

Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards

# NHS Consultants' Clinical Excellence Awards

Scheme 2008 Awards Round



## Guide for Award Holders

This guide is available online at the ACCEA website  
[www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea](http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea)

The online national awards application system is available at  
[www.nhsaccea.dh.gov.uk](http://www.nhsaccea.dh.gov.uk)

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

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## Preface: What does this guide cover?

This guide is for any consultants or academic GPs who already hold a Clinical Excellence Award or a Distinction Award.

It contains a short introduction, to remind you of the aims of the Scheme and how it works. It then covers how a change in your circumstances can affect your award and how it is reviewed, and what the guidelines are for applying for higher awards.

Please use it as background information, and as a reference guide if you apply for another award

It 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](http://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](http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea)

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# Part 1: Introduction

## **The Clinical Excellence Awards Scheme**

**1.1** The Clinical Excellence Awards recognise and reward NHS consultants and academic GPs who perform 'over and above' the standard expected of their roles. Awards are given for quality and excellence, acknowledging exceptional personal contributions.

**1.2** To be considered for an award, consultants and academic GPs 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.

## **How does the Scheme work?**

**1.5** There are 12 levels of award. Levels 1-8 are awarded locally and Levels 10-12 (Silver, Gold and Platinum hereafter) are awarded nationally.

Level 9 can be awarded locally or nationally. To avoid confusion, this guide will always refer to the national Level 9 award as Bronze.

**1.6** Applicants may apply for both a national Bronze and an employer-based Level 9 in the same year. If an applicant finds out they have been successful at the employer-based level, before the national recommendations are made, they must let the secretariat know, to avoid duplication. There is no difference, financially or otherwise, between the two awards.

**1.7** ACCEA and its regional sub-committees recommend individuals for Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum awards. Applicants for Levels 1-9 are recommended by Employer-Based committees.

**1.8** ACCEA monitors the employer-based scheme and publishes an annual report on the awards that includes information on their distribution.

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

**What does the Scheme reward?**

**1.10** 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 well-being, 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 the 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 are applications assessed?**

**1.11** 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 3 of this guide, and you can also view them at [www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea/annual.htm](http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea/annual.htm)

**1.12** 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.

**1.13** The sub-committees and employer-based 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.

**1.14** 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**

**1.15** 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.

**1.16** The Committee advises Ministers on award nominations proposed by the Chairman and Medical Director, based on recommendations from sub-committees and national bodies.

#### *Regional sub-committees*

**1.17** 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 and the North West is subdivided into two, to make these areas manageable. There is also a committee covering Wales.

**1.18** The sub-committees consider all applications made from consultants and academic GPs in their area, and produce a shortlist for the Chairman and Medical Director to consider for submission to the main Committee.

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*

**1.19** The Chairman 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, Women's Medical 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.

#### *Employer-based committees*

**1.20** Every year, each NHS organisation employing consultants eligible for an award appoints an employer-based awards committee.

**1.21** These will contain between 10 and 15 people, including consultants, management and lay members.

**1.22** Smaller organisations have the option of linking with a neighbour if they do not have enough people to form a viable committee. ACCEA recommends that employers should aim to ensure that their committees cover at least 50 eligible consultants, combining with other organisations, where necessary, to achieve this.

## Part 2: Change in circumstances

The following changes to your circumstances may affect the payment of your Clinical Excellence Award:

### **Change in specialty**

**2.1** If you stop practising in the area for which your award was granted, your case will be subject to review by ACCEA or, in the case of employer-based awards, the relevant committee.

### **Working in general management**

**2.2** If you stop practising in the area for which your award was granted, and move into a full- or part-time general management post, you will need to speak to your employer and consult ACCEA about whether you can continue to receive the full monetary value of your award. You would not normally receive payment of your award whilst you are in full-time general management.

**2.3** If you return to clinical work after a period in full-time general management, your award may be reinstated after a review.

### **Unpaid leave**

**2.4** Awards are not paid during any period of unpaid leave. If you take leave for longer than a year, the question of reinstating your award will be subject to review by ACCEA or the relevant employer-based committee.

### **Secondments**

**2.5** If you are on full-time secondment to a post with a non-qualifying employer, your award will be suspended.

**2.6** You should speak to your employer before you begin your secondment to make arrangements for protecting the award and continuing to collect it after your secondment has finished.

**2.7** If the secondment is longer than a year, the question of whether to reinstate the award will be subject to review by ACCEA.



**2.8** If you are on secondment to the new Independent Sector Treatment programme, whilst retaining your NHS employment rights, you are still eligible to receive your award.

#### **Prolonged absence from the NHS**

**2.9** Where consultants, for any reason, have not practised their specialty in the NHS for more than a year, ACCEA will review whether the award should be reinstated.

#### **Leaving the NHS during an award round**

**2.10** Payment for ACCEA awards granted in the autumn is backdated to 1 April of that awards year.

**2.11** In order to qualify for an award, you must have been employed as a consultant in the NHS on the 1 April. If you are in post, the award will be payable from that date until the contract terminates.

**2.12** We cannot grant an increased award in the 2008 round if you leave the NHS before 1 April 2008.

**2.13** Consultants sometimes leave the NHS before the awards round is completed. If you submit a completed application by the closing date and are still in your NHS post on 1 April, the application will be followed through to the conclusion of the process. If successful your award will be backdated to 1 April and payable until you leave the NHS.

#### **Effect of retirement on Clinical Excellence Awards**

**2.14** Awards cease on retirement and are consolidated into pension. If you are re-employed, you will not continue to receive award payment.

#### **Effect of retirement on Distinction Awards**

**2.15** If you return to work within 12 months of retirement, and continue in the same post or one equivalent to that held when the award was granted or last renewed, you should submit an application to ACCEA for reinstatement of your award. This is the same as the Review form, and is available in Word format from the ACCEA secretariat.

**2.16** Your application should demonstrate that you will continue to work over and above contractual requirements, to the level of your existing award.

**2.17** ACCEA will then decide whether the existing award can be continued for a specified period of time. This is subject to usual review arrangements, unless you retire again before the next review.

Each case is judged on its merits.

**Part-time employment**

**2.18** If you are working part-time, your award will be paid pro-rata.

## Part 3: Applying for higher level awards

### Guidelines for applying for a higher award

**3.1** If you already hold a Distinction Award or Discretionary Points and successfully apply for a Clinical Excellence Award, you will no longer receive payment from any previous Points or Award.

**3.2** If you already hold a Clinical Excellence Award, you can apply for a higher level award. The guidelines for applying for a higher award are as follows:

You already hold:	You can apply for:
Discretionary Points or Level 1-8 Award	Bronze Award through the national process and/or Level 9 from your employer
Bronze Award or Level 9 Award	Silver Award
Silver Award	Gold Award
Gold Award or an A Distinction Award	Platinum Award
B Distinction Award	<b><i>Either</i></b> a Silver or Gold Award (see below*)

\*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.

### How to apply

**3.3** You may apply for progression through the Scheme up to Level 9 via your employer.

**3.4** As consultants do sometimes succeed at national level before they reach Level 8, you may apply for a Bronze Award and Levels 1-9 in the same year. All applications for Bronze Awards will be assessed on their merits and there is no minimum level of local award required.

**3.5** The value of your existing award will form part of your new one. So, for example, if you have a Level 7 award, and successfully apply for a Level 9, you would get the value of the Level 9 award – not the combined total of both.

**3.6** When applying for a new award, please refer to the Guide for Applicants, to ensure you follow the correct process. You can download this from the website at [www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea/2008-applicantsguidetoscheme.pdf](http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea/2008-applicantsguidetoscheme.pdf)

## Part 4: Award reviews

### Timing of reviews

**4.1** National Clinical Excellence Awards and Distinction Awards granted from the 1989 awards round onwards are subject to five-yearly reviews. It is your responsibility to ensure that your award is reviewed at the correct time.

The ACCEA Secretariat will endeavour to notify you and your Chief Executive to remind you when your review is due. However, there may be occasions when we are unable to contact you.

**4.2** The five-year review ensures that ACCEA only rewards consultants who continue to meet the performance standards required. In reaching a view on renewals, we also consider any adverse findings from complaints, disciplinary or professional proceedings.

Awards can be reviewed at any other time. If your employer feels there is good reason to do so, they have a duty to inform the Chairman and Medical Director of ACCEA.

### How will the review work?

**4.3** As part of the review, you will need to complete an application form, setting out how you continue to meet the criteria for holding an award at the appropriate level. When applying for renewal you should demonstrate, by reference to any achievements since the original award or last review, how you continue to meet the criteria for the Scheme.

**4.4** You should focus on activity within the five-year period leading up to the review. You should only include information on earlier activity to demonstrate how your contributions have evolved.

**4.5** If ACCEA deems the paperwork you have submitted for the review is insufficient for award renewal, it will invite you to resubmit an application the following year. In cases where the evidence you supply is unclear the Chairman and Medical Director can also recommend to ACCEA that your award be renewed for less than five years, giving you a chance to demonstrate you still meet the relevant criteria for your award level.

If you still do not submit sufficient evidence, a recommendation will be made to ACCEA that your award be withdrawn or downgraded.

**What part does your employer play in your review?**

**4.6** The Chief Executive of the organisation where you work will need to complete **Part 2** of the review form, and indicate whether:

- > they support the continuation of the award;
- > you continue to work to the standards of professional and personal conduct required by the General Medical/Dental Council (GMC/GDC);
- > there has been any disciplinary action by your employer or the GMC/GDC, arising from a complaint that directly concerns you.

**What happens if your award is withdrawn or downgraded?**

**4.7** If, following a review, it is considered that you no longer merit your award, the Chairman and Medical Director will recommend to ACCEA that we withdraw or downgrade it.

**4.8** Before referring such cases, the ACCEA Secretariat will contact you, explaining the reasons. You then have the opportunity to make a written submission to ACCEA before the final decision.

**How will the withdrawal of an award affect your salary?**

**4.9** There is a system of salary protection for awards that are downgraded or withdrawn. However, in exceptional circumstances ACCEA may completely withdraw an award and its financial component.

**4.10** The financial value of your former award will be frozen until your basic pay (plus the value of any lower award if the original award was downgraded) has caught up with your mark-time earnings.

**4.11** Your basic pay for this purpose will include any underlying Discretionary Points you hold.

### **What if you are soon to retire?**

**4.12** If your expected retirement date follows the five-year review limit by only a short period (e.g. up to six months) ACCEA may use its discretion to renew the award until that date, even if this results in an extension slightly beyond the limit.