Frequently Asked Questions about the Clinical Excellence Awards (CEA) Scheme

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General Questions

1. Who is eligible to apply for an award?

   For Awards payable from 1 April  |
   Consultants should be in the grade on or before 1 April
   2005    |
   2006    |
   2007    |
   2008    |
   2009    |
   2004    |
   2005    |
   2006    |
   2007    |
   2008

2. Who is eligible to apply for a higher level award?

   There is no fixed time limit that determines whether a consultant should be
   considered for a national Bronze award. It takes time to develop the over and
   above achievements necessary to succeed competitively. In practice most
   successful candidates achieve this after about a decade as a consultant.
   There are exceptions to this however.

3. What level of employer based CEA should be held before applying for a national
   level award?

   At present, no guidance has been issued on the level of employer based CEA needed
   before a consultant can be considered for a national Bronze award.
   This is to allow consultants to establish which level of employer based CEA is
   appropriate to them since there is no automatic translation from Discretionary
   Points (the term used for an employer based level award under the former scheme) to
   CEA. In practice consultants who successfully apply for a national award will
   normally, have at least a Level 4 CEA and will have been in post for about ten
   years (or more). However exceptions occur.

4. What level of award should a consultant apply for?

   (a) Consultants who hold level 1-8 CEAs can only be considered for an employer based
       or national Level 9 (Bronze) CEA.
   (b) Those holding a B Distinction Award for approximately 5 years could
       consider applying for a Level 10 (Silver) or 11 (Gold) CEA.
   (c) Those holding an A Distinction award for approximately 5 years could
       consider applying for a Level 12 (Platinum Award).

Postscript

1. There will be no more Distinction Awards allocated. If a B Award holder
   applies for a Clinical Excellence Award and is successful then he/she moves to the
   Clinical Awards Scheme at either Level 10 or 11 and leaves the Distinction Awards
   Scheme.

2. Consultants who have Discretionary Point(s) or a Distinction Award will
   continue to be in receipt of them until they retire (subject to review of a Distinction
   Award) or they apply for, and are granted, a CEA.

3. A consultant who holds a Distinction Award returns to work within one year of
   retirement, he/she can continue to receive the award (pro rata), which would be
   funded nationally. For this to occur the consultant must provide evidence of
continued awardable work over and above the prevailing contract. In all such cases an application form, which covers the new arrangements, needs to be submitted to ACCEA, and this can be "in-year", i.e. outside the application and review timetable, if necessary. Please note that this applies only to Distinction Awards.

5. What happens to an award when a Clinical Excellence award holder retires?

When a consultant retires Clinical Excellence Awards, once taken into account in payment of a pension, cannot be reinstated if they return to work.

6. Do I keep my award until I retire?

National level CEA are held until retirement subject to satisfactory review. A detailed review form must be completed four years after an award has been made and every five years thereafter. In the review form a consultant must demonstrate that their performance continues to meet the high standards that the award recognises.

7. Does the consultant receive a reminder about when to complete a review?

ACCEA endeavours to remind consultant award holders when a review is due, but the onus is on the award holder to ensure they complete a review on time.

Employer Based Awards

8. Are consultants who are awarded a CEA one year eligible to apply for another in the following year?

Yes but the consultant must be able to demonstrate a step change since the last award was granted.

9. Can a consultant jump to a higher level, i.e. from nothing to level 5?

Exceptionally, provided the award is granted within the rules in the guide.

10. Can consultants who have a Level 8 apply for another employer based award?

Yes. These consultants may apply for a employer based Level 9 award. This is equivalent in all respects to a national Level 9 (Bronze) award.

11. How does a trust calculate the number of awards and the total minimum investment?

The minimum investment is calculated by multiplying the number of eligible consultants by 0.35 to arrive at the number of units of award and then by multiplying this by the value of a Level 1 CEA in that year.

12. What is the minimum level of investment that NHS organisations should spend on employer Based Clinical Excellence Awards?
The annual minimum level of investment in employer based Clinical Excellence Awards must be the same as would have occurred under the former system of Discretionary Points and calculated on a ratio of new awards to eligible consultants of at least 0.35. This minimum investment level was agreed with the profession and must not be refused on purely financial grounds.

ACCEA takes the view that NHS organisations should spend the minimum investment each year. Awards must be made according to ACCEA criteria. If the properly constituted Employer Based Awards Committee decides that, in year, there are insufficient awardable applications, this must be reported to ACCEA. The sum unspent must be carried forward and added to the minimum investment the following year.

13. **What constitutes an eligible consultant?**

The local pool of eligible consultants per trust is calculated by counting those consultants in post on April 1st each year and who hold up to level 8 CEA or 8 Discretionary Points. Consultants who hold Distinction Awards and National Clinical Excellence Awards are not included.

14. **Can a NHS employer spend more than the minimum investment?**

This is possible, provided the awards are granted within the rules in the Guide.

15. **Are the lower awards worth the same amount?**

Levels 7, 8 and 9 are a higher value than 1-6 (see [awards amounts table](#) on ACCEA website).

16. **What happens to the funding vacated when an employer based award holder gains a national award?**

The primary commitment is that the annual level of investment in new awards at local level should be at least the same as occurred under the previous system of discretionary points. There was no requirement for Trusts to recycle discretionary points relinquished when a consultant was granted a national award. Discretionary points were introduced in 1995 with the following guidance. "...there is no requirement that monies freed as a result of retirements, resignations and individuals being granted B awards be recycled back into discretionary points at individual employer level. Any such reductions have already been discounted nationally in determining the minimum number of points to be awarded at employer level."

When holders of locally awarded CEAs retire, resign or are awarded a national award there is no requirement that their Trust return that funding to a local CEA ‘funding pot’. This is the same arrangement as applied with the former discretionary points scheme.

National Awards are recycled (paragraph 31 of the August 2003 CEA framework document available from the DH website describes this).

[The new NHS consultant reward scheme](#)
17. What happens when a consultant has two contracts of employment?

There is a single scheme for Clinical Excellence Awards (CEA). Although Levels 1-9 are administered by employers, it is not a separate Scheme for each employer. Consequently, there can only be one level of award held by a consultant, not a separate one for each contract of employment.

Where a consultant has a contract with one employer but also does work in another trust for which that employer is reimbursed, then the relevant employer-based awards committee (EBAC) would be the employer, for the purposes of the award application, rather than the other trust, although the system should ensure that the views of the other trust are known.

Where consultants are employed by more than one relevant employer, there ideally should be an agreement between employers in advance, as to how the awards will be considered. This could be based on delegated authority to one employer to consider the application and should include some consideration of liability for the financial consequences. In the absence of such agreement, the chief executives of the organisation should take responsibility for resolving the immediate issue and agree the process for subsequent applications. This is not a matter for the EBAC itself to resolve.

18. What if a consultant is awarded an employer based Level 9, are they automatically excluded from the national levels?

No. An Employer Based Level 9 is equivalent in all respects to a Bronze Award. A consultant with an employer based Level 9 is eligible to apply for a national level 10 or 11 if they consider that their work since the Level 9 Award has justified further recognition.

19. If someone applies for a national level 9, are they automatically excluded from applying for an employer based level 9?

No. A consultant can apply for an employer based and national level 9 in the same year. If a consultant successfully applies for an employer based Level 9 they will not be considered for a national Level 9 and vice versa.

20. Who pays for level 9 CEAs

The employer is funded for payment of employer based level 1-9 awards. ACCEA is funded for payment of national level 9 - 12 awards.

How to apply

21. Which form should I use to apply for an award?

Consultants who apply for a national award must apply using the online ACCEA application system. Consultants who are applying for an employer based award should use downloadable word documents. The forms are only accessible on the ACCEA website at:

http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/accea/forms.htm

Successful candidates will be notified in the Autumn after the main meeting of ACCEA (normally held at the beginning of October). The list of successful candidates is also published on the website. Employers are also informed.
22. If I am successful in obtaining a national award when will I hear?

For national awards, you will be informed after ACCEA’s recommendations are agreed in October. The award is backdated to the preceding April.

23. If I am successful in obtaining an employer based award when will I hear?

For employer based awards, employers will notify successful candidates.