

## HIS Research Committee – Terms of Reference 2021

### 1. Purpose

The Research Committee (RC) is a standing committee of the Healthcare Infection Society (HIS) whose purpose is to design, plan, deliver and monitor the research strategy, including the management of grants, awards and fellowships in keeping with the strategic aims of the Society.

To preserve and enhance the reputation of HIS as a funder of high quality, robust and relevant research into healthcare-associated infections that will evidence best clinical practice and promote patient safety.

To advise members on all matters related to funding activities of HIS.

### 2. Activities

- Develop the HIS research strategy.
- Monitor the scope of research funding to ensure delivery of the HIS research strategy.
- Review and approve the HIS grants and awards portfolio on a biennial basis or as the need arises.
- Decide themes for strategic grants as appropriate.
- Peer review and approve applications for all **research** grants and awards and HIS Travel Grants. Events and career development grants (including the Graham Ayliffe [when no research element is proposed], Career Development Award, Public Engagement Grants and Sponsored Events Grants) fall within the remit of the Professional Development Committee.
- Facilitate and contribute to the appointment of external peer reviewers for grant applications.
- Review and approve all documentation relating to grants awards including (but not limited to) grants and awards terms and conditions, standard operating procedures, and application forms.
- Facilitate and contribute to the development of post-award support for grant recipients.
- To review and highlight good practice, or research of note that result from HIS funding (via reports).

### 3. Responsible to

The Healthcare Infection Society Council and Council Officers

### 4. Membership

#### 4.1 Members

- **Chair:** A member of Council (ideally as a trustee, or as a co-opted member), appointed by Council for a three year term, which can be extended by Council by up to a further three years.
- **Vice-Chair:** Appointed by Council for a three-year term, which can be extended by Council by up to a further three years. Represents the committee at Council if Chair is unable to attend. The Vice-Chair may succeed the Chair, if approved by HIS Council.



Members of the committee must represent the membership categories and professional roles of HIS members. With the exception of Lay representatives, committee members should be drawn from the HIS current membership. The committee should include at least one of the following:

- Consultant member
  - Trainee member (with a maximum of two trainee representatives)
  - Associate member
  - Biomedical, Healthcare or Clinical scientist
  - Member of the microbiological scientific research (academic or industrial) community
  - Specialist co-opted members as required by the nature of the grants portfolio
  - Lay representative
- The HIS Research and Development Manager (RDM) will attend meetings as a Society representative. They do not have voting rights.

The minimum number of members shall be 10

## 4.2 Nominations

Nominations for membership of the committee will be sought via an open call to HIS members.

All nominees will be asked to declare potential conflicts of interest during the application process.

## 5. Terms of membership

Individual members will be recommended to Council by the Chair for an agreed time period of up to three years, which can be extended by one further term of three years on the Chair's recommendation, if agreed by Council. Members must then step down from the committee for a minimum of three years.

Individual members (except lay representatives) must be members of HIS to serve on the committee.

Any member of the group appointed is expected to attend 50% of meetings (including teleconferences) of the Committee annually unless agreed by the Chair of the Committee.

Where required, experts may be co-opted on to the committee to provide peer review and enable the committee to be quorate.

## 6. Meetings

### 6.1 Frequency of meetings

The Research Committee will meet face-to-face every six months to coincide with the two major funding rounds whose decisions fall in the spring and late autumn, with work continuing between meetings by email and teleconference as and when required.

Normally there will be a teleconference in between each face-to-face meeting.

Additional business will be carried out electronically as far as possible. The Chair may convene additional meetings as they deem necessary.

### 6.2 Quorum

A quorum shall be 6 members



### 6.3 Agenda and papers

An agenda, along with documentation/information supporting the items under discussion will be agreed with the Chair and circulated to members of the Research Committee a minimum of seven (7) calendar days before a meeting by email. In the absence of return communication outlining errors in the delivery of email, the agenda and papers will be considered received by all parties unless otherwise notified.

Where the volume of papers to be considered exceeds the size limit for attachments to be sent via email, committee members will be provided a secure link to access the relevant HIS folder and this will be password protected.

It is essential that all papers are read and considered in advance of the meeting and that reviews where needed are returned to the RDM, ten (10) calendar days before the meeting.

### 6.4 Minutes

Formal minutes recording the proceedings of meetings will be taken by the RDM distributed to the Chair for review within seven (7) calendar days of the meeting taking place. Final minutes will be circulated to all Committee members, and others in attendance, as close to three (3) calendar weeks after the meeting takes place as is practicable.

Minutes of the Research Committee will be circulated by the RDM

## 7. Decision making

Where possible, a general consensus identified by the Chair of the Committee will be sufficient to consider a matter passed, rejected or deferred. Where consensus is not possible, all decisions will be made by a vote. Where an equity of votes occurs, the Chair may cast an additional vote to finalise the decision, or may defer the decision for later action. The committee makes a recommendation to fund to the Council Officers who will also review and make recommendations on the proposed funding.

## 8. Conflicts of interest

To ensure the ongoing impartiality and objectivity of the Research Committee, committee members are asked to adhere to the HIS Conflicts of Interest policy which is available within the induction document ([available here](#)) when reviewing grant applications. In essence, where a vested interest is identified by a committee member, they must withdraw from the consideration of that application and where a committee member is a named Co-Investigator, Collaborator or Supervisor, they should inform the RDM in advance of the application's submission. On the occasions where the Chair declares an interest, the chair of the committee will absent themselves from the decision making in that funding round and vice-chair will take the chair the meeting. Please refer to the HIS conflicts of interest policy for further information.



## 9. Reporting to Council and delegation of responsibility

### 9.1 HIS Council

The Research Committee will report to the HIS Council on all matters related to their remit and advise on the contribution of the Society's research funding activities to the greater Society strategy.

The Research Committee may make recommendations to Council regarding the organisation of new initiatives.

The Research Committee are delegated the responsibility to make decisions regarding research grants and awards. All decisions must be formally reported to Council during a meeting of Council.

The Chair of the Research Committee will report verbally at Officer and Chairs teleconferences.

The RDM is delegated authority to conduct the primary triage of all applications for completeness and fit to remit. Additionally Travel Grant applications that are within scope may be approved by the RDM and two committee members.

### 9.2 Annual General Meeting

The Chair of the Research Committee will attend the Annual General Meeting of the Society held in November/December of each year to represent the Research Committee. If this is not possible, a further member of the committee may be nominated to stand in their stead.

The terms of reference will be reviewed every two years.

**Created:** September 2019

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