in a word document, am I able to copy and paste parts of my application from here?

Yes. Underneath each text box in the online application form, there is a row of formatting icons. Select the  icon and paste your text into the pop up window that appears. Click 'insert'.

13. Can I submit my application before I have all of my citations?

Your application cannot be submitted without Part 2 of your application being completed by your Chief Executive or their nominated deputy. Other citations to support your application can be submitted at any stage once you have begun your application, and after you have submitted it, but must be submitted to ACCEA before the deadline.

14. What can I do if my Chief Executive is willing but unable to provide a citation for my application?

It is necessary for a member of the Board to officially approve the application but ACCEA recognises that it is not always practical for the Chief Executive to be the person who provides the citation. For various reasons (e.g. sick leave, change in post-holder) a Chief Executive may be unable to provide a citation for an application. In this case a nominated deputy may provide the citation. However, the Chief Executive retains overall accountability for the process and its contents.

15. My main employer is the university but it does not appear in the drop down list of employers on the online system?

The NHS employer with whom you have an honorary contract must complete part 2 of your application form and so you should select them from the drop down menu on the online application form. However your university may choose to nominate you and/or provide a citation in support of your application.

16. What is the process for university support?

Your application should be considered in competition by a committee which should include consultants with and without a national award and one or more lay representatives. The university will then submit a ranked list via the online system.

17. What do the letters a Chief Executive uses to score the applications stand for?

The Chief Executive uses the following ratings for each domain –

X = No commitment in this domain

U = Has not delivered contractual obligations at a level expected

C = Delivers contractual expectations at a level expected

P = Some aspects of delivery have been clearly over and above expectations

E = Outstanding delivery of service

POST APPLICATION

18. If I am successful in obtaining a National Award when will I hear?

For National Awards, you will be informed after ACCEA's recommendations are agreed. The award is backdated to the preceding April. If you are successful, you should receive a letter from ACCEA and your name will be published on the website. Employers are also informed.

19. Will I be notified if I am unsuccessful in my application for a National Award?

No. Only successful candidates will be notified. You will receive an email notification that the results are available and you can check whether you have been successful or not by going to the ACCEA website.

20. Can I obtain feedback regarding my application?

Discussion of individual applications is confidential to the members of the sub committee. Feedback to individuals can only be sought from the employer, usually the Chief Executive of the Trust. The Chief Executive can seek advice from the Medical Vice Chair of the appropriate regional sub-committee if desired.

21. Can I appeal if I am not granted an Award?

Inevitably, some applicants will be disappointed with the final outcome of the awards process. You cannot appeal simply because you disagree with the collective judgement of ACCEA or your Employer Based Awards Committee. However, where procedures have not been followed or there is evidence of a process failure you may appeal for a review. Please see the Part 6 of the Guide for Applications (new and renewal) and existing award holders or Part 8 of the Guide to Employer Based Awards (employer based awards) for further information on appeals.