

Publication withdrawn

This guidance was withdrawn in June 2026.

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 overall 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?

Clinical Excellence Awards cease on retirement and are consolidated into your NHS pension. If you are re-employed, you will not continue to receive any award payment. If you are re-employed on a permanent contract, you have the right to re-apply to the Scheme. New awards following retirement and return to work are made on the basis of work undertaken since the new contract began and applications will need to demonstrate impact and sustainability.

If you are a distinction award holder who previously held a reinstated distinction award you will have renewed your award on an annual basis until the 2013 awards round, when the award was extended to 31 March 2015. Evidence submitted in the 2013 application will already have gained recognition in the reinstated award. Evidence that has already gained recognition cannot be considered for a new award; consequently, applications for a new award should include evidence of work after the 2013 application. The assessors will disregard any evidence where the dates are unclear and for on-going work it should be clear what has been achieved since 2014.

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 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.

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 a new award at the next level 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. At what level can I renew my award?

From the 2014 National Awards round you can opt to renew your Silver, Gold or Platinum award at the same level or at a lower level; your decision should be based on what level of award you consider your supporting evidence to be appropriate. You will only be scored at the level you have submitted your application. If you are due to renew a Bronze award and are unsure whether you will be competitive at that level, you should consider also applying for a new Employer Based Award from your Trust.


12. If I apply for a new award and I am unsuccessful will my existing award be removed?

No, new applications and renewal applications are treated as two separate applications and therefore scored separately. The scores are not comparable or transferable.

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

Yes, along with carriage returns, spaces count as one character and a carriage return as two characters.

14. 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'.

15. 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. Any citation submitted after you have submitted your application will be added to your application but will not be visible to you.

16. 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 (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.

17. 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.

18. 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

19. Citations

Anyone can provide a citation to do so they need your GMC/GDC number. If you apply for a renewal of your existing award and a new award at the higher level citations can be given for both or either award. The online system will ask which award the citation should be added to.

A citation will add more value if it describes the impact or context of the applicants contributions. Citations that duplicate information in an application or multiple identical citations are unhelpful.

20. What do the letters a Chief Executive uses to score the applications mean?

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

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

Yes, you will be informed after ACCEA's recommendations are agreed. The award is backdated to the preceding 1 April. You should receive a letter via email from ACCEA and your name will be published on the website. Employers are also informed. It is important that the information on your online accounts hold accurate contact information otherwise we will not be able to contact you.

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

Yes from the 2014 National awards round the ACCEA Secretariat has issued letters to all applicants. You should receive a letter via email from ACCEA. It is important that the information on your on line account holds accurate contact information otherwise we will not be able to contact you.

23. Can I obtain feedback regarding my application?

Discussion of individual applications is confidential to the members of the sub-committee. We can provide your domain and overall scores plus the cut off score for a successful award. 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.

24. 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. 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 National Awards Applicants (new and renewal) and existing award holders for further information on appeals. ACCEA no longer deals with employer based awards appeals

25. What happens if my award is not renewed?

You will no longer receive your award or the financial benefit from 31 March 2016, unless you satisfy the provision outlined in paragraph 4.2.7 of the Guide for Applicants..

26. If my award ceases in 2015 round can I reapply for CEA?

Consultants who fail to renew an award in the 2015 Round will not be able to submit a renewal application in a subsequent round. You will, however, be able to apply for a new award if you remain eligible for the Scheme or any successor Scheme. You can apply for a new award at the level of the award that was not renewed or a level below. If an application is unsuccessful it will not be considered at another level.