



Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund Research Expert Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund scheme was established in July 2020 and is enabled by the *Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012* (the Act). The FHRI Fund aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the Western Australian (WA) population, improve efficiency of the WA health system and increase economic prosperity of WA through provision of competitive grant funding.

The Advisory Council for the FHRI Fund (Advisory Council) is responsible for developing strategies and setting priorities for the FHRI Fund in the field of medical research and innovation. Upon request by the Minister for Medical Research (Minister) or the Department of Health (the Department), the Advisory Council provides advice in relation to making or approving arrangements (Programs and Initiatives) and the Minister must seek a recommendation from the Advisory Council regarding how money standing to the credit of the FHRI Account should be applied during the financial year.

Due to the high-level, strategic nature of the Advisory Council, Expert Committees will be formed as required to provide advice about contemporary issues and opportunities, to contribute specialist knowledge, or to assist with peer review processes to select funding recipients.

Standing Expert Committees may be established where ongoing advice is required by the Minister, the Advisory Council or the Department. The Advisory Council is responsible for the establishment of the Standing Research Expert Committee. Interstate and international members may be enlisted to Expert Committees as required.

Key performance criteria for Expert Committees include appropriateness and transparency of recommendations, and the quality and efficiency of their meetings.

2. Purpose

The FHRI Fund Research Expert Committee (Committee) will provide expert advice and/or recommendations to the Department and Advisory Council on activities, matters and emerging areas of opportunity related to health and medical research in WA.

3. Delegated authorities and reporting

The Committee has no delegated authorities or independent decision-making powers. The Advisory Council retains the responsibility for making recommendation to the Minister and the Deputy Director General retains the responsibility for decision making on matters related to implementation of approved recommendations.

4. Accountability

The Committee is accountable to the Advisory Council, through the Office of Medical Research and Innovation (OMRI) at the Department.

5. Membership

Committee members will have demonstrated leadership, experience and expertise related to health and medical research in WA and will be appointed on recommendation by the Advisory Council.

The Committee will comprise of:

- the Director, Research, OMRI or a nominee (non-voting, Chair).
- a nominated Advisory Council member.
- a member with lived experience and expertise in consumer and community involvement in health and medical research.
- a leading Indigenous researcher with expertise in Aboriginal health research in WA.
- no less than 4 leading WA researchers who are:
 - currently active in research with a minimum of 0.5 FTE dedicated research time
 - Fellows of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.
 - experts in their fields with an appropriate spread of expertise across:
 - universities, medical research institutes, health service providers and private research entities
 - each of the NHMRC broad research areas of:
 - basic science research
 - clinical medicine and science research
 - health services research
 - public/population health research.

The Committee may also comprise of:

- other experts in their field whom, taken together, the Advisory Council considers to provide a suitable blend of expertise and experience that will benefit the purpose of the Committee in the strategic focus areas of the FHRI Fund Strategy and the WA Health and Medical Research Strategy. This may include leaders of philanthropy, industry or national/international research institutions.

6. Appointment

Appointment to the Committee will be through an Expression of Interest process. Recommendations for appointment will be made by the Secretariat to the Advisory Council for their endorsement or may be through direct invitation by the Advisory Council to individuals with suitable expertise and experience.

7. Term of Committee

The term of membership is expected to be for up to three years, but at the discretion of the Advisory Council, this can be adjusted to the time required to effectively assist

the Department or the Advisory Council in the design, development and implementation of specific activities relevant to the FHRI Fund.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Committee chair

The Chair of the Committee is the Director, Research, OMRI. In the Chair's absence, the Director will nominate another Department representative or Committee member to Chair the Committee.

The role of the Chair is to:

- ensure that the Committee's decisions and recommended actions are documented and communicated to the Advisory Council as required.
- recommend to the Advisory Council, members and/or changes in membership of the Committee.
- determine the scope and duration of Committee activities.
- extend invitations to relevant experts with specific technical expertise to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis when required.
- ensure members are aware of their roles and responsibilities through the provision of these Terms of Reference, including the management of conflicts of interest and adherence with other relevant policies and procedures.
- facilitate the functions and actions of the Committee, in the context of the requirements, roles and responsibilities of the Department and the FHRI Fund.
- ensure the effective conduct of Committee procedures and activities.
- convene and conduct meetings, as required.
- brief members on issues arising during the term of the Committee's functions.

8.2 Committee member

The role of a Committee member is to:

- provide advice, guidance and recommendations to the Department and Advisory Council in relation to activities of the FHRI Fund including the design and development of FHRI Fund Programs and Initiatives.
- provide advice and guidance on appropriate sector engagement relating to matters, activities and emerging areas of opportunity related to health and medical research in WA.
- participate in three-yearly Committee Performance Reviews and be named in the FHRI Fund Annual Report that corresponds to the year in which the Performance Review is completed noting this may occur after the end of a member's tenure.
- act in the best interests of the Department and the FHRI Fund.
- identify, disclose, manage, and resolve potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- maintain confidentiality of the activities relating to the Committee.
- engage with all parties appropriately and respectfully.
- respond to requests for advice, guidance, and meeting attendance in a timely manner to ensure efficient and effective functioning of the Committee.

9. Remuneration

Committee member positions are unpaid, with the exception of the consumer and community involvement representative who will be reimbursed in accordance with Department policy.

10. Operational procedures

10.1 Meetings

- There will be a minimum of two scheduled meetings per year.
- The Secretariat will be responsible for taking minutes and noting actions.
- Minutes and actions will be presented to the members via email for endorsement, with any amendments noted.
- A quorum for meetings will comprise at least 50 per cent of the members.
- Nominations of proxies are not permitted. Members not attending a meeting are expected to review papers for that meeting and send feedback and comments to the Secretariat prior to that meeting date.
- Committee members may participate in meetings remotely or in person.

10.2 Out of session requests

- The secretariat may from time to time send an out of session request for advice, feedback or decision to Committee members.

10.3 Secretariat

The OMRI will provide secretariat support for the Committee.

10.4 Recordkeeping

The Secretariat will prepare a record of documentation relating to the Committee and will keep files of at least the following:

- Correspondence and papers circulated to the Committee.
- Agendas, meeting papers and meeting minutes.
- Conflicts of Interest Register.

The files are the property of the Department and must be preserved in accordance with the *State Records Act 2000* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

10.5 Decision-making

Decisions of the Committee will be made by consensus of all members present at the time the matter is discussed.

11. Integrity and Governance

Operations of the Committee will be governed by the Governance Framework of the Western Australia Future Health Research and Innovation Fund.

11.1 Acceptance of Terms of Reference

Before performing any role of the Committee, members are to read, understand and

agree to the provisions in these Terms of Reference by signing this document.

11.2 Conflicts of interest

- Each Committee member is responsible for identifying and disclosing conflicts of interest. An interest is a personal connection or involvement with something or someone that might be thought to compromise that person's impartiality in carrying out their professional duties. An interest is anything that can have an impact on an individual or group. Interests may be personal, or related to family members or close associates, and may be financial, commercial, employment-related or political in nature. Interests may be direct or indirect, pecuniary, or non-pecuniary. Other definitions are set out in Appendix A.
- A conflict of interest is a conflict between professional responsibilities (e.g. as a Committee member) to act in the public interest and personal interests.
- There are three main types of conflicts to be identified, disclosed, managed and resolved:
 - Actual conflicts of interest: These involve a direct conflict between professional duties and other private interests.
 - Perceived conflicts of interest: These can exist where it appears that other interests could improperly influence a professional duty, whether or not this is the case.
 - Potential conflicts of interest: These arise when private interest could conflict with professional duties in the future.
- The Secretariat will:
 - Record disclosures in the conflicts of interest register.
 - Monitor disclosures and raise awareness when needed through reviewing the conflicts of interest register before circulating material to the Committee.

11.3 Code of Ethics

The *Commissioner's Instruction No 40 – Ethical Foundations* sets out the minimum standards of conduct and integrity to be complied with by all public sector employees. It is the expectation that individuals who are Committee members and who are not public sector employees, also adhere to the minimum standards set out below.

Standard 1: Integrity – to:

- act honestly and uphold the trust placed in us by the community
- use our position and authority for the purpose intended
- provide objective and timely advice to the government of the day
- ensure our behaviour upholds the good reputation of our public sector body and the public sector.

Standard 2: Impartiality – to:

- make considered and unbiased decisions based on merit
- place the public interest over our personal interest
- declare and manage conflicts of interest
- implement government priorities, policies and decisions impartially.

Standard 3: Respect for others – to:

- communicate with and treat people with respect
- treat people fairly, having regard for their diverse backgrounds

- work together constructively, inclusively and professionally.

Standard 4: Trust and accountability – to:

- take responsibility for our time, decisions, actions and behaviours
- be responsive and provide considered advice and information to others
- make decisions that ensure the best use of resources for now and the future access, use and disclose information only where we are authorised to do so
- record our decisions for transparency allowing for review and scrutiny.

11.4 Code of conduct

The Committee will adhere to the following:

- members must disclose conflicts of interest.
- Unless expressly indicated, discussion and issues remain confidential to the Committee.
- confidentiality is to be managed in accordance with the Department *Code of Conduct Policy* (MP 0124/19).
- members must not permit personal prejudice to influence their role on the panel. Members should be aware of how their own biases (conscious or unconscious) could affect their role on the Committee.
- members must not take advantage of knowledge or information obtained during their role on the Committee process for personal and professional gain.
- Feedback is to be provided within requested timeframes.
- Resolution of dissenting issues shall be achieved by a vote of members present and the Chair shall have the casting vote.
- The Committee, through or at the direction of the Chair, is able to co-opt/seek expert advice on an as-needed basis.

12. Reporting

Reporting relevant to the Committee involves:

- Key outcomes arising from the Committee's activities and meetings will be documented in the meeting minutes and reported to the Advisory Council, and if relevant, to the Minister for Medical Research.
- A direct line of communication to be established with the Advisory Council through the nominated Advisory Council membership on the Committee.
- A provision for the Committee to present directly to the Advisory Council if deemed necessary.
- A summary of the Committee's purpose, composition, performance, and outcomes to be included in the FHRI Fund annual report.
- Outcomes of annual Committee performance reviews and recommended improvements to the Committees functions reported to the Committee and the Advisory Council.

13. Review

The Advisory Council may review and amend the Terms of Reference and activities of the Committee at any time. The Secretariat shall be responsible for initiating and managing this process.

14. Dispute Resolution

Any disputes arising from the activities of the Committee will be referred to the Deputy Director General, of the Department, who will make a considered and final decision on the matter

Document Control

These Terms of Reference shall be amended only with the approval of the Chair.

Version	Amendment date	Description of revision	Approved
1.0	NA	Terms of Reference finalised	April 2024

Declaration by Committee Member

I, _____, agree to abide by the Terms of Reference provided in this present document.

Signature

Date

Appendix A

Actual conflict of interest	There is a real conflict of interest between a Research Expert Committee (Committee) member's public duties and private interests. Where a person's duties as a member of the Committee may be unduly influenced by a secondary interest (such as a personal or competing professional interest, including secondary employment or office).
Conflict of interest	A situation arising from conflict between the performance of public duty and private or personal interests. Conflicts of interest may be actual, or perceived to exist, or potentially exist at some time in the future.
Conflicts of duty	Where a member has more than one official or professional role with a competitive relationship. No private interest is involved or apparent. It also includes a conflict between a member's duty to the Committee and another duty that the member has (or example, to another organisation or committee).
Conflicts of Interest Register	A record of all identified conflicts of interest that are raised at meetings of the Committee or in the performance of its functions. It records the date the declaration was made and by whom, the nature of the conflict, the type of conflict (actual, potential or perceived) and proposed management plan.
Integrity	Broadly refers to the expected standards of behaviour and actions which reflect honesty, accountability, transparency, impartiality, and acting with care and diligence.
Non-pecuniary interest	An interest which does not relate to money but which may relate to a non-financial gain or loss to a person or someone associated with them. For example, relative family member, friendship membership of an association, society or trade union or involvement (or interest) in an activity. They include any tendency toward favour or prejudice resulting from friendship, animosity or other personal involvement that could bias judgement or decisions.
Partiality (favouritism, cronyism and nepotism)	Preferential treatment given by a member to another individual or group over the interests of others with equal claim to the same treatment.
Pecuniary interest	An interest associated with a reasonable likelihood of expectation of any financial gain or loss to a person or to someone associated with them, for example relative, friends, partners or work colleagues.
Perceived conflict of interest	The public or third party could form the view that Committee member has a private interest that could improperly influence their decisions or actions, now or in the future, whether or not this is in fact the case.
Potential conflict of interest	A Committee member has private interests that could conflict with their public duties. This refers to circumstances where it is foreseeable that a conflict may arise in future and steps should be taken now to mitigate that future risk.
Role conflict (dual roles, competing interests)	When two or more interests conflict with one another. This situation may occur between an individual's professional duties and their private interests or duties. It may also occur when the individual has two or more official / professional roles that come into conflict through the different duties expected from each role.