

NIHR South Coast INSIGHT Programme (SCIP)

Frequently Asked Questions for Managers

1. What is NIHR SCIP and why should I support my staff member to apply?

NIHR SCIP is a personal funding award that allows early career staff to complete a Master's in Research at one of several participating Universities in the South-Central Region of England. Staff completing the NIHR SCIP programme will develop knowledge and skill in research and improvement methods. Learners will be supported throughout their studies to apply their learning to their professional practice, to inform local service improvement initiatives or identify priority areas for future research.

2. What does the award fund?

The SCIP award includes funding of full MSc tuition fees at one of the participating Universities. The SCIP award also includes a stipend payment of £20,780 in total. **This is a fixed amount**, that is determined in accordance with UKRI rate recommendation. The stipend amount will be paid to the applicant (or by separate negotiation may be paid to the applicant's employer) via a SCIP University. Payment is *typically* made retrospectively and in quarterly installments.

3. Who should apply for an INSIGHT award?

All early career health or social care professionals registered with one of the eligible regulatory professional bodies at the time commencement on the programme are welcome to apply. Early career is defined as **up to five years whole time equivalent** spent working in their registered profession. Career breaks (e.g., maternity leave) are excluded from the calculation of whole time equivalent.

4. What are the eligible professional bodies?

Applications are welcome from undergraduate or postgraduate students/early career professionals working towards registration/ registered with one the following regulatory bodies (not including doctors and dentists):

- Academy for Healthcare Science
- General Chiropractic Council
- General Dental Council
- General Medical Council
- General optical Council
- General Osteopathic Council

- General Pharmaceutical Council
- Health and Care Professions Council
- Nursing and Midwifery Council
- Social Work England
- UK Public Health Register

Applicants must be registered with one of the eligible professional regulatory body's by the time they start at University.

5. Can an applicant study part time?

Yes, applicants can choose to study full time (completion of masters degree within one year) or part time (completion of masters degree within two years).

6. Can applicants work alongside study?

Yes, applicants can work alongside study, but they do need to be able to attend lectures and complete course assignments. When considering support of your member of staff it is helpful for them to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the course and be able to discuss this with you so that you can plan for the different commitments. Applicants must select one of the following work–study combinations: work full-time/study part-time, work part-time/study part-time, or work part-time/study full-time. Studying full-time while working full-time is not permitted and applications proposing this combination will not be accepted.

Case-based example of how to balance clinical work and study commitments: An early career professional working within a community-based NHS Trust

Joy is an early career healthcare professional, who graduated in 2024. Joy works within an NHS community-based Trust, employed on a Band 5 contract and is completing her masters part time over two years.

Based upon a mid-point Band 5 salary, the £20,780 stipend will cover Joy's salary costs for 0.25 WTE (1 and a quarter day per week) over a two-year period.

For a mid-point Band 6 the funding would cover 0.4 WTE (2 days per week) over one year or 0.2 WTE (one day per week) over two years.

Things to consider when planning:

- Joy's studying commitments may vary from month to month as she completes each module. This may mean she needs more study time one month and less another where she may be able to work more clinical hours
- Study days may change from module to module depending on which day of the week they are scheduled.

It is strongly advised that you discuss an application with your employee AND employing organisation Heads of Department/ other as appropriate at the soonest possible time. When discussing an application, you should confirm employer support to apply and how you agree to manage ongoing support if successfully awarded funding.

Please contact the SCIP team if you would like support discussing work and study arrangements (email scip.insight@soton.ac.uk).

7. Can the stipend be paid to an employer?

It may be possible to agree reallocation of the stipend award to the applicants' employer, to support them to undertake study and allow your organization to arrange some backfill/or other alternative of time. Please discuss this with the applicant and the SCIP team for further detail.

Each of our participating University courses have a slightly different master's programme. Below is a summary of the programmes:

University	Course name and link	Teaching structure
University of Southampton	MRes Clinical and Health Research University of Southampton	Module based learning that is taught on campus, on various weekdays, and includes some self-directed off-campus study.
Oxford Brookes University	MSc in Applied Health Research Oxford Brookes University	Module based learning that is taught on campus, typically on Saturdays only, and includes some self-directed off-campus study.
University of Portsmouth	MRes Science & Health University of Portsmouth	Module based learning that is taught on campus, on various weekdays, and includes some self-directed off-campus study.
University of Winchester	MRes Health Science 2025 University of Winchester	Module based, distance learning (does not typically require any campus attendance), typically on weekdays.

Southampton Solent University	MRes Master's by Research Solent University	Project based learning, that may require some campus attendance for short bursts of learning or project supervision meetings.
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8. Are international applicants eligible to apply?

Yes, in the 2026 round of SCIP international applicants are eligible to apply **but will be required to self-fund the difference between home and international tuition fee rates.** International applicants, with support of their employers, are expected to check and confirm that take-up of an award **will not breach any visa conditions.** Inability to pay the fee difference or confirm visa compliance may result in the award offer being withdrawn.

9. What happens if the applicant is awarded a SCIP funding offer but not a university place or vice versa?

The SCIP team will confirm that an offer of study will be made by the applicants first choice University before making a funding offer. If all funded places at the first choice University have been filled, AND the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for SCIP funding place and has indicated that they are happy for us to share their application with the other participating Universities, they may be offered funding and place of study at one of the other participating Universities. Applicants can indicate on the application form if they would like to be considered for funding at *only* their first-choice university *or* any participating university. We encourage applicants and their employers to carefully consider the study requirements of each programme when completing this question on the application form.

This is year 2 of a 3-year funding programme; if an applicant is unsuccessful in their first attempt they may choose to apply in the next round of funding. Funding applications open once annually.

10. How do applicants apply?

Applicants should complete the online [2026 South Central INSIGHT Programme \(SCIP\) funding application form – Fill in form](#)

or use the QR code below:



11. When is the application deadline?

The deadline for receipt of applications is **23.00 GMT on Monday 6th April 2026**. Applicants must have submitted an NIHR SCIP application AND an application directly to their first choice of university by this deadline.

12. Where can I find more information?

More information is available on each of the participating University websites (see table above). Specific queries can be sent to scip.insight@soton.ac.uk. You can watch a webinar recording about NIHR SCIP here:

<https://brookes.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=893fd00b-1309-4660-8022-b3b700c3ef31>

Thank you for considering support of your staff member to apply to the NIHR SCIP programme.