

Medical and Research Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

To provide recommendations to the Psoriasis Association board of Trustees on the funding of research projects, on decisions relating to research grants, and on the research strategy.

Background

The Medical and Research Committee are mandated by the board of Trustees to review individual research grant applications and provide advice to the Trustees as to whether the applications merit funding. Committee members are expected to assess applications on scientific merit, benefit to people with psoriasis and/or psoriatic arthritis, relevance to the Psoriasis Association's Research Strategy and aims, and value for money. It is also required that Committee members consider the comments and scores from the external peer reviewers and the lay reviewers (the Experts by Experience Committee) when making their recommendations.

In addition to reviewing grant applications, the Medical and Research Committee provide advice on the grant funding process, the types of grants offered by the Association, and on the research strategy.

Operation

- The Medical and Research Committee will meet annually in February or March to review the applications received in the grant call.
- If no single date is suitable for all members, the meeting will be held on the date that is suitable for most Committee members.
- The attendance of at least five voting members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum at the Medical and Research Committee meeting.
- Committee members are expected to attend the meeting. The meeting may be held in person or online and is dependent on the availability of members.
- Aside from the meeting, the Committee will work remotely. Grant applications and application review forms will be emailed to the Committee members.
- Communications with the Psoriasis Association will predominantly be via email, however, telephone and postal communications are readily available if requested.
- Grant applications and review forms will be sent to all members of the Committee, except in cases where there is a conflict of interest.



- Conflict of interest is defined as:
 - 1) A Committee member who is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application.
 - 2) A Committee member who could be seen as a direct competitor of a grant applicant.
 - 3) A Committee member who works for the same institutional department as the grant applicant.
 - 4) Any appointment to organisations funding research in fields that may also be funded by the Psoriasis Association.
 - 5) Any appointment (except for Advisory Board appointments) to a pharmaceutical, biotechnology, bioscience, healthcare or similar company involved in an area relevant to the Psoriasis Association's interests.
- Where there are multiple conflicts of interest within the Committee and external peer reviewers for a particular application, the application will be sent to additional external peer reviewers.
- A minimum of three scientific reviews are required per application. At least one of these three reviews must come from a Medical and Research Committee member.
- Apart from the Trustee who is a member, all other members of the Medical and Research Committee are permitted to apply for funding from the Psoriasis Association. However, they must not comment or score the application nor be present during the discussion of the application.

Membership

- The Committee can have up to ten voting members and is composed of clinicians and academics that are experts in the field of psoriasis and/or psoriatic arthritis. This does not include the Psoriasis Association representatives.
- Diversity among the voting members is ensured for academic institution and areas of expertise as well as career stage. All members are asked to complete a diversity survey every two years to enable the Psoriasis Association to monitor diversity in membership.
- The Chair of the Committee has been chosen for their expertise and ability to chair the meeting.
- One member of the Committee is a Trustee of the Psoriasis Association. To avoid biasing the results of the grant review process, this individual must not vote more than once in the grant review process.
- Members of the Committee are appointed for a three-year term. This may be renewed for a second term of three years before stepping down for a term (three years).
- New members of the Committee are invited on a staggered basis to ensure corporate memory while allowing for the incorporation of new expertise.
- New members of the Committee are invited, and subsequently appointed, based on recommendations from current members of the Committee.



Member Responsibilities

- Members are expected to review and score all the grant applications that they receive from the Psoriasis Association, except in cases of a conflict of interest, and submit their completed review forms by the deadline in January/February.
- Members are expected to attend the annual Medical and Research Committee meeting.
- During the discussions and voting at the meeting, Committee members are required to consider the opinions of both the external peer reviewers and the lay reviewers (the Experts by Experience Committee).
- Except in cases of a conflict of interest, all members are expected to vote and contribute to the discussion at the Medical and Research Committee meeting on whether to recommend each application.
- The Chair is expected to lead the meeting which includes leading on what grant applications to discuss based on the average collated score.
- Psoriasis Association staff will endeavour to identify any conflicts of interest prior to sending the grant applications to members of the Committee. However, should a conflict of interest be present, or arise during the grant review process, then the Committee member is required to declare it and withdraw their review.
- Committee members are required to declare conflicts of interest with any applications or items on the agenda at the beginning of the Medical and Research Committee meeting. They are then required to remove themselves from the meeting for the duration of the discussion about the conflicted application or agenda item.
- Where an application conflicts with multiple members of the Committee, Committee members are expected to suggest suitable alternative reviewers in good time.

Expenses

- The Psoriasis Association will reimburse Committee members for any reasonable travel expenses associated with attending the Medical and Research Committee meeting.

Staff Involvement

- Psoriasis Association staff will attend the Medical and Research Committee meeting in an admin and support capacity. They will not be able to vote, however, if called upon, the staff member will report and clarify the views of any reviewers that are unable to attend the meeting in order to assist the Committee with making their decisions.
- Staff will also support the Medical and Research Committee throughout the grant review process and will act as an intermediary between applicants and the Committee.

Reviewing Terms of Reference

- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as needed but at least once every two years.