Radiotherapy-related funding opportunities in the UK

This document summarises the various funding opportunities for radiotherapy and radiation biology research across the UK, as at August 2013.

In particular, the MRC has recently announced a call for proposals in radiobiology – no deadline or end date has been publicised, but we would encourage researchers to take up this opportunity early to maximise the chances of successful funding.

Link to:

- New opportunities
- Programme funding
- Project grants
- Fellowships/training
- Infrastructure
New opportunities

**MRC Radiobiology highlight**

The MRC's Molecular and Cellular Medicine Board (MCMB) wishes to encourage innovative, high quality, investigator-initiated research proposals in radiobiology relevant to human health.

The Board would particularly welcome applications on the following topics:
- Determination of the mechanisms of radiation injury at the molecular, cellular, tissue and organ levels
- Research into the mechanisms of radiation carcinogenesis: individual susceptibility and gene-environment interactions; possible interactions with other carcinogenic agents
- Studies of long term health effects of radiation exposure, particularly radiotherapy treatment
- Development of novel biological approaches for radioprotection and/or treatment of radiation damage
- Development and validation of biomarkers and new therapeutic approaches.

[http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Highlightnotices/Radiobiology/MRC006743](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Highlightnotices/Radiobiology/MRC006743)

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**CR-UK New Agents Committee (NAC) trials funding**

(Early phase drug-radiation combinations)

The New Agents Committee provides a one-step process for selecting new anti-cancer treatments and diagnostics and taking them into early clinical trials.


The NAC reviews, selects and funds novel, unregistered, anti-cancer agents for:
- Exploratory and preclinical development
- Phase I trials, including First in Man
- Combination trials of unregistered and registered agents (including radiotherapy combinations)
- Early Phase II hypothesis-testing clinical trials.
Programme funding

**NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research**

Programme Grants for Applied Research are prestigious awards of up to £2m over a period of 3–5 years, directed towards leading researchers who can demonstrate an impressive track-record of achievement in applied health research. Each programme will fund a series of related projects which form a coherent theme in an area of priority or need for the NHS.

http://www.ccf.nihr.ac.uk/PGfAR/Pages/Home.aspx/

**EP SRC programme grants**

Programme grants are a flexible mechanism to provide funding to world-leading research groups to address significant major research challenges. They are intended to support a suite of related research activities focusing on one strategic research theme. Although it is expected that most proposals will be interdisciplinary and collaborative in nature, they can address key challenges in a single discipline.

http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/routes/capacity/programme/Pages/grants.aspx

**NIHR Health Technology Assessment (HTA) programme**

(For large-scale pragmatic trials)

The HTA programme considers clinical and cost effectiveness ("is the intervention worth it?").

The HTA programme commissions and funds research via four different routes:

- **Standard calls** – commissions research proposals that address specific topics or themes
- **HTA Clinical evaluation and trials calls** – invites research proposals for evaluation studies and clinical trials on topics proposed directly by researchers;
- **Themed calls** – one-off invitations for proposals to fund research in areas where a particular need has been identified
- **Technology Assessment Report (TAR) contract** – specialist assessment centres are contracted by the Department of Health to undertake technology assessment reports on behalf of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and other policy customers.

http://www.hta.ac.uk/funding/index.shtml

Characteristics of the HTA programme:
http://www.netscc.ac.uk/funding/technology_evaluations.asp

Information to guide applicants in deciding to apply to CTAAC or HTA in the first instance:
http://www.netscc.ac.uk/funding/cancer_research.asp
Project grants

**CR-UK Phase III clinical trials grants (CTAAC)**

Cancer Research UK welcomes studies for cancer treatment directed at the tumour such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery with the principle objective of improving survival.

The Phase III Clinical Trials Grants scheme is run through the Clinical Trials Awards and Advisory Committee (CTAAC) which reviews and funds cancer clinical trials. CTAAC accepts investigator-led studies, except first-in-man studies, including:

1. **Phase III/IV** therapeutic trials
2. Large scale **Phase II** trials that are over 2 years in duration and, or greater than £40,000 per annum.


Information to guide applicants in deciding to apply to CTAAC or HTA in the first instance:

[http://www.netscc.ac.uk/funding/cancer_research.asp](http://www.netscc.ac.uk/funding/cancer_research.asp)

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**CR-UK feasibility study project grants**

Feasibility studies, pilot studies and Phase II trials are viewed as purpose-driven preparatory studies, essential for determining the most appropriate questions for the next generation of Phase III trials. These studies aim to assess the activity, feasibility or toxicity of new treatment approaches, and can be used to screen out inactive treatments.

[http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/science/funding/find-grant/all-funding-schemes/feasibility-study-project-grant/?script=true](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/science/funding/find-grant/all-funding-schemes/feasibility-study-project-grant/?script=true)

CR-UK accepts investigator-led studies, except first in man studies, including:

1. Single or multi-centre prospective **therapeutic** (IMP and non-IMP), **diagnostic** or **prevention phase II studies** testing aspects of **feasibility**, **tolerability** and/or **efficacy**.

   Trials may involve more than one NCRN network, or several centres within a network.

2. Academically-led feasibility studies in receipt of educational grants or free drugs from the pharmaceutical industry can be submitted for **endorsement** (industry-sponsored trials cannot be reviewed under this scheme).
**MRC Methods Research for Complex interventions**

The MRC, through the MRC-NIHR Methodology Research Programme (MRP), wishes to fund high quality methods development research to support the use and evaluation of complex interventions in health research.

http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Highlightnotices/MRPmethodsresearch/index.htm

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**MRC NIHR Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) programme**

The EME programme is broadly aimed at supporting 'science driven' studies with an expectation of substantial health gain. The clinical studies are likely to be mostly randomised controlled trials but other forms of evaluation appropriate for the intervention under study will also be supported.

The EME programme examines the efficacy of the intervention (“does it work?”) to the point where, in the example of a drug, a marketing authorisation could be sought or widespread use in healthcare supported. The safety of the intervention is also a subject for the EME programme.

http://www.eme.ac.uk/

Characteristics of the EME programme:
http://www.netscc.ac.uk/funding/technology_evaluations.asp
# Fellowships/training

**NIHR Clinician Scientist Award**

The NIHR Clinician Scientist award is open to researchers working in medicine and dentistry who are capable of leading research in their discipline. The awards provide salary and research costs for up to 5 years post-doctoral training. It is for medical or dental graduates at SpR/Str/GP Registrar level, consultants or those of GP status who have a PhD/MD.

[http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/intetacatrain/ncsas](http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/intetacatrain/ncsas)

**NIHR / Chief Scientific Officer’s Healthcare Scientists Research Fellowship**

Supports healthcare scientists who already have some research experience and wish to bridge clinical or service careers and research. Applicants must have completed their training and have HPC (or equivalent) registration at the point of award. There are award levels for both doctoral and postdoctoral applicants:

[http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/hcs/](http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/hcs/)

**NIHR Fellowships Programme**

The NIHR Fellowships Programme is open to individuals who work in any discipline that contributes to improving health, healthcare or services.

[http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/nihrfellow/](http://www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk/nihrfellow/)

[http://www.nihr.ac.uk/faculty/Pages/faculty_career_opportunities.aspx](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/faculty/Pages/faculty_career_opportunities.aspx)

**MRC Clinical Research Training Fellowship**

The MRC clinical research training fellowships (CRTF) aim to train and develop outstanding medically and other clinically qualified professionals to become rigorous scientists, able to relate their research to clinical medicine and to the improvement of health and wellbeing.

[http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Clinicalresearchtraining/MRC001820](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Clinicalresearchtraining/MRC001820)

**MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship**

The MRC’s Clinician Scientist Fellowships aim to develop outstanding medically and other clinically qualified professionals who have gained a PhD/DPhil to establish themselves as independent researchers.

[http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Clinicianscientist/MRC001823](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Clinicianscientist/MRC001823)
**MRC / Royal College of Radiologists Clinical Research Training Fellowship**

One joint clinical research training fellowship is offered in each calendar year, open to clinical radiologists who are members or fellows of the Royal College of Radiologists, and who also meet the eligibility criteria set out by the MRC under guidance for applicants.

http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Jointlyfundedclinicalresearchtraining/MRC003872

Further information is available on the Royal College of Radiologists website: http://www.rcr.ac.uk/content.aspx?PageID=1450

**MRC Senior Clinical Fellowship**

The MRC’s senior clinical fellowships aim to develop outstanding medically and other clinically qualified professionals such that they become research leaders.

http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Seniorclinical/MRC001824
Infrastructure

**NIHR Biomedical Research Centres**

The NIHR Biomedical Research Units funding will enable NHS/University partnerships to develop their research capacity in the priority area so that they are capable of submitting a credible bid for Biomedical Research Centre status in a future funding competition. The NIHR Biomedical Research Units will be “building on the best”, where the Biomedical Research Centres are about “making the best better”.

http://www.nihr.ac.uk/infrastructure/Pages/infrastructure_biomedical_research_units.aspx

http://www.nihr.ac.uk/files/pdfs/Briefing%20documents/4.3%20Biomedical%20Research%20Units.pdf