

Principles of Peer Review

Myeloma UK is an Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) member charity and adheres to the principle of peer review as set out by the AMRC; the guidance document can be found on the AMRC website <https://www.amrc.org.uk/principles-of-peer-review>

Myeloma UK funds research in a broad range of areas and may convene specialist Advisory Groups which are call or subject specific. All Boards and funding panels are set up in line with the following AMRC principles:

Accountability: Charities are open and transparent about their peer review procedures and publish details of the process, including the names of the members of scientific advisory committees or other decision-making bodies.

Balance: Scientific advisory committees reflect a fair balance of experience and scientific disciplines which are relevant to the research area.

Independent decision making: The scientific advisory committee is independent of the charity's administrative staff and trustees.

Rotation of scientific advisers: Scientific advisory committee members have a fixed term of office.

Impartiality: Scientific advisory committees should include a significant number of non-beneficiaries of research grants. There is a conflict of interest policy and potential beneficiaries to research funding are not present when decisions are made.

All competitive research applications will be peer reviewed. Applications submitted undergo triage by the Research team for completeness, eligibility of Principal Investigator and remit against the grant round. Applications submitted which are incomplete or outside the call remit will be referred to Chair of the Research Advisory Group who will decide if the application will progress to peer review.

We seek for peer review to be appropriate to the value of the funding, meaningful to the subject and reflect our broad spectrum of research. In line with AMRC recommendations, we will seek to achieve at least two written reviews for any research application with a financial value over £25,000 per annum.

We will convene funding panels relevant to the Grant Round and in line with our Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Accountability

Myeloma UK embraces openness, transparency and accountability. We will publish the following information on our Research portfolio:

- Research Advisory Group membership details

- Myeloma UK Conflict of Interest policy

- Research funded by Myeloma UK including: Principal Investigator (PI's), institution, value of award (where open) and lay summary.

- Research calls which are open

Feedback and success rate are provided to all applicants at the end of the process, the peer reviewers' details are anonymised.

As an AMRC member charity, we ask all peer reviewers, internal and external to assess and comment on the replacement, refinement and reduction (3Rs) of animals in research applications. The guidance for peer reviewers contains resources to support this. All research applications which involve non-human primates, cats, dogs and equine species are referred to the National Centres for 3R's for special review.

Balance

Myeloma UK is committed to ensuring a fair balance of experience and scientific disciplines. We aim to ensure any funding panel and the Research Advisory Group is comprised of a range of relevant experts. We seek to avoid discrimination on any panel on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity or geographical spread. Research Advisory Group, panel and peer reviewers are sought from the field of myeloma, or aligned disciplines. We seek to identify experts using a range of methods; working alongside specialists in the field, receiving recommendations from current members or experts in the field and through research grant applicants.

In line with AMRC best practice guidance, the Research Advisory Group must be comprised of at least five members. We aim to ensure appropriate cover across all disciplines and breadth of research we support. The Research Advisory Group will report to the Research and Clinical Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees.

Independent decision making

The Research Advisory Group and any funding panels are an independent committee from the Board. No Board member can be a member of the Research Advisory Group.

The Research Advisory Group or any funding panels may invite a member of the Board as an observer to the decision-making meeting where research applications are reviewed and discussed.

Should a Research Advisory Group member decide to join the Board, they must step down from the Research Advisory Group (or vice versa).

All research funding decisions and recommendations are made by the panels. Myeloma UK staff are involved in the administration of the research grant round process, they provide secretariat and ensure compliance with Myeloma UK's research management procedures.

Any decision-making meeting of the Research Advisory Group or funding panels must have at least three members to be quorate. When arranging any meeting, as much notice as possible should be given as members may have clinical, teaching or academic commitments.

Rotation of Members of the Research Advisory Group

Research Advisory Group members are appointed for a specific period of office.

Chair will serve for a maximum of three years

Term of office for each member is three years, a second consecutive term of up to three years may be offered

It is necessary to have staggered membership dates to ensure a degree of continuity for the committee.

Previous Research Advisory Group members who have either completed their term of office or have stood down must have at least a three year period of absence before re-joining.

Impartiality

No more than 50% of the Research Advisory Group can hold current open grants from Myeloma UK during their tenure on the Research Advisory Group. Each Research Advisory Group member is required to declare any Conflict of Interest on joining and members will be asked to update this annually. Peer reviewers are sent the Conflict of Interest Policy and asked to read it and raise any issues before committing to review a project.

Research Advisory Group or funding panel members who are connected to a grant proposal, must declare a Conflict of Interest. They must absent themselves from the relevant part of any meeting where any grant they are connected with is discussed.

An individual is deemed to have such a connection when they are:

the sole applicant a joint applicant or a named collaborator a relative of one of the grant applicants a business partner of one of the applicants a member or employee of the same university or institution as one of the grant applicants

Myeloma UK may exclude Research Advisory Group members from discussion when:

They are a direct competitor of the applicant.

They have acted as an external referee or served on another Committee in respect of a proposal when it was considered by another funding body.

In the event of the Chair of the Research Advisory Group applying for funding, they must absent themselves from the whole research grant round and the Deputy Chair will take on the duties of the Chair.

Single Institute Funding

Myeloma UK does not fund a Single Institute.

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