Scientific Review Committee Terms of Reference

Ref SRC5

Purpose

The purpose of the PSC Support's Scientific Review Committee (SRC) is to provide expert, independent, impartial research funding recommendations to PSC Support in line with the current PSC Support Research Strategy and available budgets. This involves reviewing funding applications, preparing written scores/ comments and discussing applications in meetings in order to make judgements about the quality and relevance of each grant application.

Membership

SRC members are invited by PSC Support. It comprises scientific and lay members, providing a broad range of scientific/ lay expertise, experience and institutions.

Lay members are people who live with PSC (either having PSC themselves, or knowing someone close with the condition).

Individuals will be invited to be members of the SRC for an initial term of three years. This can be extended by agreement between PSC Support, the Chair of the SRC and the individual concerned. Members may serve for no longer than six years before stepping down from the SRC for at least three years.

There will be at least five members of the SRC including two lay members.

The SRC will be chaired either by an independent expert who is not directly involved in PSC research; or by someone who has PSC research expertise. The Chair of the SRC should not be a Trustee of PSC Support.

Membership of the SRC will be published on the PSC Support website.

Responsibilities

- To declare all potential conflicts of interest using PSC Support's online Declaration of Interest form.
- To uphold PSC Support's Research Code of Conduct.
- To support the triaging of Letter of Intent (LOI) submissions to determine which applicants are invited to submit full applications.
- To review and score applications (and associated expert reviews) for research funding using the relevant appraisal criteria.
- To attend SRC meetings when necessary.
    - PSC Support holds one funding round per year. We expect there will be one SRC meeting per funding round, conducted online, and occasionally two meetings in exceptional circumstances.
- To contribute to discussions at SRC meetings to ensure that the SRC recommendations reflect issues of importance to researchers and people affected by PSC.
- Outside of SRC meetings:
    - to contribute to discussions (by email) on individual grant applications or cost-extensions.
    - to review interim and final reports for currently-funded research grants (by email) to ensure that projects are meeting their aims and objectives.
- To be aware of and consider the replacement, refinement and reduction (the 3Rs) of animals in research applications.
- To provide advice to PSC Support on funding procedures, types of award and refinement of the PSC Support research funding process.

Operations

In the case of the Chair being unable to attend the Scientific Review Committee meeting or declaring a conflict of interest, an interim Chair will be appointed by PSC Support.

Grant Rounds

PSC Support holds one grant funding round per year.

In-Depth Review of Funding Applications

At least two experts will review each funding application in detail according to set Appraisal Criteria. The in-depth review may take the form of a written report, an oral report, or a combination of the two.

Interviews

Following review of Research Training Fellowship applications, applicants may be invited to attend an online or in-person interview by the SRC.

Triage of Letters of Intent (LOI)

LOIs undergo triage by staff to confirm eligibility, budget adherence, and fit with our strategic priorities. Staff do not perform any evaluation on the quality of the application or scientific merit. The SRC may also perform triage of LOIs (if evaluation criteria are published to applicants before/ during the LOIs submission period).

Appraisal Criteria

For each funding application, peer review scores and written comments will be considered according to set criteria:

- Scientific Appraisal Criteria
    - Relevance of idea or proposal
    - Patient-Relevant outcomes
    - Originality
    - Realistic costing and value for money
    - Relationship to and the volume of research already available in the field
    - Scientific quality or methodology
    - Expertise of researchers
    - Consider the replacement, refinement and reduction (the 3Rs) of animals in research applications (if applicable)
- Lay Appraisal Criteria
    - Importance of this research to people with PSC
    - Makes a positive difference
    - Makes significant progress towards an ‘unanswered question’ in PSC
    - Lay summary's ease of understanding

External Experts

External Experts will be appointed to provide in-depth reviews:

- for awards of £55,000 and above, or
- for awards relating to projects outside the areas of expertise of the SRC
- when the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the SRC

External Experts may be selected from the Scientific Review Committee and/or be appointed by the SRC from the wider research and clinical community, or from those who have special expertise in relation to a funding application.

Scientific Review Committee Meetings

One SRC meeting per funding round will be held to consider the grant applications (taking into account in-depth reviews) and to recommend to the PSC Support Trustees

- which studies (if any) should be funded;
- (where appropriate) alternative sources of funding for research projects which are only indirectly linked to PSC and may be equally eligible for funding by other health charities or grant-making organisations.

An SRC meeting may be held in person or by suitable electronic means agreed by the SRC in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

The quorum for SRC meetings will be at least five, or more than 50% of the SRC members being present (whichever figure is higher). For decisions made out of cycle (i.e. annual reviews assessed outside of SRC meetings), there will be a quorum of five. External Experts may contribute to SRC meetings and be included in the quorum (for example, when existing SRC members declare conflicts of interest and may not take part).

Decisions relating to the funding rounds will only be made outside of the meetings in exceptional circumstances.

PSC Support

SUBMISSION AND PROCESSING | EXPERT REVIEW | FINAL DECISION



Stage 1
Applicants submit letter of intent (LOI)for triage by PSC Support staff*

Stage 2
Successful LOI applicants are invited to submit a full application

Stage 3
Applications are processed and prepared for review

Stage 4
At least two experts review each application in detail

Stage 5
Scientific Review Committee reach recommendations on what to fund**

Stage 6
Final funding decision made by PSC Support Trustees

** Letters on Intent are triaged based on alignment with PSC Support's strategic research priorities and not quality of research*
*** The quorum for Scientific Review Committee meetings will be at least five, or more than 50% of the Scientific Review Committee members being present (whichever figure is higher). External Experts may be included in the quorum.*

PSC SUPPORT EXPERT REVIEW

amrc
ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL RESEARCH CHARITIES

SUBMISSION | PROCESSING | EXPERT REVIEW | FINAL DECISION



Stage 1
Applicants submit an application for funding

Stage 2
Applications are processed and prepared for review

Stage 3
Scientific Review Panel reviews and interviews candidates

Stage 4
Scientific Review Committee reach recommendations on what to fund*

Stage 5
Final funding decision made by PSC Support Trustees

** The quorum for Scientific Review Committee meetings will be at least five, or more than 50% of the Scientific Review Committee members being present (whichever figure is higher). External Experts may be included in the quorum.*

PSC SUPPORT RESEARCH TRAINING FELLOWSHIP REVIEWS

Conflict of Interest

SRC members and External Experts will submit a completed PSC Support Declaration of Interest form for each funding round.

Ahead of declaring conflicts of interest, SRC members/ External Experts will be provided with:

- title of project,
- applicant and co-applicant names,
- institution name(s).

Any member of the SRC/ External Expert who declares a conflict of interest (including a current association with an institution applying for a grant) will not participate in that activity, they will not receive the application(s) and will not be present for discussion of the application(s) at the SRC meeting.

Expenses

Members of the SRC/External Experts will not be paid for their contribution. PSC Support will reimburse reasonable expenses for attendance at meetings – for example telephone call costs or the cost of standard class travel and if necessary overnight accommodation for face-to-face meetings. For full details see PSC Support Expenses Policy.

Agreement

In my capacity as a member of the PSC Support Scientific Review Committee, I undertake to:

- act and advise in the best interests of PSC Support;
- work towards and in compliance with these Terms of Reference;
- keep all contents of SRC meetings and associated documents and correspondence confidential;
- declare any personal, professional or financial interest which may be relevant to PSC Support and to declare, in particular, any interests which may conflict with the interests of PSC Support SRC, and to ensure that I am not party to, or influential in, decisions which may conflict with any interest of my own;

- declare any affiliations to other organisations, which could entail a conflict of interest.

Your Agreement

Please indicate your understanding and agreement to these Terms of Reference in this online form.

Version History		
Reference	Date	Description of change
SRC1	06/03/2019	New Terms of Reference
SRC2	02/07/2024	Update External Expert role and review process inc Research Training Fellowships
SRC3	03/04/2025	Update graphics
SRC4	10/08/26	Include Letter of Intent stage
SRC5	29/09/26	Clarification of SRC role
Next review due:		01/02/2027
On website?		Yes