



‘Developing the best research professionals’

**Draft Report of the UKCRC Sub Committee
for Nurses in Clinical Research (Workforce)**

Consultation response form

Dates and further information:

The consultation period for this report is 12 weeks
from **Monday 8th January 2007** to **Friday 30th March 2007**

A report summarising responses to this consultation will be written and then made available to download from the UK Clinical Research Collaboration web site (<http://www.ukcrc.org>)

If you have any queries please contact Philippa Yeeles at the UKCRC
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If this document is not accessible to you and you would prefer it in another format please contact Philippa Yeeles on 020 7670 5452.

Completing the form:

Please read through the document and enter your comments as prompted.

To fill in this form:

1. Please save the document onto your hard drive.
2. Use the tab key to move between questions.
3. Text boxes will automatically expand to take your response.
4. Tick boxes can be checked/unchecked using the space bar or mouse.

Please complete and return this form as a Word attachment to an email.
Send it to consultation@ukcrc.org

THE DEADLINE FOR RESPONDING TO THIS CONSULTATION IS FRIDAY 30TH MARCH 2007

RESPONDER DETAILS:

Name of responder (person): Simon Vincent

Name of organisation (if appropriate): Cancer Research UK

Your health profession:

Nature of your response:

Organisational response

(representing the views of the named group or organisation):

Yes No

Personal response

(representing the views of one or more individuals):

Contact details in case of queries:

Telephone: 02074385332

E-mail: simon.vincent@cancer.org.uk

- The Summary Consultation Report will be a public document made available on the UKCRC's web site. If you would prefer your comments only to be reported anonymously then please tick this box.
- Please tick this box if you would like to be notified by email when the Summary Consultation Report becomes available on the UKCRC web site.

Structure of the Consultation Response Form:

Questions 1 & 2 invite you to comment on the report as a whole.

Questions 3 - 13 focus on the recommendations in the report.

They are grouped into the following areas:

- A. Education and training [Q.3 – Q.8]
- B. Facilitating careers [Q.9 & Q.10]
- C. Better information on nursing researchers [Q.11 & Q.12]
- D. Implementation [Q.13]

You are asked to indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each recommendation and invited to expand on your response.

Question 14 invites members of the Allied Health Professions to consider the recommendations and comment on their potential applicability to the academic research careers of the Allied Health Professions.

Question 15 invites you to comment on any other aspects of the report that are not included elsewhere in your response.

Q.1 To what extent do you think that the report accurately reflects present and future challenges in this area?

The box will expand to fit your text:

Cancer Research UK supports nurses through a number of different funding streams, and we fund nurses in almost all of the categories listed on page 7 (see later for details). We are particularly keen to support more nurses as principal investigators on research grants, or through fellowships. However, it seems that there are very few nurses in a position to apply for such grants. We have anecdotal evidence for why this should be so, which seems to be in line with the results of this comprehensive report.

We have been told that the biggest barrier to nurses applying for fellowships, and other research grants, is the lack of a defined career structure to allow them to combine research with nurse training or clinical practice. Unlike our doctoral fellowships for medical trainees, most of the nurses applying to do a PhD, through our Nurse Research Training Fellowship, have already had a substantial practice career. They may have to leave this behind, with no guarantee of a return, in order to undertake a research degree. One consequence of this is a large number of nurses undertaking a PhD part-time, in order to reduce the career and financial risks associated with leaving their current post to take up a full-time PhD.

At the post-doctoral level we have a Clinician Scientist Fellowship, which is open to other professions allied to medicine, including nurses. For clinicians, the fellowship supports both their research and clinical activities, and the joint career path is recognised by both the university and the NHS employers. Although we encourage nurses at post-doctoral level to apply for this fellowship, they do not currently have the same recognised dual career path. As well as making it difficult to retain their clinical practice during their research, this can also lead to a difference in salary between those nurses that stay in practice and those that enter academia, another disincentive to undertake research.

As a result, we understand that academic nurses fall into two broad categories; those that come to research quite late, and undertake projects that relate directly to their previous clinical practice, and those that enter academia soon after qualifying and pursue an almost exclusively academic career. The former tend to apply for our Nurse Research Training Fellowship, the latter tend to apply for project and programme grants through Cancer Research UK's Population and Behavioural Science Committee (a committee that supports research in cancer prevention and control and in behavioural research relevant to cancer), although there is some overlap in these divisions.

A secondary difficulty in pursuing a research career, as mentioned by our current nurse fellows, is the lack of more senior role models and mentors at all stages of their career. There are so few centres of academic nursing that very few nurses are exposed to nursing research during their training. Whilst doctors might experience research at all stages of their career, from medical school right through to interactions with clinical academics during specialist training, there are few such opportunities for nurses, as the report makes clear. Even if nurses do want to go into research, there is a lack of information about the opportunities. There is rarely

anyone around them during training and clinical practice that will encourage them or offer them a place in a research group to undertake research.

We know that many of our doctors embarking on an independent research career are there because of the encouragement and practical support from one key clinical academic. There are not enough such role models for nurses.

We think that this report addresses these two problems. The focus of the report seems to be on developing nursing careers to enable more to reach the stage of pursuing independent research, which we agree is important. However, there are many nurses working in medical research who might not want to develop their career to become a PI in their own right. We hope this report and its implementation will also address the needs of the much larger number of nurses in research that need the training and support to develop in these supporting roles (see also answer to Q2 below).

Q.2 To what extent do the recommendations create an appropriate and integrated pathway to develop a high quality and sustainable workforce of nurses in clinical research?

The box will expand to fit your text:

Cancer Research UK funds nurses in a variety of research roles. A small number of these are in senior research roles as principal investigators, running their own research projects, winning research grants, and having been supported through fellowships. The recommendations appear to lay out a well-defined career path which would give such nurses the stability to pursue this career.

However, we also need nurses in many other roles. We note that the decreasing number of planned opportunities at each of the four Award Schemes is designed to produce nurses with different levels of research experience that would be suitably trained to undertake research in other contexts. We agree that the health service and HEI sector will benefit from their experience, as stated in Recommendation 1. However, we would not wish any nurse undertaking such valuable roles to feel that they were somehow second-class research nurses. Similarly, we currently recruit nurses in non-PI roles from a range of backgrounds, and we would not want such nurses to feel that they were no longer suitable for the important roles in our clinical research facilities or as part of other research programmes.

Our own figures show that a large number of the nurses that we fund are working as part of teams running clinical trials or are providing the infrastructure to support trials. We recognise that many of the initiatives recommended would provide training for nurses in these areas (such as more opportunities for Masters courses or professional doctorates). We hope that this career path would be seen as valuable in its own right. We recognise that this is stated in the report in the text accompanying recommendation 1. We hope that this will be emphasised even more strongly to

ensure that nurses in the necessary team roles are not seen as less important to the overall research effort than those aiming to become independent researchers.

A. Education & training

Recommendation 1

We recommend the establishment of a coordinated range of research training opportunities endorsed by all four countries of the UK. These training opportunities should be organised at four sequential levels (Award Schemes 1 – 4), as set out in the following recommendations.

Q.3 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

We feel that a well-defined career path for nurse academics is the single most important factor in developing nurse-led research. The proposed structure seems appropriate, although we would welcome further clarification on how such research training might fit with either training or continuing clinical practice.

A. Education & training

Recommendation 2

We welcome the opportunities for nurses presented by the UK Clinical Research Networks and clinical research facilities. We recommend that the rapidly developing training programmes emerging within this infrastructure should be seen as one of the preparatory steps towards the new training path, for those who have experience of working as research nurses and who wish to develop their skills further. It will be important that this rapidly increasing cadre of research professionals has access to clear advice and mentoring to ensure that those that wish to move on to an MRes and beyond, can do so.

Q.4 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

We welcome the desire to provide a career path both for nurses new to research and to those that might already have experience research, and who might then want to pursue their own independent research career.

A. Education & training

Recommendation 3

MRes or MClinRes (Award Scheme 1)

We recommend that up to 100 career clinical academic training positions be funded annually for graduate nurses. These positions will be of two-year duration (or part time equivalence), and 50% clinical and 50% academic in composition. Such posts will have a clear academic postgraduate component resting within a well defined vocational training programme. A set of Core Modules should be developed nationally which would form part of the curriculum for all Award Scheme 1 holders.

Q.5 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

We welcome the aim of having a training scheme that combines clinical practice and academic study, that will be recognised by both the HEI and NHS employers. Cancer Research UK already has a funding scheme to support Masters or Diploma students, and we have in the past provided core support to Masters courses. We would welcome the chance to support any such courses, or the individual nurses that successfully apply.

In our discussions with our current nurse fellows it was mentioned that the standard required to obtain a PhD level fellowship is very high, and that few nurses have had the chance to gain the experience necessary to compete for such fellowships. We would therefore welcome any system or training scheme that allows more nurses to get involved in research earlier in their careers.

However, whilst Cancer Research UK is willing to pay for the training necessary for individuals to carry out research, we have traditionally been reluctant to support any courses which would be considered a standard part of an applicant's professional training. The positions described here may well be on the boundary between that which is fundable and that which is not. We would wish to focus any support for such positions towards those nurses that have shown a clear intention to pursue a research career once they have their MRes or MClinRes.

A. Education & training

Recommendation 4

PhD/Professional Doctorate (Award Scheme 2)

We recommend that up to 50 early career clinical academic appointments are funded annually for a period of five years. These positions will be of three-year duration (or part time equivalence) and allow students to undertake a PhD or Professional Doctorate programme of study.

Q.6 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

Cancer Research UK already funds a number of nurse researchers undertaking a PhD through our Nurse Research Training Fellowship. We would strongly welcome any scheme which allows such nurses to retain clinical practice through an honorary clinical contract. However, we feel that three years (full-time) is the minimum time needed to complete a PhD, and so if this period was to include clinical work as well, it may be necessary to increase the length of these appointments.

We also welcome any move towards encouraging nurse researchers to undertake independent research in settings other than an academic department of nursing, as described in the explanation for this recommendation. We hope that the other health professions will give such an effort their full backing, and provide support and encouragement for the nurses in their teams that want to develop their own research. We hope that this will go some way to addressing the lack of mentors and role models mentioned in the response to Q1.

The Professional Doctorate would provide a good grounding for nurses entering academia, to give them experience of the research process whilst remaining focused on their clinical practice. As such, Cancer Research UK would support an increase in such schemes, although we do not currently have a route by which we might fund such programmes.

A. Education & training

Recommendation 5

Post-doctoral Career Fellowships (Award Scheme 3)

We recommend that up to 20 Post-doctoral Career Fellowships are funded annually. These positions will be of three-year duration (or part time equivalence) to allow appointees to undertake advanced research, clinical and education roles and develop their programme leadership potential.

Q.7 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

Cancer Research UK is keen to fund more nurses undertaking post-doctoral research. Unlike at PhD level we do not have a specific scheme for post-doc nurses. Applicants are instead encouraged to apply for either our Clinician Scientist Fellowship, which is advertised as also being open to allied health professions, or our post-doctoral fellowship in behavioural research. Alternatively, nurse PIs can apply for a project grant which can be used to support their own salary. However, there are drawbacks to all three routes.

The Clinician Scientist Fellowship is the most flexible scheme for providing funding for the applicant's salary, and it gives the longest and most generous support. However, it is a stipulation that medical professionals holding such a fellowship must continue to undertake at least 20% clinical training or practice. This can be negotiated relatively easily for doctors but is more difficult to arrange for nurses.

The post-doctoral fellowship in behavioural research does not require such a clinical commitment, but at present the standard package of support would not necessarily cover a senior nurse salary. Since many nurses undertake a PhD having already reached a relatively senior level as a nurse, this scheme is not always the most appropriate way of continuing their research support. However, we are currently revising the scope of this scheme to make it more attractive to health professionals, including nurses, as well as non-clinical post-docs.

Finally, the project grants offered by our Population and Behavioural Science Committee can be used to support any research in behavioural sciences

related to cancer, and most of our nurse-led research falls into this category. To be a PI it is necessary to have some previous experience. It is of course possible for a nurse to be employed as a post-doc on someone else's research grant, but this route is once again restricted by the lack of senior nurse PIs that can act as the supervisor for the post-doctoral nurse.

Cancer Research UK therefore welcomes this recommendation. This initiative could establish a defined route by which nurses embarking on an independent career could gain post-doctoral research experience in a way that is recognised nationally and is acceptable within the context of continuing clinical practice. We would be very willing to delay any revision of our current schemes for nurses to ensure that what we offer is compatible with this recommendation and any subsequent implementation plan.

A. Education & training

Recommendation 6

Senior Clinical Academic Fellowships (Award Scheme 4)

We recommend that up to 10 Senior Clinical Academic Fellowships for nurses are funded annually. These positions will be of three to five year duration (or part time equivalence) and allow appointees to develop more advanced research, clinical work and education skills and develop their role as leaders.

Q.8 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

Much of the response to Q7 applies here. Cancer Research UK does not have a Senior Nurse Fellowship, but instead encourages nurses to apply for the Senior Clinical Research Fellowship. However, as above, this fellowship does require the fellow to retain some clinical practice alongside their research.

All of our fellowships that allow researchers to establish an independent research group, including the Senior Clinical Research Fellowships, have recently been lengthened to six years. We feel that this is the minimum time needed to establish a research group and generate research results. It is difficult to assess the ability, or even potential, of a new PI in three years, particularly if the research is combined with clinical practice.

B. Facilitating careers

Recommendation 7

We recommend that career flexibility, specifically the ease of combining research and clinical practice throughout a career, must be enabled through the introduction of sessionally based contracts of employment that allow nurses to work as clinicians while also undertaking other roles as researchers and/or educators.

Q.9 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

Given the comments raised in earlier answers, we wholeheartedly agree with this recommendation.

B. Facilitating careers

Recommendation 8

We recommend that in discussion with key partners, a well articulated system of mentoring is developed for nurse researchers and educators, including emerging researchers.

Q.10 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

Cancer Research UK's Clinician Scientist Fellowship scheme is one of the clinician scientist schemes approved by the Academy of Medical Sciences, and we have therefore incorporated its mentoring requirements into our scheme. We have also extended a similar mentoring arrangement to all of our fellowship schemes, and we have seen the benefits that such arrangements can bring to the fellow. We would welcome any central, national system for mentoring and we will ensure that our own systems conform to any recommendations.

C. Better information on nursing researchers

Recommendation 9

We recommend that NHS Careers Advisors must be made aware of and promote the full range of career opportunities that are possible for qualified nurses. Careers advice must include opportunities for developing excellence in clinical research, education and leadership.

Q.11 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

Cancer Research UK would be delighted to provide information about our fellowship schemes for nurses, and about career opportunities in our research facilities and research programmes.

C. Better information on nursing research

Recommendation 10

We recommend that a single data source be developed to provide information on labour market intelligence that relates to nurses engaged in training to be researchers and educators.

Q.12 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

We would welcome such intelligence, which would help us develop and target our existing support for nurses. This would also help us as we plan whether to introduce any new funding streams for nurses.

D. Implementation

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the implementation and delivery of these recommendations and their associated actions should commence without delay, with a view to achieving the recommendations outlined in this report within 5 years.

Q.13 Do you agree or disagree with the above recommendation?

Please indicate your views using the grid below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Recommendation 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to help us better understand your response

(the box will expand to fit your text):

We hope that these recommendations will be implemented as quickly as possible. We hope that there would be a representative from the cancer nursing research community involved in any implementation.

Q.14 'Developing the best research professionals' focuses on the training needs of the nursing workforce in clinical research. However, the UKCRC also wishes to consider to what extent the recommendations in the report could be considered a blueprint that could also be applied to the research workforce of the Allied Health Professions?

If you are a member of the Allied Health Professions, it would be helpful if you could indicate:

- a) Which of the recommendations could be suitable for your profession?**
- b) Are there any issues specific to your profession that would not be addressed through these recommendations?**

The box will expand to fit your text:

Q.15 Any further comments?

Please use this box to provide any other comments you wish to make:

Cancer Research UK's support for nurses

Cancer Research UK supports a large number of nurse posts through its grants and its direct support to clinical units across the UK. These fall into nine broad categories (see also appendices submitted).

Clinical infrastructure (this includes tissue banks, support nurses for clinical programmes, and any nurses not directly linked to a specific research programme or clinical trial: 15 posts

Clinical trials (this includes all Phases of trial, and any research project directly associated with the trial: 24 posts

Clinical Trials Units (this includes nurses employed within Cancer Research UK's Clinical Trials Units and by the trials networks): 15 posts

Programmes in population or behavioural sciences (this includes all programmes funded by the Population and Behavioural Sciences Committee, along with other programmes in epidemiology or genetic epidemiology): 31 posts

Clinical programmes (this includes nurses on all other research programmes): 24 posts

Projects in population or behavioural sciences: 18 posts

Other project grants: 5 posts

Information nurses: 7 posts

Nurse Research Training Fellows: 2 posts

Total: 141 nurse posts

Research projects led by nurses

Nurse Research Training Fellows:

1. Pauline Hyman-Taylor, University of Nottingham

A prospective, longitudinal study, to investigate the impact of changes in service provision, for the follow-up of women with primary breast cancer

2. Isabella White, University of Surrey

Development of an integrated psychosexual clinical assessment strategy for

women receiving pelvic radiotherapy

Population and Behavioural Sciences Committee grants

1. Dr Sara Faithfull, University of Surrey

Project grant: Behavioural urinary management for prostate symptoms: a phase II trial for testing a self-management intervention for urinary problems following prostate radiotherapy

2. Professor Karen Cox, University of Nottingham

Project grant: Feedback of trial results to participants: A literature review and stakeholder survey

3. Dr Carole Willard, University of Manchester

Project grant: An exploration of the factors that contribute to physicians' treatment decisions when patients have advanced cancer

Cancer Research UK provides core support at the level of three bursaries a year for three years to the following Masters programme:

Professor Alison Richardson, King's College, London
MSc Advanced Practice (Cancer Nursing)

About Cancer Research UK: Cancer Research UK is the world's leading independent organisation dedicated to cancer research. With a total scientific spend of £257M, in the financial year 2005-06, we carry out world-class research to improve our understanding of cancer and find out how to prevent, diagnose and treat different kinds of cancer. Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of more than 3,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.