

Cancer Research UK Funding Committees General Terms of Reference

1 Remit

- 1.1. Each funding committee is responsible to the Scientific Executive Board (**SEB**) for the oversight, development, review, funding and management of a portfolio of research awards within its remit, in line with Cancer Research UK's research strategy.
- 1.2. Each funding committee will operate in accordance with these General Terms of Reference and its specific Supplementary Terms of Reference.
- 1.3. In order to fulfil its remit, each funding committee will work with:
 - The SEB, other funding committees and other specialist boards and working groups, including CRUK Cancer Horizons Project Review Group (**PRG**), to ensure co-ordination of activities, and appropriate input to the development of strategies and policy.
 - Other stakeholders specified in the relevant committee's Supplementary Terms of Reference.

2 Terms of Reference

- 2.1. Each funding committee must ensure the maintenance of an internationally competitive research portfolio, which is targeted to the fulfilment of Cancer Research UK's mission, by:
 - (i) Allocating resources on the basis of scientific excellence and relevance to Cancer Research UK's research strategy.
 - (ii) Providing peer review of the highest international standards and engaging the appropriate additional expertise in the assessment of applications and evaluation of funded research programmes and, on request, projects being considered by the CRUK Cancer Horizons Project Review Group (**PRG**).
 - (iii) Maintaining an awareness of the expertise and portfolios of the other funding committees, engaging the expertise of other committees in peer review and contributing to peer review by other committees where appropriate.
 - (iv) Ensuring that all research is conducted to the highest ethical standards, complies with all relevant regulations and guidelines, and is conducted in an environment which supports the highest standards of research governance. Where a research application proposes the use of animals in research, this includes, without limitation, rigorous review of experimental design, the application of the principles of the replacement, refinement and reduction

of animals in research (**3Rs**) and compliance with relevant guidelines issued by the NC3Rs.

- (v) Allocating resources within the budget set by the SEB.
- (vi) Periodically reviewing the different funding models used by the committee and recommending changes where appropriate.
- (vii) Reviewing Scientific Milestone Reports and other progress reports, as appropriate.

2.2 Each funding committee should also provide input to the development of the research strategy for Cancer Research UK, which includes:

- (i) Proactively identifying and bringing to the attention of the SEB new funding opportunities and new areas where Cancer Research UK funding could make a significant impact.
- (ii) Keeping abreast of and, where relevant, addressing, external factors such as government policies, which impact on Cancer Research UK's research portfolio.
- (iii) Bringing to the attention of the SEB issues relevant to the funding of research in universities and medical schools.
- (iv) Identifying and bringing to the attention of the SEB opportunities for partnerships and collaborations, including joint funding opportunities.

3 Membership

3.1 **Chair:** The Chair of each funding committee will be appointed by the SEB. The Chair will serve in this role for an initial term of three years, renewable once only for a further three years provided that he or she does not serve on the committee for more than six years in total.

3.2 **Vice Chair:** The Chair and Vice Chair will have substantially different research interests, reflecting the specialised remit of the relevant funding committee and will not be from the same institution. The Vice Chair will not automatically succeed to the Chair.

3.3 **Members:** The membership will be approved in line with the R&I Governance Framework and notified to the SEB. It will comprise of expert scientists at the appropriate level, providing a broad range of scientific expertise essential for that committee. Membership may also comprise patients and the public in an effective way across our research activities according to our Statement of intent for patient

and public involvement.

- 3.4 Members will be appointed for an initial term of three years, renewable once only for a further three years.
- 3.5 Members must not have been on a committee for a minimum of three years before they are eligible to return as a member of that committee.
- 3.6 Less than half of the members of a funding committee should be in receipt of grants from that committee.
- 3.7 No more than 20% of the membership should be from the same institution.
- 3.8 Taking into account the need to comprise expert scientists at the appropriate level, the membership should reflect diversity across protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010, as amended.
- 3.9 Members who are women should ideally comprise 50% of each Funding Committee. Members from ethnic minority backgrounds should ideally comprise at least 20% across Funding Committees. The gender balance and ethnic origin of each Funding Committee must be reported annually to SEB, along with data regarding other protected characteristics where available.
- 3.10 10-20% of the membership should comprise industry representatives, patient involvement representatives, members from overseas or other independents in order to add diversity of knowledge and experience.
- 3.11 In general, members should serve on no more than two Cancer Research UK funding committees simultaneously.
- 3.12 The Committee Chair and Cancer Research UK are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate expertise at a meeting to evaluate each proposal and it is at their discretion to postpone a proposal or committee meeting if necessary.
- 3.13 Where a lack of expertise has been identified, the Committee may co-opt experts on an ad-hoc, time-limited basis where appropriate. Paragraph 3.7 does not apply to co-opted experts serving on an ad-hoc basis.
- 3.14 Staff of Cancer Research UK may attend meetings in an ex-officio capacity. Only the Chief Scientist and Chief Clinician may participate in a voting capacity where they are formal members of the Committee.

4 Meetings

- 4.1 Each funding committee will meet as frequently as is set out in its Supplementary Terms of Reference.

- 4.2 With the support of the CRUK office, the funding committees will operate mechanisms for recording members' interests and for dealing with potential conflicts of interest during the conduct of their business.
- 4.3 The minutes or report of each meeting will be presented to the SEB and to such other committees as the SEB requires.
- 4.4 Subject to paragraph 4.5, a quorum for a funding committee meeting is three members or 50%, whichever is higher. A committee member who is participating in the meeting by electronic means is present for the purposes of determining whether a meeting is quorate.
- 4.5 Where scientific review of a funding decision of the Committee is required before its next scheduled meeting, CRUK may ask a subset of members to consider the matter and make the decision on behalf of the Committee. In such cases:
- a quorum of the Committee shall be three members (deciding the matter in person, via telephone or email);
 - CRUK will include the Chair in the subset of members asked to consider the decision, if he or she is available and does not have a conflict of interest in the matter;
 - CRUK need not give notice of the request to all members until the Committee's next scheduled meeting;
 - the subgroup of members may refer the matter to the Committee's next meeting if they consider that it should be considered at a meeting of the full Committee;
 - any decision made on behalf of the Committee will be reported to the Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

5 Approval limits

- 5.1 Each funding committee is authorised to approve the funding of grants up to the following thresholds, which apply on a per grant basis:

	Funding Committee	SEB
Award value (instalment or total award)	Up to £5 million	Up to £10 million

Any grant in excess of the thresholds for Funding Committees must be referred to the SEB, along with a recommendation from the relevant funding committee.

- 5.2 All capital expenditure or equipment requests in excess of £500k (including those in Institutes) must go to the SEB for approval.
- 5.3 Cancer Research UK may, from time-to-time, ask an appropriately qualified panel (**Panel**) to run a cancer research workshop or 'sandpit' in relation to an area within

a Funding Committee’s remit. In such cases, the SEB authorises the responsible Panel to approve seed-funding awards of up to £100,000 per award, provided that:

- (i) those decisions are subsequently reported to the Funding Committee within whose remit the seed-funding awards fall (the **Relevant Funding Committee**);
- (ii) the Panel includes at least one member of the Relevant Funding Committee; and
- (iii) the Relevant Funding Committee maintains oversight of the workshop, ‘sandpit’ or other seed-funding initiative a whole.

6 Review

- 6.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed as needed and, it is intended, at least once every two years.

7 Document information

Version	7
Approved by	Scientific Executive Board
Last approved	May 2024
Next scheduled review date	May 2026
Document owner	Research Operations and Communications Department (R&I)
Schedule of amendments	<p>Version 7 (May 2024) – Updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members to be approved in line with the R&I Governance Framework (3.3) • Approval limits for Funding Committees and SEB revised (5.1) <p>Version 6 (October 2022) – Updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity targets as per our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in research action plan. • Term of the Chair to align with AMRC peer review principles. • Reference to former funding committees operated under our Policy, Information and Communications directorate. • Name of the Cancer Horizons Project Review Group. <p>Version 5 (February 2020) – Updated requirements for approving a new member and diversity requirements</p>

	<p>for overall Committee composition.</p> <p>Version 4 (December 2017) - Added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reference to particular responsibility of Committee in reviewing research proposals involving animals,• non-binding target for proportion of female members;• reference to patient representatives• mechanism for approval of seed-funding awards within a Funding Committee's remit; and• other minor amendments to terminology etc. (December 2017).
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