



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

# Terms of Reference

## Scientific Review Subcommittee

Version 1

August 2016

# Contents

1. Purpose	2
2. Overview	2
3. Role of the SRS	2
4. Functions	2
5. Scope of responsibility	2
6. Accountability of the HREC	2
7. Membership	3
7.1 Committee composition	3
7.2 Appointment of members	3
7.3 Responsibilities of SRS members	3
8. Meetings	4
9. Secretariat	4
10. Communication	5
11. Amendment to the ToR	5

## *Document history*

Editor	Date	Version	Amendments
HREC Office	April 2016	-	Terms of reference drafted.
HREC Office	August 2016	V1	Terms of reference circulated to members for comment.

# 1. Purpose

The purpose of these Terms of Reference (ToR) is to serve as a guide to the responsibilities, functions and status of the Scientific Review Subcommittee (SRS) established by the Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park Health Care Group (SCGHOPHCG) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

# 2. Overview

The SRS was established to provide advice to investigators on the scientific rigour of proposed research. While the SRS reviews the scientific merit of proposed research, the HREC is responsible for approving proposed research in line with its ToR and Standard Operating Procedures.

These ToR should be read in conjunction with the Standard Operating Procedures which provide a detailed outline of the processes and procedures for reviewing, approving and monitoring research within the SCGOPHCG.

# 3. Role of the SRS

The role of the SRS is to ensure the scientific merit of research being conducted within the SCGOPHCG.

# 4. Functions

The SRS, in line with the Standard Operating Procedures, will perform the following functions:

- consider the scientific merit of all proposed research involving human participants, and
- refer scientifically acceptable proposals to the HREC for consideration.

# 5. Scope of responsibility

5.1 For all proposed research submitted to the HREC, the SRS is responsible for:

- reviewing the scientific rigour of all research involving human participants
- providing scientific advice to investigators, and
- referring studies on the HREC for ethical review

5.2 The SRS is not responsible for reviewing proposed clinical drug trials.

# 6. Accountability of the HREC

6.1 The SRS is accountable to the SCGOPHCG HREC and must provide all meeting minutes and records of decisions for noting by this committee.

## 7. Membership

### 7.1 Committee composition

7.1.1 Minimum membership shall comprise of nine members. The minimum membership shall include:

- one Chair
- two physicians of diverse professional calling
- one laboratory researcher
- two nursing researchers, and
- two allied health researchers of diverse professional calling.

7.1.2 The SRS may co-opt expertise as required for review of specific proposals or issues, with support of the Chair. Where this is the case, unless otherwise agreed by the SRS, the secretariat will coordinate obtaining such expertise.

### 7.2 Appointment of members

7.2.1 Members are appointed as individuals for their own knowledge and experience, rather than as representatives of an organisation, group or opinion.

7.2.2 All membership, including the Chair, shall be approved by the Chair of the HREC.

7.2.3 Members will be appointed to serve a three year term. Reappointment is by application to the Chair.

7.2.4 Members shall receive a letter of appointment which includes the date of appointment, length of tenure, assurance that indemnity will be provided in respect of liabilities that may arise in the course of bona fide conduct of their duties as a HREC member, the circumstances whereby membership may be terminated and the conditions of their appointment.

### 7.3 Responsibilities of SRS members

7.3.1 SRS members will:

- attend meetings regularly or provide sufficient notice if unable to attend. If unable to attend members should provide written feedback on the proposals under review, unless otherwise arranged
- come to meetings prepared for the relevant discussion
- participate in relevant specialised working groups as required
- sign a declaration of confidentiality upon appointment, and
- notify the Chair of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that exist or arise during their tenure on the SRS

- 7.3.2 Members shall not be paid a sitting fee for attendance at the meeting.
- 7.3.3 Should a member wish to resign from their position, the member is to notify the Chair, in writing, copied to the secretariat. The Chair, with input from the secretariat, is responsible for appointing a replacement.
- 7.3.4 The Chair of may terminate the appointment of any SRS member for reasons, including:
- failure to disclose a conflict of interest, or
  - failure to fulfil his/her obligations as a SRS member

## 8. Meetings

- 8.1 The SRS shall meet on a monthly basis, a minimum of 11 times in a calendar year. Meeting dates will be agreed in advance by the SRS and HREC. These dates will be published online, along with associated submission dates.
- 8.2 In the absence of the Chair, a proxy Chair will be nominated to complete the required duties for the duration of the meeting.
- 8.3 The SRS will consider every correctly completed application that it receives at its next available meeting following receipt.
- 8.4 The secretariat shall circulate the completed application material to all members at least seven days prior to the meeting.
- 8.5 Any member of the SRS who has any interest, financial or otherwise, in a research proposal or other related matter(s) considered by the SRS, should declare such interest to the Chair. The member will withdraw from the meeting until the SRS's consideration of the relevant matter has been completed. The member will not participate in the discussions and will not be entitled to vote in the decision with respect to the matter. The departure of any member who declares a conflict of interest will be noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- 8.6 There is no quorum requirement for the SRS.
- 8.7 The SRS will endeavour to reach a decision concerning the ethical acceptability of a proposal by general agreement. Any significant minority opinions will be minuted.
- 8.8 The secretariat may, on behalf of the Chair, invite investigators to attend an SRS meeting in order to provide clarification on a research proposal.

## 9. Secretariat

- 9.1 The Department of Research will provide secretariat support to the SRS including:
- maintaining responsibility for all communication with investigators, unless otherwise agreed by the Chair
  - organising meetings of the SRS
  - maintaining up-to-date membership details and distribution lists
  - attending to all meeting documentation

- recording the minutes of SRS meetings
- providing timely updates and communication with committee members
- providing timely communication and advice to investigators
- providing reports in line with governance requirements, and
- maintaining records in line with institutional, state and federal requirements.

## 10. Communication

10.1 The SRS will utilise both formal and informal methods of communication, placing importance on face-to-face meetings especially if any issues regarding proposed research has not been resolved by written or telephone communication.

10.2 Following the meeting of the SRS, investigators will be notified promptly of the outcome of the meeting.

## 11. Amendment to the ToR

11.1 These ToR may be amended following a formal written proposal to the SRS. For any change to be ratified the proposal must:

- be circulated to all members
- be discussed and voted upon at a meeting of the SRS. Any member unable to attend such a meeting may register his or her views in writing, and
- supported by at least two thirds of the members of the SRS

11.2 The Chairperson shall send the amendment to the HREC for review and approval.

© Department of Health 2016

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.