

Cancer Research UK

General Terms of Reference for Expert Review Panels

This document sets out the key responsibilities and membership requirements that the Scientific Executive Board (**SEB**) has delegated to the Expert Review Panels (**ERPs**) assisting SEB directly or the various Cancer Research UK (**CRUK**) Funding Committees in the evaluation of grant applications or strategic reviews.

1 **ERPs assisting CRUK Funding Committees or SEB**

The ERPs assisting Funding Committees or SEB include, without limitation, those that assist:

- The Clinical Research Committee
- The Discovery Research Committee
- The Early Detection and Diagnosis Research Committee
- The Prevention and Population Research Committee; and
- The Research Careers Committee
- Scientific Executive Board directly (including ad hoc or strategic investment reviews)

2 **Remit**

- 2.1. **Scientific quality review:** to provide peer review of the highest international standards and make recommendations about the scientific quality of the grant applications or funding portfolio for the particular funding schemes or portfolio that they are asked to review;
- 2.2. **Endorsement:** consider and provide peer review as per paragraph 2.1 and give final approval for applications for endorsement of studies that are within the ERP's remit;
- 2.3. **Shortlisting:** if requested by the Office, to decide, based on outline or preliminary proposals, which applicants for the funding schemes within the ERP's remit should be invited to submit a full application for that scheme.

3 **Additional Terms**

- 3.1. **Good research practice:** To assist Funding Committees or SEB in ensuring that all CRUK-funded 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. In assessing grant applications, members should use our Guide to Assessing Grant Applications.
- 3.2. **3Rs:** 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.
- 3.3. **Review of data sharing plans:** To assess the applicability and adequacy of applicants' data sharing plans and other forms of output sharing to promote the principles of

open research and the CRUK Data Sharing and Management Policy (as amended).

4 Membership

- 4.1 **Chair:** The Chair will be a member of the CRUK Funding Committee that the ERP has been established to assist. They will serve in the role of Chair according to their Committee membership term where applicable. Where an ad hoc or strategic investment review Panel assists SEB directly, the Chair will be approved in accordance with the approval requirements set out in the R&I Governance Framework.
- 4.2 **Vice Chair:** The ERP need not have a Vice Chair but, where one is appointed, he or she will be based at a different institution from the Chair, and will generally act as chair of the ERP meeting on any matters where the Chair has a conflict of interest. The Vice Chair will serve in the role of Chair according to their committee membership term, where applicable.
- 4.3 **Members:** ERP Members will be appointed by the Head of the CRUK Research Team supporting the ERP, in accordance with the approval requirements set out in the R&I Governance Framework. The ERP will comprise expert scientists at the appropriate level, providing a broad range of scientific expertise essential for that Committee or SEB. 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](#).
- 4.4 Members will be appointed either as a:
 - i) standing member for an initial term of three years, renewable once only for a further three years. Members must not have been on an ERP for a minimum of three years before they are eligible to return as a member of that ERP;
 - ii) ad hoc member invited for a specific meeting(s) according to the range of grant applications to be considered in a particular funding round.
- 4.5 Less than half of the members of an ERP should be in receipt of grants within that ERP's remit.
- 4.6 No more than 20% of the membership should be from the same institution.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 Members who are women should ideally comprise 50% of each ERP. Members from ethnic minority backgrounds should ideally comprise at least 20% across ERPs. The gender balance and ethnic origin of each ERP should be reported annually to SEB, along with data regarding other protected characteristics where available.
- 4.9 Where appropriate, the membership should include industry representatives, patient involvement representatives, members from overseas or other independents in order to add diversity of knowledge and experience.
- 4.10 The ERP Chair and CRUK are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate expertise at a meeting to evaluate each proposal and it is at their discretion to postpone the consideration of a proposal if necessary.

- 4.11 Where a lack of expertise has been identified, the ERP may co-opt experts on an ad-hoc, time-limited basis where appropriate. Paragraph 4.6 does not apply to co-opted experts serving on an ad-hoc basis.
- 4.12 Staff of CRUK may attend meetings in an ex-officio capacity. Only the Chief Scientist and Chief Clinician may participate in a voting or scoring capacity where they are members of the ERP.

5 Meetings:

- 5.1 ERPs will meet as often as is required by the review schedule of SEB or the Funding Committee they are assisting.
- 5.2 Members of ERPs must adhere to our Code of Practice for reviewers.
- 5.3 With the support of the CRUK office, the ERPs will operate mechanisms for recording members' interests and for dealing with potential conflicts of interest during the conduct of their business.
- 5.4 With the assistance of the Office, a report of each ERP meeting will be provided to the Funding Committee or SEB that the ERP is assisting.
- 5.5 A quorum for an ERP meeting is three members or 50%, whichever is higher. A member who is participating in the meeting by electronic means is present for the purposes of determining whether a meeting is quorate.

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	5
Approved by	Scientific Executive Board
Last approved	December 2023
Next scheduled review date	December 2025
Document owner	Research Operations and Communications Department (R&I)
Schedule of amendments	<p>Version 5 (December 2023) – Updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remit expanded to include panels assisting SEB directly, including portfolio reviews. • References to Code of Practice for reviewers and Guide for Assessing Grant Applications included. <p>Version 4 (September 2023) – Updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsements to be approved by the ERP and the Committee notified. <p>Version 3 (October 2022) – Updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of funding committees according to our revised funding model. • Membership of panels which may include both

	<p>standing and ad hoc members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity targets as per our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in research action plan. <p>Version 2 (Feb 2020) – Updated diversity req's for overall composition.</p>
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