

The RCGP Research Ready[®] Programme – A User Guide

This guide is intended as a brief introduction to and overview of the RCGP Research Ready programme; including information on its benefits, details of how to sign up and become accredited, frequently asked questions and further information sources.

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Overview information / FAQs

[NB – each FAQ header links to a section of the guide containing further information on that subject.]

[What is Research Ready[®]?](#)

Research Ready is a programme which gives information, guidance and support to research-active GP practices; and provides a method by which practices can demonstrate they are aware of and meet the standards necessary to undertake primary care research.

[Who is Research Ready[®] for?](#)

Any general practice in the UK with an active or potential engagement with primary care research, on any scale, is able to join Research Ready. Its content is intended for use by any and all practice staff involved in research, including GPs, nurses, practice managers and administrators.

[Why should my practice join Research Ready[®]?](#)

Research Ready accreditation is the most recognisable means of demonstrating to regulatory bodies (e.g. CQC, NIHR) and research participants that your practice is aware of, and has met, the necessary regulatory requirements for research – i.e. that you are ‘research ready’.

Further to this, the programme also offers information, support and guidance to practice staff – clinical and non-clinical – on such standards, and resources to assist in carrying out research. This side of the programme is an area of increasing focus for the RCGP.

How much does it cost to join Research Ready®, and how do I pay?

There are two payment options: either £250 for three years' accreditation, or £100 for one year.

Payment can be made on the Research Ready website, via debit / credit card, or via cheque. Currently, BACS payments cannot be accepted.

How do I join Research Ready®?

Firstly, nominate someone at your practice to act as Research Lead, then visit the [Research Ready website](#) and register an account.

To become accredited, complete a 'Practice Information' survey – giving details on your practice's engagement with research; pay an administration fee (see above); and complete a 'Quality Statements' assessment, confirming you meet the necessary requirements to undertake research.

What is the Research Ready eLearning course, and how do I access it?

The RCGP Learning website contains a variety of online eLearning courses, one of which relates to Research Ready, designed for use by all GP practice staff.

Once you are accredited, you will be given a discount code. Head to the RCGP website and 'purchase' the course – applying the code before completion will remove the cost.

Where can I find more information?

Other than elsewhere in this guide, any queries you have can be directed to the RCGP team via email at Research.Ready@rcgp.org.uk.

If your practice has an accredited account with the [Research Ready website](#), further information can also be found in the 'Resources' section there.

The main RCGP website also contains a [Research Ready webpage](#).

Background – the Research Ready® programme

In 2006, an RCGP-led group of bodies involved in primary care research convened to design a programme which would support practices in hosting high quality research, and developing a focused research culture and ethos. This would be achieved via two main methods:

- Establish a recognisable quality badge mark, attainment of which would allow practices to demonstrate awareness and achievement of all relevant research standards and requirements.
- Make guidance and information available to practices on how such requirements / standards would be applied, and how best they could be met.

In short, the programme sought to assist practices in improving their readiness to carry out research projects; and to demonstrate this readiness to interested parties (e.g. NIHR, CQC, DH, colleagues, research participants) – i.e. that they were 'Research Ready'.

Research Ready has continued to develop around these twin approaches in the ten years since. Spring 2016 saw a new version of the Research Ready website launched, with a greater variety of resources, guidance and support made available, providing a more interactive service.

Benefits of Research Ready[®] accreditation

Research Ready-accredited practices gain access to a range of substantial benefits, designed to support their active and prospective research projects:

- Primary among these is evidence of gaining accreditation itself – a certificate demonstrating the practice is aware of and meets all relevant legal, ethical, professional, governance and patient safety responsibilities (as described by the [UK Research Governance Framework](#)).
- **Free** access to the RCGP Research Ready eLearning package (priced at £300 to non-accredited practices / users) – see below.
- Accredited practices join a network of well over 1000 GP practices, covering over 15% of the UK population. This is the largest of the RCGP's practice networks.
- Network members receive regular updates on local and national research opportunities, from CRN, RCGP and partner organisations, plus relevant developments and activity from research projects already underway.
- Free access to a series of online resources, including:
 - Case studies: a variety of materials relating to GP / primary care research projects undertaken previously.
 - Articles: publications detailing research projects carried out previously, including method, background and output, presented in a formal academic style.
 - Templates: a range of items, designed by RCGP, CRN and other GP practices, which may be of use in future research projects.
 - Documents: miscellaneous items of interest and for practical use in implementation, consideration, or review of primary care research projects.
- Late 2016 will see the programme expanded to include an 'Advanced' level of accreditation; offering support, certification and guidance for those practices involved in more complex and/or industry-based research projects.
- Also, research activity tracking software is being developed for use by all accredited practices; allowing online storing of research project data, to track each project through from conception to archiving; removing the need for offline storage of project data and duplication of data input.

The RCGPLearning Research Ready[®] course

RCGPLearning is an online learning environment covering diverse aspects of primary healthcare, and now offers a full package based on Research Ready. It is designed for all members of a primary care research team – clinical and non-clinical staff equally – and consists of four modules, covering:

- Becoming 'research ready'
- Assessing project feasibility
- Obtaining informed consent
- Data management

The price of accessing the course is £300; however, access is available **free of charge** to any practice signed up to the Research Ready programme.

How to access the course

Course access is gained via the RCGP website – you will need to ‘purchase’ the course as normal, but can apply a discount code to remove the cost in full.

Upon gaining full accreditation, full instructions on accessing the course can be found on your practice’s account on the Research Ready website – in the ‘RCGP Learning’ section – where your discount code can also be found.

Joining Research Ready®

Your practice must register with the Research Ready website, complete two short assessment surveys to demonstrate eligibility, and pay a small accreditation fee to become formally accredited. Accreditation can be for a period of either one or three years, depending on your preferred option.

The Research Ready® system

The Research Ready website was relaunched in spring 2016 to allow a general update and refresh of functionality. Partly, this was prompted by the increasing diversity of hardware / software system access across the medical community (e.g. smartphones, tablets, desktop computers, etc.)

However, the principal intention was to allow user support to be given more comprehensively and regularly throughout a practice’s accreditation period; as opposed to focusing primarily on providing the quality badge element of the programme, typically taken at the point of accreditation.

Registration

Firstly, nominate a person at your practice to act as research lead (this can be a GP, nurse or practice manager). Head to the website, via <http://www.extension.rcgp.org.uk/researchReady/practicelogin.aspx>, and click ‘Sign Up Now’.

The first page invites you to register details on your practice – name, address, CCG, etc. Fields marked [*] are mandatory, including that requiring your practice code (**X12345**), as this will act as your practice’s username when logging back into the system in future.

On the next page, you can enter your contact details – name, title and role (clinical research lead / account manager) – and choose a password for logging back in, which must be at least seven characters long.

The system will highlight the security of your choice of password: this can be improved if it contains both numbers and letters, and if letters are both upper- and lower-case. Obviously, it should also be memorable! But if you do forget it later, the system will allow you to reset it so you can still log in.

Upon completing this page, your account will be registered, and you will shortly receive an email confirming this. You can now return to the Login page and, using your practice code and password, log in to access your new account.

Accreditation

Once registered, there are three main steps to becoming Research Ready-accredited – all found within the ‘Dashboard’ section of your account:

1. Complete the ‘Practice Information’ survey

This short survey requires you to give some information on your practice’s status and engagement (active or potential) with research, including your practice’s specific research interests.

Please note, accreditation does not depend on the content you provide here – i.e. there are no ‘wrong’ answers – but you do need to complete the survey in full.

2. Pay programme administration fee

Your practice will need to pay a one-off administration charge to cover the period of your accreditation. There are two payment options available here:

- £250 for three years’ accreditation
- £100 for one year’s accreditation

Please note that this fee is levied solely to cover back office costs required to run the Research Ready programme – it generates no profit for any party involved.

It may also be possible to offset funding for this cost against any income your practice receives from future research activity. Payment can be made by debit / credit card or cheque, although not via BACS at present.

[NB – steps 1 and 2 can be completed in reverse order if preferable; but step 3 can only be started once both 1 and 2 have been finished in full.]

3. Complete the ‘Quality Statements’ assessment

The final step is of a similar format to step 1. You will be presented with five statements, each of which describes requirements for carrying out primary care research, and has been devised in conjunction with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For each statement, you will be asked to confirm your practice agrees with the statement and meets this requirement, via a ‘Yes / No’ question; and then you will be asked to give some further information on how your practice meets these requirements, via a free-text box.

As with step 1, accreditation cannot be completed until this assessment is finished; but unlike step 1, accreditation does depend on the answers given here: you must be able to answer ‘Yes’ and give accompanying information for all five statements.

Accessing documents

Once all three steps are complete, you will be able to download (/ save / print) three documents: chiefly, the Research Ready certificate, displaying your status as accredited, start and end dates of your accreditation period, and research lead details (in PDF format as default).

As well as this, you can access documents detailing your answers given in the 'Practice Information' and 'Quality Statements' surveys. These will be available in MS Word format as default.

Research Capability

The 'Dashboard' section of the website also contains a third survey, completion of which is entirely optional – 'Research Capability'. This survey consists of 20 questions (all optional), collecting information on the capacity of your practice in undertaking research projects.

Once completed, the system will draw information from the answers given here alongside selected details given earlier in the process (specifically, when registering initially, and when completing the 'Practice Information' survey) to produce your practice's summary Research Capability Statement.

This can be downloaded, again in MS Word format. While use of this is entirely optional, it can be a useful overview / summary document of your practice's research status to provide to any interested parties.

Reaccreditation

As your accreditation period approaches its end, you will be able to renew it. Essentially this involves repeating the accreditation process above – reviewing and updating the information given in the two surveys and paying the relevant admin fee.
