

HIS Research Committee – Terms of Reference 2024

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 two years. When appointing a new Chair, to ensure we are inclusive to all Committee Members, this should be included as an agenda item for a Committee meeting to inform members that the position of Chair will become vacant.
- **Vice-Chair:** Appointed by Council for a three-year term which can be extended by Council by up to a further two years. When either the Chair or Vice-chair demits there will be an open call to all



Committee Members for the position. The Vice-chair will not automatically succeed the Chair. If the Chair and Vice-chair roles are not filled by existing Committee Members, an open call to members will be made. If appropriate Council may decide to offer the roles on a co-Chair or co-Vice-Chair basis. This should be made clear in the call for the position and applicants may apply with another Committee member for a joint role. It is advised that the RC appoint two Vice-Chairs, one with experience in clinical healthcare and the other in academic microbiology.

Members of the committee must represent the membership categories and professional roles of HIS members. 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 – ideally but not essential (there is no expectation for lay member to be a HIS member)

The HIS staff lead for the RC will attend meetings as a Society representative. They do not have voting rights. The number of committee members should be no less than ten (10) at any time and there will be a maximum of fifteen (15) members

Application process

- Nominations for membership of the Committee will be sought via an open call to HIS members three times a year with a clear deadline, only if there are vacancies on the Committee.
- Application for membership of the Committee will be managed in confidence by the HIS staff lead for the RC and reviewed by HIS Council.
- Positions for the Chair and Vice-Chair role will be advertised within the Committee initially and if these roles are not filled by existing Committee Members, an open call to members will be made.
- Applicants will be asked to submit an expression of interest of between 500 and 700 words stating why they are applying for the Role of Chair or Vice-Chair and their experience to support their application.
- As part of the process, applicants will be asked to consider whether they would agree to be appointed as a co-Chair or co-Vice-Chair should the opportunity arise. Council will take this into consideration when reviewing applications.
- The role of Chair or Vice Chair is available as an individual position or as a role-share, and single or joint applications from committee members for the role will be accepted.
- Extension after a first term will be voted on during a Committee meeting and the opportunity to apply for the Chair or Vice-Chair role opened up.

4.2 Appointment of individual Committee Members and terms of office

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

For a member that has held numerous roles within the Committee, the maximum number of years a member can serve on the Committee is eight (8), regardless of position.



Individual members must be members of HIS. Nominations for membership of the Committee will be sought via an open call to HIS members three times a year with a clear deadline, only if there are vacancies on the Committee. Members will be asked to self-nominate with an expression of interest using the relevant application form.

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

After the deadline, applications will be sent in confidence firstly to the Chair and Vice-chair and, assuming the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, then to the entire Committee for comment. All applicants to Committees will be invited to meet the Chair and HIS staff lead for the Committee in advance of their application being considered. They may also be invited to observe a meeting.

Comments from the committee on individual applications will be collated by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee who will decide on whether to make a recommendation to Council for membership of the Committee. Successful applications will be ratified at the next meeting of Council.

5. Terms of membership

- 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 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 meeting in between each six monthly 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 half the number of members on the committee, e.g. if there are twelve members on the committee, six must be present for a meeting to be quorate.

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 HIS staff lead for the RC, ten (10) calendar days before the meeting.

6.4 Minutes

Formal minutes recording the proceedings of meetings will be taken by the HIS staff lead for the RC 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 HIS staff lead for the RC.

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](#) 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 HIS staff lead for the RC 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 HIS staff lead for the RC 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 HIS staff lead for the RC 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

Adopted: HIS Council #142 11 September 2019

Updated and adopted: HIS Council #147 November 2020

Due for revision: September 2021

Updated: August 2021

Adopted: September 2021

Due for revision: September 2023

Updated: February 2024

Adopted: HIS Council #160 March 2024

Due for revision: September 2026