



# Treialon Cymru

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## Trials Cymru

## Associates Membership Programme – FAQs

Find out more about the Associate Members Programme

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/centre-for-trials-research/collaborate-with-us/associates>

*Q: Who will the mentors be?*

A: All mentors will be from the Centre for Trials Research. They will have either taken part in the mentoring training that is currently being rolled out in CTR or they will have previously received training that meets the same learning outcomes.. They will be selected by a matching process based on the mentees that apply and each mentor would only have one mentee from this Associate scheme at a time.

*Q: What criteria will be used to select Associate Members?*

A: Associate members will be selected based on the fit between their proposal and what the Centre is able to offer: Where we are unable to match a mentor with the applicants proposal we will offer feedback and signpost to other CTUs or potential opportunities elsewhere. We hope to attract a range of Associate Members from different professional backgrounds, at different points in their career from across Wales. Similarly we have promoted the mentoring training across all resource groups within CTR to support the staffs professional development and build our capacity to meet the needs of the Associates. The first year of the programme will give us an idea of the breadth of interest in the scheme and whether we need to actively promote it in particular stakeholder groups. If we have more applications than we can meet, then we will prioritise based on i) professional and geographical diversity ii) other available opportunities iii) people who do not currently work with the Centre.

*Q: Can you give examples of the types of things people might ask for?*

A: Everybody's programme will look a bit different depending on their aims but some examples are provided at the end of this FAQs.

*Q: Will applications from staff in regions/organisations within Wales identified as having low levels of research activity, or in roles typically poorly represented as research leaders, e.g. non-clinical, be prioritised/encouraged to apply?*

A: We encourage applications from all strands of health and social care. We would invite informal discussions with anyone who feels that they would be interested in being a part of this to help best support their applications. On review, we will look to appoint Associates that represents the breadth of our activity

*Q: Will rejected applicants receive feedback ?*

A: Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback and, wherever possible, signposting to other opportunities.

*Q: The full list of partners needs to be clear. Does this also include HEI's?*

A: Yes. The Associate Member Programme is open to all stakeholder organisations in Wales involved in health and social care including those working in research and HEIs.

*Q: This could link in with the Welsh Clinical Academic Track programme.*

A: The Associate scheme could potentially be used as a stepping stone to applying for the Wales Clinical Academic Track (WCAT) fellowship programme as well as other opportunities such as those offered by the Health and Care Research Wales Faculty and by NIHR. We plan to work on a map looking at the interconnections between these types of opportunities to help people navigate their way through to something that fits for them.

*Q: Lack of financial support may limit buy in and clinical staff may struggle if no dedicated time.*

A: We are not able to offer financial support but we hope that the scheme can be a stepping stone to funded opportunities if that is what the Associate is looking for. We appreciate how difficult it can be for practitioners to have ring-fenced research time. We have designed the Associate Members Scheme in such a way and with a level of time commitment that can be considered to be part of their personal professional development time

*Q: How will this scheme differ from the NIHR Associate PI scheme?*

A: The NIHR Associate PI scheme is usually linked to particular studies, is dependent on the fit between the study and the practitioner and lasts for six months, so these two schemes offer a

different type of opportunity. However, it may be that finding a place on the PI scheme could be one objective within the mentoring plan if that would meet the needs of the CTR Associate.

*Q: How will you ensure that there is geographical parity, so that Swansea or Bangor associate members are made aware of opportunities/links/trials units locally?*

A: The three aspects of Treialon Cymru will all be working closely with the other CTUs in Wales so we would definitely aim to link Associate Members up with any opportunities available to them in Wales.

*Q: What will be expected of the Associates?*

A: We hope that the Associates will act as champions within their service for the CTR and the CTUs within Wales, spreading the word about the work that they do. In terms of what you would need to do as an Associate, it will include getting sign off from your line manager, meet regularly with your mentor, maintain a log of activity and provide feedback to the Centre on your experience as part of our continuous improvement.

*Q: Any way to give an indication of likely time commitment (min/max) and what determines duration?*

A: We envisage a minimum of the equivalent of half a day per month to ensure the Associate can get something from the experience. While we don't prescribe a maximum, Associates will be expected to discuss realistic commitments from the Centre and with their own line manager. The duration of membership will be decided as part of the mentoring plan drawn up between the mentor and mentee. It will be based on the needs the mentee has identified and the ability of CTR to provide the opportunities to meet those needs and likely timeframe to achieve this.

*Q: Any contact point for people to ask questions/discuss eligibility directly?*

A: Sue Channon (channons2@cardiff.ac.uk) is the academic lead for the scheme and she is happy to talk through any questions about the scheme with potential applicants

*Q: How will this fit within the developments of the Faculty as there seems some common ground to develop/avoid repetition with?*

A: We will be working closely with the Faculty as we hope there will be opportunities for synergy between the two programmes

## **Exemplars for prospective applicants**

- 1. Someone in a researcher/practitioner/policy focussed role with no experience of a Clinical Trials unit:**

They have an interest in how applied health and social care research affects their work (maybe in providing information, or potentially as a “next step” for their work) and they would like to learn more: They may have heard about CTUs, but have no knowledge of trials or the work of a CTU.

For people in this situation we could offer snapshots of different aspects of the CTR to give them an overview which they can discuss with the mentor to consider the fit with their work. Examples of this would be access to staff meetings (to understand the breadth of work); divisional meetings that fit most closely with their area of interest (to understand how their work might dovetail with the work in a CTU); time attached to a team at different points of a study eg developing an application (to understand the components of the application and how an idea goes from a question to a design) or, if for example they are interested in impact, time with a team at dissemination stage; If they are interested in the operational aspects of the CTU they could observe specific meetings such as the study adoption group to see how the CTR takes on particular projects and they could spend time with a particular resource group. There would be regular “debriefs” with the mentor to support them in synthesising the information and ensuring it is giving them what they want from the process.

## **2. A practitioner with some experience of research but wanting to understand how a trials unit could help them progress their work further**

They have research ideas, they may have held small grants, completed a PhD but they do not feel equipped to take the next steps.

For someone in these circumstances we could offer any elements of example 1 as a form of orientation (depending on their experience to date ) but for this group the focus would be on the process of an idea from early stages through to funding. This would provide them with insight into the role of a CTU in supporting a practitioner CI or co-applicant. By shadowing a project in development they would gain insight into the steps involved, the funding context, the team process and the roles of different members of the team. In addition to their mentor they could spend time with an experienced CI, team members from different resource groups and project teams further on in the study cycle. The mentor sessions would include discussion of the operational processes involved but also thinking about potential opportunities outside the CTR to help the person progress which could include signposting to other infrastructure groups or funding opportunities they could apply for.

## **3. Someone looking for a greater in-depth knowledge of a particular area of expertise within the CTR**

This person may have significant research experience, they could be a clinical academic or working within a Higher Education Institution but feel that there are areas of work within the CTR that they could benefit from learning more about. For example it could be that they want to integrate more public involvement into their work or want to ensure that they are enabling a more inclusive approach to their recruitment strategy. In this type of scenario the programme would link the associate member directly with the appropriate person/team who would provide exposure to their work in CTR and also support the associate in developing their own ideas in this particular area of activity.

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