Mary Seacole Development and Leadership Awards 2014/15

Frequently asked questions

1. Relating to application

- Do awardees have to be members of a BME community?

The short answer is no.

The focus of the development award is on undertaking a project or other educational/development activity, to enhance patient/client-focused care that benefits the health needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities.

Health care professionals from all ethnic and cultural groups have a part to play in this. The ethnicity of the awardees and the nature of the project undertaken as part of the award may provide particular insights or perspectives which help towards these aims and the diversity of insights are valued. The **ABSOLUTE** here is the need to add value and contribute to enhancing the health and life chances of BME people.

The leadership awards are about influencing the development of diverse health at a service, policy or educational level.

- Can the award be used to fund my degree, PhD or other training programme?

No, the purpose of the award is not to fund training programmes. However, an award project may contribute towards part of a training programme.

- Can I complete my project as part of a first degree, PhD or other training programme?

Yes, the project can be completed as part of another training programme or research development activity. However, it is important that there is a clear delineation between where the contribution of the Mary Seacole project starts and finishes relative to the generic training programme. A report and study plan has to be produced for the steering committee which identifies this.
• **Do I need to be in ‘clinical’ practice?**

The award is open to nurses, health visitors and midwives who have a ‘live’ registration with the NMC. This does not seek to identify ‘clinical practice’ such that diversity of the situations in which health care professionals work is restricted. For development awards particularly it is envisaged that at least 50% of the awardees’ time is spent in clinical practice. The key issue is being able to demonstrate how your proposed project/development activity will enable you to contribute to the enhancement of patient/client focussed care. If this is not obvious from your proposal or within your employment role, you will need to make this explicit in your application.

• **I am an agency worker, can I apply?**

You must be an employee working in public services *involved in the delivery of care or involved in work that informs healthcare practice* within the NHS and has the support of his/her employer. Therefore, a privately employed agency worker would not be eligible. But a bank worker consistently employed by an NHS hospital may be eligible.

• **Are there any banding limits for applicants?**

No, providing an applicant meets the employment criteria at the point of their application, there are no band or grade limits.

• **Do I have to have an idea for my project before I apply?**

Yes you do. This has to be sufficiently developed so the awarding committee can make a judgment as to the appropriateness of your study. A proposal for the project must be submitted in your application. This will form part of the decision as to whether your project fulfils the criteria for the award and to evaluate it for funding.

• **What is the difference between the ‘Development’ and ‘Leadership’ award?**

The development awards may be more suited to those at the beginning of their service/research development career. It is a good opportunity to try out ideas for undertaking a project or other educational/development activity. The aim of this award is to increase the capabilities of individuals in shaping the health of BME communities.

The leadership awards are about much more than personal endeavours, they also require the individual to influence development of diverse health at a service, policy or educational level, involving not just their own professional activities but those of others. Their projects or the applications of the findings are far more wide reaching than the boundaries of their current place of work. In that sense it may be more suited to those ready to take ‘the next step’ in policy/service/educational development and innovation.
• Can I apply jointly with a colleague?

No, at present joint applications will not be considered for interview. This is because the funds relate to one project and the development and support of one individual. This restriction will be kept under review in partnership with the funding organisation.

• Can I put forward a collaborative project?

Both the Development and Leadership awards stipulate a focus on a *specific* health care project with defined outcomes and timescales.

2. Relating to holding an award

• If I am successful in gaining an award can I change my project?

No, this cannot be changed because the project you put in your application is the one for which you are given the award. However, often proposed projects for the Mary Seacole award (particularly research based studies) may need some refining as the research study progresses. This is the normal process and is indeed part of the learning and skills development that takes place during completion of the award. However these changes have an emphasis on refinement, to help focus the study within the time constraints and the parameters of the award.

As the award will be made for a 'proposed' project, it is envisaged that the broad nature/focus of the study will remain unchanged once the award is made.

• What support will I receive?

A steering group with representation from all the participating organisations provides support and oversees the completion of the awards. The steering group organises a range of training days for awardees to build the skills needed to successfully complete the award.

On an individual basis each of the awardees is allocated two ‘critical friends’ to act as mentors who may also be part of the steering committee. One provides ongoing support and monitors progress during the award, while the second is to provide advice and feedback relating to the academic/written quality of the research project and the project report in particular.

• I see I would be required to do a presentation at the award ceremony in the year following completion of my award, what will the presentation entail?

It is important that there is the opportunity for the funders, prospective applicants and ‘incoming awardees’ to have the opportunity to see the contribution successful Mary Seacole awardees have made to enhancing the health care and benefitting the
health of diverse communities. The presentation of the awardees provides an important vehicle through which this is done.

The focus of the presentation then is to showcase the project within the guidelines provided. There is no need to review or present the life of Mary Seacole or the nature of the award given in recognition of her work. The audience is there to see what YOUR contribution has been and HOW the award has helped you to recognise and celebrate your own work in this area.

- Are there any other benefits of gaining a Mary Seacole award?

The Mary Seacole awards are as much about personal development for the winners as they are about completing a service development/research project. As a previous winner myself I can wholeheartedly say it has given me the opportunity to develop my own abilities in networking, personal agency and opened up a wealth of opportunities which continue to shape my continuing professional and personal development. Ultimately the chance to get involved in a range of activities and events will present themselves – it is up to the individual to take advantage of these and shape their own development and contribution to the health and wellbeing of diverse populations in the future.

It is important to recognise that the Mary Seacole awards are highly prestigious. As an awardee you will be subject to much publicity and need to recognise that you will be seen as a role model for Mary Seacole. This therefore brings benefits as well as responsibilities to the award holder.

- What If I can’t complete?

It is important that before you apply you are clear about the commitment you are undertaking. Conducting a study requires much dedication and hard work. It cannot be successfully completed without this. Please ensure that you have support from your line manager/employer. They will be asked to agree to this before funds are released to the awardee. However, it is your responsibility to complete the project in time and to budget. Failure to complete the project may result in a repayment of funds.

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