

**GRANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1. To function as a committee of the Foundation's Board of Trustees.
- 1.2. To be accountable to the Foundation's Board of Trustees for the review of grant proposals and the prioritisation and allocation of funding in compliance with the Foundation's Articles of Association and any research priorities in place at the time set by the Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

**2. OBJECTIVES:**

- 2.1. To support research in a manner that is consistent with the purpose, objectives and principles of the Foundation.
- 2.2. To approve financial support for research that ensures the allocation of research funds achieves high quality research results.
- 2.3. To demonstrate to the Trustees that a robust mechanism of prioritising of financial support for projects underpins each decision.
- 2.4. To submit a report to the Foundation's Board of Trustees on the work of the Grants Review Committee indicating the basis for its funding decisions (including average scores for each grant, reasons underlying award decisions – positive and negative – and feedback to applicants).

**3. COMMITTEE'S CHAIR:**

- 3.1. The Chair of the Grants Review Committee will be an independent non-member of the Foundation, nominated by the lead Trustee and approved by the Board of Trustees. A Vice Chair will be appointed by the Chair from the independent non-members of the Foundation to deputise as and when necessary.

**4. MEMBERSHIP:**

- 4.1. There shall be six voting members of the Grants Review Committee, at least four of whom will have proven medical research history relevant to the objectives of the Foundation. Each independent member will be appointed by the Board of Trustees for three years with reappointment for a subsequent and final term of three years to be only by approval from the Foundation's Board of Trustees. Taking account of gaps in funding when the Grants Review Committee does not meet in any particular year, no independent member may serve for longer than seven consecutive calendar years from the date of first appointment.

The composition of the Grants Review Committee shall be as follows:-

- Four independent members (not to include members of the William Harvey Research Foundation, William Harvey Research Institute staff, or other connected persons) one of whom will act as Chair of the Grants Review Committee;
- Chair, or an appointed representative, of the Foundation's Board of Trustees who shall sit in as an ex-officio voting member of the Grants Review Committee;
- Lay member to represent the Foundation's funding interest.

***In attendance:***

- The Foundation's Grants Administrator who shall act as Secretary to the Committee.

**5. APPOINTMENT PROCESS:**

- 5.1. In the case of the independent members, appointments will be made by the Foundation's Board of Trustees following nominations to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 5.2. No member may appoint an alternate to represent or act on their behalf in their absence.
- 5.3. In the event that a member of the Grants Review Committee without good reason misses two consecutive meetings, or is unable or unwilling for whatever reason to continue to serve on the Grants Review Committee, the Board of Trustees will appoint a replacement.
- 5.4. No member may be re-appointed by the Board of Trustees who has completed two terms in accordance with 4.1 above without a minimum period of three consecutive years' absence from the Grants Review Committee.

**6. SECRETARIAT:**

- 6.1. Secretarial support will be provided by the Foundation.
- 6.2. The preparation and presentation of working papers, agendas and minutes will follow the Foundation's format.

**7. PROCEDURES:**

- 7.1. Meetings of the Grants Review Committee will be held annually or as required.
- 7.2. A quorum shall be four members and must include at least three researchers.
- 7.3. The agenda and accompanying working papers are to be circulated in good time to give members of the Committee adequate preparation time.
- 7.4. The status of available funds will be presented at each meeting of the Grants Review Committee.
- 7.5. Late applications can be accepted after the application deadline, at the discretion of the Chair.

**8. DECISION MAKING:**

**8.1. OPEN-CALL RESEARCH GRANTS:**

- 8.1.1. Decisions to award grants will be by consensus.
- 8.1.2. Funding decisions will need to demonstrate that the application meets the requirements of the Foundation's Articles of Association and any research priorities set by the Board of Trustees at the time.
- 8.1.3. Where the use of animals is included in an application the 3Rs policy for the replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research is addressed in the application and in the peer-review process.
- 8.1.4. A full budget, with benchmarks illustrating expenditure and revenue, will be required prior to approval.
- 8.1.5. Decisions to support projects will need to, as a minimum, demonstrate the following characteristics:-
- Evidence of scientific rigour and sound innovative practice;
  - Compliance with the Foundation's policy and goals;
  - Compliance with the 3Rs policy for the replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research endorsed by the Foundation as a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) where use of animals is included in a grant application;
  - Complies with any current regulations, standards, guidelines, statutes and ethics;
  - Complies with the Foundation's approval process;
  - Has an appropriate budget and costing for undertaking the research.
- 8.1.6. Advice may be sought from other groups or individuals on any project submitted for approval.
- 8.1.7. The Chair of the Grants Review Committee in conjunction with the other researchers on the Committee may consider recommendations from applicants and previously-funded researchers, as well as online tools and resources, to identify external reviewers and will arrange for applications to be reviewed in a timely manner in advance of meetings of the Grants Review Committee.
- 8.1.8. Where a contract is required, all legal documents will show that they have been reviewed and accepted by the Foundation's legal advisors.

## **8.2. RESEARCH GRANTS FULLY FUNDED FROM DESIGNATED OR INVESTIGATOR RESTRICTED FUNDS OR FROM FREE RESERVES OF THE FOUNDATION:**

- 8.2.1. A full budget must be included in the grant proposal with detailed estimates and justification of planned expenditure for approval. Where relevant, names of sponsors or donors should be shown on the grant application.

8.2.2. Where the use of animals is included in an application the 3Rs policy for the replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research must be addressed in the application and in the peer-review process.

8.2.3. Peer review for grants funded from designated and investigator restricted funds or from Foundation free reserves should comply with the following:-

- Under £10K, Peer Review by a scientifically qualified Trustee or Member of the Foundation;
- From £10K up to £100K, Peer Review by WHRI Peer Review Committee plus a scientifically qualified Trustee or Member of the Foundation;
- Over £100K, Peer Review by WHRI Peer Review Committee plus External Expert Peer Review.

8.2.4. Decisions to financially support proposals from Foundation free reserves are subject to available funds in the Foundation's reserves and existing unallocated resources.

8.2.5. When funds are insufficient to support all proposals, the Grants Review Committee will establish procedures for ranking or prioritising the proposals to determine which grant proposals are to be supported.

8.2.6. The Grants Review Committee may, in its absolute discretion, refuse a request for funding support or recommend conditional funding.

## **9. ACCOUNTABILITY:**

9.1. To act responsibly with regard to efficient and effective administration of and use of Foundation funds.

9.2. Perform functions in good faith, honestly and impartially and avoid situations which may compromise the integrity of, or external confidence in, the Grants Review process.

9.3. Where the Grants Review Committee declines to support an application, to inform the applicant in writing of the Grant Committee's reasons for declining to support the application.

9.4. The Grants Review Committee will seek external advice related to research funding issues (i.e., legal, accounting and scientific) as appropriate.

## **10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

10.1. On their appointment all Trustees and members of the Grants Review Committee will be sent these Terms of Reference including the Conflicts of Interest policy attached as Appendix 1.

10.2 All peer reviewers will be sent the Conflict of Interest policy before they agree to review applications.

10.3 If any member of the Grants Review Committee, including the Chair, has an interest in any proposal, they shall declare that interest and absent themselves during the discussion and scoring of the application.

## **11. APPEALS:**

11.1. Researchers have a right to request a reconsideration of the decision. All appeals will be reviewed by the Chair of the Grants Review Committee and Foundation's lead Trustee who will submit a further opinion / recommendation to the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

## **12. DELEGATED AUTHORITY:**

12.1. The Board of Trustees of the Foundation will delegate authority to the Grants Review Committee to recommend a project for funding. Approval of grant awards will be ratified by the Board of Trustees. Following this approval funds in the Foundation's accounts will be designated to support the grant, grant award letters will be issued, and funds released to be drawn upon by investigators as per the Foundation's policy and agreed authorised policies of the Foundation.

12.2. All accounting processes (e.g., tracking, invoicing) will be managed through the Foundation's Accountant with support from the Grants Administrator for specific project details and meet all regulatory requirements and standard operating requirements.

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## Appendix 1

### WHRF Grant Review Conflict of Interest Policy

#### 1) General

- a. This policy relates to Foundation Trustees, all members of the Grants Review Committee including the Chair, any peer reviewers and Foundation staff.
- b. The purpose of this document is to minimise the potential for conflicts of interest arising and to protect the Foundation and those who work for it from any perception, real or otherwise, that the external interests and affiliations of those involved in the grant-review process might interfere with their ability to work towards the furtherance of the Foundation's interest.

#### 2) Declaration of interest

- a. Any persons covered by this policy, as defined in paragraph 1a), must declare any disclosable external interest on their appointment to the Foundation, and annually thereafter. A register of interests will be kept up to date by the Foundation.
- b. Interests which should be disclosed by such individuals include:

Equity interests (if worth £10,000 or more, or more than 1% of the total issued capital) in enterprises with involvement in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, biotech or related areas, or in any other enterprise that may have a real or perceived interest in the work of the Foundation. Third party investments (e.g., ISAs) should be held exempt from this.

Consultancies and other external appointments (paid and unpaid), together with details of any remuneration or other benefits arising from these.

Any other interests, including professional interests, which they feel may be a source of conflict, or which might be perceived to conflict, with the interests of the Foundation. (This includes interests held by the spouse or children of those in paragraph 1a.)

#### 3) Discussion of proposals

- a. Details of applications, meeting papers and related correspondence and the names of external referees are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with persons outside the review process. Consideration should be given ahead of discussion of proposals to the extent to which applications and reviews can and should be anonymised.
- b. Discussions of a proposal between members of the Grants Review Committee which occur outside a committee meeting should be declared to the Chair of the committee.
- c. If a Committee member (including serving Trustees) or a peer reviewer is approached by an applicant for technical advice on an application, he or she may provide advice, but must report this to the committee Chair and secretariat. They may subsequently be asked by the Chair to absent themselves from a discussion of the application concerned.

#### 3) Managing conflicts of interests

- a. Where a Committee member or peer reviewer is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, he or she must declare an interest and withdraw from any consideration of that application. That member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports. He or she must retire from the meeting when the application is assessed. Details of discussion of that application will be deleted from any papers the member receives. This should also apply to Trustees who serve as Committee members and are applicants in the grant round.

- b. Where the Chair of the Committee is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, he or she must declare an interest and should not be involved in that round of meetings. A Vice Chair will chair the meeting to prevent any undue influence.
- c. Committee members or peer reviewers who could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are funded or applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion) or have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past three years, or work in the same institution, should declare an interest and may be asked to withdraw from the meeting for that application, or may be allowed to stay, but not vote on the application.

#### **4) Resolution conflicts of interest**

- a. The Foundation recognises that the majority of conflicts or potential conflicts will relate to a particular issue and as such will not present any long term restrictions on an individual's ability to work for the Foundation or to sit on its committees.
- b. In a small number of cases, major conflicts of interest may arise which compromise an individual's ability to continue in their position within the Foundation. Where such a situation relates to a member of the Grants Review Committee, the matter will be discussed by the Chair of the committee together with the Grants Administrator. In cases where agreement cannot be reached through this means, the case will be referred to the Committee as a whole, whose decision should be taken as final.
- c. Members of the Grants Review Committee are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions to the Grants Administrator before the meeting wherein they will be discussed, or during the meeting as soon as the existence of a conflict becomes apparent.
- d. In cases where an individual is uncertain as to whether a conflict of interest exists or not, they should report this to the Grants Administrator. The Grants Administrator shall discuss the matter with the individual as necessary and report to the Chair, who will decide on a course of action.
- e. If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of the Grants Review Committee, then he or she should raise the matter with the Chair of the committee.

#### **5) Updating the policy**

- a. The Foundation will endeavour to review this policy, if necessary, every two years, in consultation with the Board of Trustees.