

TOP TIPS

Clinical-Academic Careers

Introduction

A **clinical-academic** is defined as a qualified healthcare professional who also works in academia, typically in research, teaching, or both. Clinical-academic careers (CAC) present a unique set of opportunities for the individual, their patients, and their organisation. This leaflet aims to provide our top ten tips for a successful clinical-academic career.

Tip 1. Different career paths

Every clinical-academic career is different. There is no clearly defined path that you must take and no right or wrong way to progress your career. The proportions of someone's clinical and academic responsibilities will be different for everyone and their situation. You can carve your own CAC but use opportunities and schemes to help you meet your goals. (eg. [NIHR Programmes](#) [NHS Education for Scotland](#) [CSO Scotland - Fellowships](#) [Health and Care Research Wales](#))

Tip 2. Networks are important

Developing wide, supportive networks and genuine links is vital for your CAC. Include contacts inside and outside of your organisation. Consider networking with local, regional, national, and international organisations. Build a relationship with at least one Higher Education Institute. Consider clinical networks, such as special interest groups. It can take time to develop these networks to have genuine, productive relationships.

Tip 3. Identify a mentor

Mentorship can be invaluable to develop your professional or personal CAC goals. Identifying someone who has the right skills or experience to support your aspirations. You can have more than one for different areas of development. Be ambitious and look outside your organisation, region, or profession to have the best person(s) for you and your situation. Be a mentor too.

Tip 4. Use strategic documents

Use national strategies that have been developed to support research and CAC in non-medical healthcare professionals. Strategies from Health Education England (HEE), National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) or other professional groups, are useful to justify CAC development. Consider how these documents can be applied locally to your organisation or speciality, at all levels of practice, to develop business cases.

Tip 5. Develop local examples

Case studies are a great way to show the impact of clinical-academics. Real-life examples illustrate achievements and tangible outcomes of these roles and their benefits to patients. Look for examples within your organisation, profession, or specialism. Case studies can also inspire others. Consider how you curate and disseminate them to connect with the intended audience. ([HEE Case Studies](#) Scroll to the bottom of this page for case studies.)

Tip 6. Identify funding streams

Identification and application to the right funding stream for you takes careful consideration and lots of planning. There are many funding streams available. Each has a specific remit, talk to the funder, and apply for the right one for you and your career stage. Some focus on career development and are distinct from study grants. Contact your research department early.

Tip 7. Promote yourself

Social media or having an online presence can be an excellent tool to support your CAC development and promote your research. It can develop links or networks and widen your circle of influence. Your visibility as a clinical-academic can be useful for your career development as well as your research, so consider opportunities to improve this and extend your reach.

Tip 8. Incorporate research everywhere

Take every opportunity to build research activities into your clinical role. Consider journal clubs, posters, seminars, presentations, principal investigator/recruitment roles, as opportunities. Professional development conversations/appraisals should incorporate your CAC aspirations and activity. Managerial support is important, and these formal processes can facilitate those conversations. Clinical-academic roles are not always straightforward and can take time and effort to be settled.

Tip 9. Dissemination to stakeholders

Dissemination is critical for your CAC and doing so via different routes can support new skills. Get creative to discuss your research in different ways and build your CV with publications and presentations. Tailor your dissemination to the [target audience](#). Patient

and public involvement is fundamental to research and clinical-academics are well placed for these activities.

Tip 10. Broaden your skills

Clinical-academics require breadth of skills. Resilience and tenacity are as important as research methods and clinical abilities. Use a framework to identify strengths and training needs and confirm attainment of professional registration requirements. For example, the [advanced clinical practice framework](#) could illustrate your CAC goals/focus and role structure. Skills will develop at different rates and time points in your CAC.

For contact details about your local **cahpr** hub and for further information about **cahpr** please visit our website <http://cahpr.csp.org.uk/>

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