

Guidance Note: Applying for the NHS RESEARCH PASSPORT - Staff

What is the Research Passport?

The Research Passport scheme was developed by NHS Research & Development (R&D) and the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) in order to streamline the process for non-NHS staff to apply for permissions to carry out research in the NHS¹.

The Research Passport system provides:

- One set of checks on a researcher conducting research in the NHS;
- One standard form completed by the researcher and his/her employer, and validated by an NHS organisation;
- A completed Research Passport which is presented to all the relevant NHS organisations;
- Faster study start-up

Who does not need a Research Passport?

You will **not** need a Research Passport or an honorary research contract if:

- you are employed by an NHS organisation; or
- you are an independent contractor (e.g. GP) or employed by an independent contractor; or
- you have an honorary clinical contract with the NHS (e.g. clinical academics); or
- you are a student on a healthcare placement as part of your studies

Who needs a Research Passport?

If you are not in any of the above categories and you have no contractual relationship with the NHS, you will need a Research Passport if you are proposing to carry out research in the NHS. If you are unsure whether you require a Research Passport please consult the R&D office at the Trust where you intend to carry out your research.

The Research Passport form asks for verification that the following checks have been made:

- Disclosure and Barring Service clearance
- Occupational Health clearance
- Personal Identification
- Two references
- Evidence of professional registration (if appropriate)
- Evidence of qualifications

Some of these checks will have already have been carried out by the University. In other cases, additional checks will need to be carried out to meet NHS requirements.

NOTE: You should apply for your Research Passport as soon as possible, as can take some time for DBS clearance and / or other checks to be obtained (usually between 6-8 weeks).

¹<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/best-practice/research-passport/>
RP Guidance V.5, November 2024 ML

DBS Checks, Standard or Enhanced

A standard DBS check is required if your research involves supervised/controlled access to NHS patients in the course of normal research activities.

An enhanced DBS check is required if your research will involve regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of NHS patients.

In addition, a Protection of Children Act (PoCA) check will be required if the research will enable you to have regular contact with children in the course of normal research activities.

How do I apply for a Research Passport?

- Confirm that you do need a research passport (consult local R&D office, or the R&D office where you plan to carry out your research).
- Download the [Research Passport Application Form](#) and the NHS guidance: [Completing the Research Passport Form Instructions](#).
- Complete sections 1–3 of the Research Passport form.
- Ask your line manager / supervisor to complete section 4.
- Once you have downloaded the form, you should commence arrangements for completing the necessary DBS (Criminal Records Bureau) application form AND / OR Occupational Health assessment. Whether you need either or both of these checks depends on the type of research you are intending to carry out in the NHS. For more information see the NHS [Algorithm of Research Activity and Pre-Engagement Checks](#). If you need further advice about which checks you will require, contact your local or lead R&D office.

- ***How do I apply for a DBS check:***

Staff will need to contact Human Resources to apply for a DBS check. See below for contact information:

DBS application for Staff Human Resources Compliance Email: HRcompliance@sussex.ac.uk

Students should contact their School Office for local arrangements for DBS checks.

You will need to provide **three** forms of ID as part of your application for a Standard/Enhanced DBS check, one of which will need to confirm your current address.

The most common combination is a Passport, Drivers Licence and Bank Statement, however please contact HR Compliance to discuss this further.

NOTE: Once your DBS check is complete, you will receive a certificate in the post as confirmation.

- **How do I apply for Occupational Health Clearance:**

To comply with NHS Occupational Health (OH) assessment requirements, if it is identified that you require OH clearance for your research passport then an additional OH assessment may be required on top of the University of Sussex pre-employment OH assessment.

NOTE: If you are new to the University of Sussex, when you fill in your pre-employment OH questionnaire you need to clearly indicate on it that you will be applying for a research passport.

Staff should have an Occupational Health Assessment undertaken by Heales, they should contact HR Business Services team via hadmin.staffservices@sussex.ac.uk to start this process. Occupational Health will then contact you if they need any further information and / or to arrange any further health assessments and immunisations / blood tests that you may need. When this process is complete, you will be notified when to collect your Evidence of Occupational Health Clearance. You will need to show this document to HR when you get your RP application form signed (see below)

- **How do I organise Final Checks and Sign off of Section 5 of the RP application form**

Once the DBS check has been completed and you have your Occupational Health Clearance (if applicable), bring your RP form along with the evidence specified in the form* to get Section 5 signed. You then need to contact HR. See below for contact information:

Section 5 sign off for Staff Human Resources Compliance Email: HRcompliance@sussex.ac.uk
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***NOTE:** the evidence you need to bring with you will depend on your status and the checks required for the type of research you are carrying out. If not held on record, both staff and students will usually need to **bring their passport** for photographic ID and this will also be required to provide **proof of right to study / reside in the UK**. You may also be required to provide **two references**, and evidence to explain any **gaps in employment** over the past three years, which are over six months long.

What do I do once my Research Passport Application Form is completed? You should take your completed Research Passport form with attachments and a synopsis of what your research will involve to the lead NHS organisation.

Once the form has been authorised by one NHS organisation it becomes a valid Research Passport that you can provide to other NHS organisations when you require an Honorary Research Contract or Letter of Access.

AND FINALLY: Once your Research Passport / Letter of Access has been issued, please bring to HR so that a copy can be added to your student record / staff file.

We are implementing the Research Passport initiative in accordance with the arrangements set out in the [‘Research in the NHS—HR Good Practice Resource Pack’²](#).

²<https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/help/hlphrgoodpractice.aspx#HR-Good-Practice-Resource-Pack>