Experienced Practitioner Gateway to Clinical Research Practitioner Registration

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Guidance Notes

The Register for Clinical Research Practitioners (CRP) is part of the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) Accredited Register. The Register for CRPs was launched in April 2021 following a successful application to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA).

The CRP Register is set at level 5 of the Skills for Health Career Framework to reflect the level of experience, knowledge and responsibility required for CRP roles. Practitioners can solve problems creatively in a managed rather than supervised environment, relying on their own judgement, actively contributing to service development and often holding responsibility for staff supervision and training. Practitioners in the NHS workforce will normally be expected to hold level 6 higher education as defined by the UK government qualifications framework. These qualifications include degree, graduate certificate, and graduate diploma.

A proposal to open a process to widen access to the CRP Register to experienced practitioners without level 6 qualifications on a time-limited, exceptional access basis was agreed by the AHCS in September 2022. A successful application to the gateway will provide the opportunity for experienced CRPs to progress to submit an application to the CRP Register in the normal way. The Registration process is exactly the same for CRPs who have passed through the gateway as it is for their colleagues who have level 6 qualifications.

Who is the gateway for?

- The gateway is for experienced CRPs who are able to evidence that they have a minimum of three years working at the level of practitioner. All applicants to the gateway will need to discuss their intended application with their line manager and colleagues to ensure that they are working at the right level before submitting their application.

What is the application process?

- Applicants need to be part of the AHCS CRP Directory before starting their application. Being part of the Directory will demonstrate commitment to the CRP community and provide access to up-to-date information and opportunities to connect.
- Applicants need to discuss their intention to apply to the CRP Register via the Gateway with their line manager and confirm their eligibility through engaging with guidance documents a Applicants will also be asked to submit evidence about their educational qualifications and ongoing learning and development that will support their application
- Prepare the required documentation to include:
    - o Experience and Education template including line manager confirmation signature
    - o Current job description
    - o Level 5 Certificate (if applicable)
- Complete the required fields on the AHCS Experienced Practitioner Gateway Portal and upload documentation.
- Pay the £10 non-refundable administrative fee

What happens after the gateway application is received by the AHCS?

Applicants will be emailed by the AHCS portal system to confirm receipt of their eligibility application and may be asked to provide further information if the submission is incomplete.

Each application will be reviewed and follow one of two routes:

Route one: Meets gateway criteria without panel assessment

Applicants that are able to provide evidence that they have been working for a minimum of 5 years at the level of practitioner and have achieved level 5 education or equivalent (such as a foundation degree or HND) will receive confirmation by email of eligibility to progress to apply to join the CRP Accredited Register.

Route two: Panel assessment

Applicants with less than 5 years' experience working at practitioner level and without level 5 education will go for assessment by a panel to determine gateway eligibility. The panel will include a representative from the AHCS and two representatives who have knowledge and experience related to the CRP role and career pathways.

Applicants will be informed of the date of their panel assessment and when they can expect to hear the outcome.

In cases where the panel concludes there is insufficient evidence to meet gateway criteria, applicants will be contacted by the AHCS and provided with information about the decision. Applicants will be able to appeal panel decisions using the published process.

Applicants that meet the gateway criteria will receive an email confirming access to progress with their application to join the Register.

Is payment required to apply to the Gateway?

There will be a non-refundable administration fee of £10 to help cover the cost of gateway applications.

When should I submit my application to the CRP Register following a successful gateway application?

The AHCS requires gateway applicants to send in their application to join the Register within six months of confirmation that they have passed through the gateway. This timeline is intended to support the continued growth and sustainability of the CRP Register and demonstrate your commitment to patient safety and your own professional development.

Why is the gateway time limited?

The CRP Register is part of a wider strategy to support and enable the development of CRPs as an established and valued part of the research delivery workforce, now becoming an identified professional group. Training and educational pathways are in development that will support CRPs to access career development opportunities, and these will align stepwise with meeting Register requirements. The gateway is intended to support access to registration for well-established and experienced practitioners in the current workforce. Therefore, the gateway will remain open for a two-year period only, until January 2025. It is anticipated that experienced CRPs working currently and keen to establish their personal professional registration will apply through the gateway in the timeframe allowed.

For further information please contact crpadmin@ahcs.ac.uk