Specialty Groups or Special Interest Groups (SGs/SIGs) may wish to provide supporting citations as a body for their members direct to the DHSC Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA). Some will formally have been recognised by the DHSC as National Nominating Bodies (NNBs).

Those SGs or SIGs that do not have NNB status can still submit ad hominem citations that, though they are submitted by an individual, make clear they are submitted on behalf of a SG or SIG responsible for a particular area of paediatric practice and are being submitted by an Officer of the SG or SIG to represent the consensus view on an individual’s clinical excellence in the field of the SG or SIG.

The number of citations NNBs may provide to the DHSC ACCEA each year to support new applications is set and strictly enforced by the DHSC ACCEA and may not be exceeded under any circumstances.

To support those SGs and SIGs that choose to undertake assessment, ranking and citation writing for applicants to ACCEA seeking a citation from the Group the RCPCH has produced these recommendations of practical steps to take.

Paediatric SGs or SIGs should choose applications to support using a uniform, robust and defensible process. Recommendations for consideration on forming and conducting a Specialty Group or Special Interest Group Ranking Committee (SGRC) are provided below.

SGRCs are independent of the College and this text is advisory only.

SGs or SIGs wishing to use this text as a starting point for their own process documentation are welcome to do so but are asked to credit the RCPCH as a source in their final documentation.

An Example - RCPCH ACCEA Process Summary

This guidance only applies for assessing applications for citations to support those seeking Bronze, Silver or Gold (National Levels 9, 10 and 11) Clinical Excellence Awards (CEAs) from the DHSC ACCEA. It does not related to either the Local Awards process (at Levels 1-9), with which the College has no involvement, nor the Platinum (Level 12) process for which the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges is the National Nominating Body (NNB) for all Medical Royal Colleges.
The College can only consider for support applications from Ordinary Members, Fellows or Honorary Fellows of the RCPCH that have been submitted through the College process to the ACCEA applicant’s College Area Ranking Committee (ARC) – the Wales Ranking Committee in Wales – before the end of the RCPCH window of application.

The College can only act as lead NNB for paediatricians. The College is unable to provide citations in support of applications to the DHSC ACCEA where the individual applicant is not an Ordinary Member, Fellow or Honorary Fellow of the RCPCH or does not meet College Good Standing criteria.

RCPCH Members who are eligible and applying for a Clinical Excellence Award (CEA) to the DHSC under the current system can enter competition to seek one of the available citations from the College to support their application.

This is since the DHSC has recognised the RCPCH as a National Nominating Body.

In England applications for CEAs are made to the DHSC ACCEA.

The Welsh Government delegates running of the Welsh CEA process to the DHSC in England. Applications from Wales for CEAs are considered by the DHSC ACCEA through the same process as those in England. Thus each Welsh applicant competes for a CEA against other Welsh applicants.

The number of supporting citations the College is able to provide for applicants at each level of Award is set every year by the DHSC ACCEA. In 2018 the RCPCH National Ranking Committee was permitted no more than 22 Bronze Level citations, 8 Silver Level citations and 2 Gold Level citations for all of England and Wales. It is likely this number may be cut even further in 2019 and competition for a citation will be even more intense.

Competition for supporting citations from the College is in two stages:

1. In the first stage at Regional level in England (Wales-wide for Wales) those seeking citations are considered by the College Area Ranking Committee (ARC) for their area in England (or the Wales Ranking Committee in Wales).

2. The second stage combines all applicants put forward from the ARCs (including the Wales Ranking Committee) for a further competitive assessment by the National Ranking Committee (NRC) for a citation from the College.

Recommendations on SGRC Process

Application of these Recommendations

SGRCs can be said to be performing a similar activity to the College ARCs and NRC. The College therefore advises elected Officers of SGs and SIGs to follow a process that is at least comparably rigorous. The recommendations below are modelled on guidelines provided to the College ARCs and NRC (available on the College ACCEA web site).

Ranking Committee Membership
Each SGRC should have at least 6 members reviewing the applications received.

When inviting colleagues to undertake this work the Chair should seek to reflect the ethnic and gender makeup of the SG/SIG membership as well as seeking to include representation of less than full time workers.

The Chair should also seek to ensure the membership of the SGRC reflects the diversity of practice settings across the Subspecialty.

All participants in the Committee should be checked to have undertaken training in non-discriminatory selection. This should be recorded as having been done.

The SGRC should make every effort to include:

- a Chair – usually a Senior Officer of the SG/SIG;
- one consultant grade paediatrician who holds no national level ACCEA Clinical Excellence Award or Distinction Award and who is not applying for a National Award in the scheme this year;
- one holder of a Bronze Level ACCEA Clinical Excellence Award or Level 9 local award (or ‘B’ Grade in the previous Distinction Award scheme);
- one holder of a Silver level ACCEA Clinical Excellence Award;
- one holder of a Gold level ACCEA Clinical Excellence Award (or ‘A’ Grade in the previous Distinction Award scheme) if this is practicable;
- one senior paediatrician from the SG/SIG;
- one academic from the SG/SIG;
- one senior trainee paediatrician from the SG/SIG;

Also, every effort should be made to ensure:

- a lay member of the SGRC;
- At least 1/3 of the committee should be female and at least 1/3 of the committee should be male with the ideal being 50/50 parity;
- There should be no more than 50% of the Committee drawn from academic post-holders.

‘Doubling up’ of roles is acceptable (one committee member fulfilling more than one role).

Senior figures involved in provision or promotion of children’s healthcare may be approached directly by those intending to apply for a CEA seeing a supporting citation ‘ad hominem’. It is therefore quite possible that recipients of such requests may be
serving members of a SGRC. In cases where the request for a citation does not come through the established SG or SIG process the decision to provide a citation is for the individual approach alone. Responsibility for the writing and submission to ACCEA of such a citation must rest with the individual approached and not with the SG or SIG. Provision of citations is therefore undertaken in a personal capacity only.

Communications with Members

The SGRC should ensure all eligible consultant Members are given ample notice of any opportunity to apply to the SG/SIG to seek support.

Requests for citations should be supported by the full application - likely in ‘Draft’ - to be submitted to the ACCEA using the appropriate DHSC ACCEA forms (accessible from the DHSC ACCEA web site).

Late applications for citations should not be accepted for any reason whatsoever.

Enquiries from applicants on progress of their applications should be answered in only the most general terms regarding progress of the SG/SIG process as a whole.

Scoring, Ranking and citation drafting

SGRCs should ensure their scorers are clear on the criteria and scoring system to be used to assess applications from those SG/SIG Members who wish to seek a supporting citation.

DHSC ACCEA Guidance documents giving the ACCEA qualifying criteria and scoring system for CEAs at the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels - scoring domain by scoring domain - are accessible from the DHSC ACCEA web site.

The SGRC should ensure SG/SIG Members who seek a citation in support of their application for a new CEA have demonstrated that their practice over the last 5 years has met or exceeded the criteria for each of the ACCEA scoring domains set out in the DHSC ACCEA Guidance.

Applications can then be ranked according to score - highest scoring, highest ranked.

Only evidence laid out in the application put forward can be used to assess the likelihood of the application achieving a CEA and therefore the merit of using one of the SGs or SIGs limited number of citations to back the application (this number will be limited by the ACCEA if the SG or SIG is an NNB).

It should be remembered that consideration of any individual application by the DHSC ACCEA will be undertaken only on the basis of the supporting evidence presented in the application.
The SGRC should retain a list of all applicants considered, the scores and ranks given to all applicants considered during the SGRC assessment process and the list of those who took part in the SGRC itself.

Notes of the SGRC meeting and specifically of its decisions and approval of the final list of applicants to be supported should also be retained.

The College recommends very strongly that any SGRC member applying for a given grade of award (Bronze, Silver or Gold) under consideration be excluded from scoring, ranking and citation drafting for applicants for citations for that grade. They should take no part in the process for that grade of award and should not be given any information on deliberations of the SGRC for that grade whether or not they are seeking a citation from the SGRC.

Scoring and ranking should be undertaken by members of the SGRC individually and independently.

Calculation of aggregated ranking should be undertaken before the SGRC meets. This will allow the meeting of the SGRC to focus on ‘borderline candidates’ (distinguishing candidates scored/ranked equally where only once can receive a citation) and agreeing responsibility for completing citation forms.

It is the responsibility of the SGRC Chair to ensure the scores and aggregated rankings for each application are assembled before the SGRC meets and to ensure a record of the attendance, discussion and decisions of the meeting is taken and kept in case of future query.

Any concerns felt by any member of the SGRC over the veracity of an applicant should be referred to the Chair of the SGRC – copying administrative support if present – in the first instance.

**Scoring process**

Scoring should only be undertaken using the ACCEA recommended system of scoring (0, 2, 6 or 10 where a score of 10 denotes the highest level of achievement) for each of the 5 domains for each application.

The five scores – one per domain – for each application are then added together to produce a total score.

The scores for each domain and the total score for every candidate being considered should then be sent to the SGRC Chair.

The total scores for each application from each marker are then added together to give a total score from the SGRC for that application.

**Ranking**

This total score must then be divided by the number of markers for applications seeking the Level of Award concerned.
The resulting 'averaged' scores for applications seeking a given Level of Award should be used to rank the applications for that grade of award with highest scoring ranked highest and lowest scoring ranked last.

Citation drafting

Members of the SGRC should agree at their meeting a fair distribution of responsibility for drafting citations to be put forward to the DHSC ACCEA in support of an application.

Citations should not be drafted by a colleague working in the same department as the recipient and should focus on work undertaken at the National and International level.

The text of each citation is limited by the DHSC to 1345 characters maximum.

Before the SGRC completes its business it should have recorded who will provide citations for each supported application and the deadline by which these will be provided to the Chair to be posted to the DHSC ACCEA e-portal either as a citation from a NNB or as an ad hominem citation.

The DHSC ACCEA closes the e-portal at the end of the window of opportunity and it is not possible to submit citations or applications after this time. It should also be noted that a 'live' application must exist to provide a candidate with a citation and so it may be necessary to ask applicants to begin and then suspend their application to allow the citation to be posted.

ACCEA Award Renewal applicants seeking a citation

Since the 2013 Round it has been possible for those already in receipt of an ACCEA Award and due to seek renewal of the award (typically on a 5-yearly basis) to seek citations in support of their Renewal Application.

However, under the present arrangements those seeking renewal of an award are not in competition for an Award and need only be judged by the DHSC ACCEA to demonstrate in their application that they have continued to make a contribution to paediatrics and child health - during the time since they last received their Award - at the minimum level expected from a holder of the level of Award that they are applying to renew for them to have their Award renewed.

It is for individual SGs and SIGs to consider how they wish to respond to requests for supporting citations from Renewal candidates.

Relationship with the RCPCH ACCEA Process

All Specialty Groups and Special Interest Groups

Paediatric SGs and SIGs that choose to undertake an ACCEA Round process with the objective of supporting their members who are seeking CEAs may choose to notify the RCPCH of those of their members they will be supporting to the DHSC ACCEA (as an
outcome of a SGRC) where they believe these applications deserve widespread support from the paediatric profession.

Such notifications received by the College will be considered on their own merit.

Submissions to the College should include electronic copies of the citation to be submitted to the DHSC ACCEA by the SG/SIG in support of the candidate.

All SGs or SIGs intending to make the College National Ranking Committee aware of ACCEA applicants they intend to support must submit their notification and the required documents to the RCPCH National ACCEA Co-ordinator via the e-mail address ACCEA@rcpch.ac.uk by the deadline set and before the RCPCH NRC meets.

In the 2019 ACCEA Round the deadline for this is 9:00am Monday 11 March 2019.

The College will only be able to consider for an RCPCH citation applicants who submit their ACCEA application to the College for consideration within the College’s own process during the RCPCH window of opportunity. Such applications received by the College will be considered on their own individual merits.

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