

Research Advisory Committee: Code of Practice

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide members of the committee with clear guidelines as to their standard of behaviour, responsibilities, and best practice in fulfilling their obligations to Cerebra. The document should be read in conjunction with the RAC Terms of Reference, Cerebra's Conflicts of Interest Policy, and research strategy.

2. The role and remit of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

2.1 The Research Advisory Committee fulfils the following functions:

- To make research grant funding recommendations in a manner consistent with Cerebra's research strategy;
- To evaluate current research projects Cerebra is funding; and
- To provide scientific advice which will inform Cerebra's research strategy.

2.2 Review of Applications

Members of the RAC shall be invited to review and score shortlisted grant applications.

An in house triage and external peer review will take place prior, as per Cerebra's funding approval process; RAC members are requested to review applications as well as comments submitted. All associated files and documentation will be sent to them, and members should review their files and notify Cerebra staff immediately of any potential Conflicts of Interest.

It is imperative that all RAC members who have been allocated applications for a funding should ensure they attend the meeting. Attendance comprises of submitting scores and written review comments in advance of the meeting and attending in person for the entire meeting duration.

3. Current Research Evaluation

RAC members will be invited to evaluate the impact of Cerebra's current research.

This will involve reviewing an interim evaluation report, and any other relevant documentation, and site visits where the opportunity to interview researchers further will be accommodated. Members will be then expected to provide a written report on their findings, expressing an accurate and impartial opinion on the merit of the research assessed.

4. Inform the Development of Cerebra's Research Strategy

RAC members will be invited to review and comment on the Cerebra draft research strategy in terms of its scientific and research value. Comments will be used to inform the development of this strategy.

3. Role and Responsibilities of the RAC Chair

An independent Chair of the RAC will be appointed with the same Terms of Office as other RAC members as set out in the Terms of Reference.

The Chair must be impartial, independent and must sign and abide by Cerebra's Conflicts of Interest Policy.

If the Chair is to be absent for all or part of a meeting of the RAC, an Acting Chair will be elected by the committee members for the duration of the meeting.

The Chair has responsibility for the operation and output of the Committee. The role of Chair is to ensure the following practices are followed:

- RAC members act appropriately and impartially throughout the meeting;
- Adherence to and active implementation of Cerebra's Conflicts of Interest Policy;
- RAC members abide by this Code of Practice for the duration of any review process;
- The full range of scientific opinion is taken into account;
- Sufficient explanation is provided from RAC members for applications not selected for funding, in order to provide adequate feedback to the applicant(s);
- Every member of the RAC has the opportunity to be heard and no opinion is ignored;
- The views of the Research Support Network (RSN) are appropriately taken into account and any queries or concerns raised are suitably acknowledged and addressed;
- Any significant diversity of opinion is fully explored and discussed, and even in cases where it cannot be resolved, it should be accurately recorded;
- The proceedings of the RAC meeting are accurately minuted to provide a clear and detailed record of the meeting and the decisions made.

4. Responsibilities of RAC members

4.1 General

It is the responsibility of each RAC member to:

- Be familiar with the AMRC's Principles of Peer Review;
- Familiarise themselves with the "Nolan Principles", and act in accordance with them;
- Ensure the committee's recommendations have a direct benefit to the families of children affected by brain conditions and make effective use of charitable funds;
- Act with impartiality of their own research interests at all times, considering what is best for Cerebra and its beneficiaries;
- Be aware and committed to the objectives, vision and values of Cerebra;
- Accept the responsibilities of their role (as set out in the RAC Terms of Reference);
- Follow the policies and procedures of the charity, making sure to obtain a working knowledge of such documents.
- Have a thorough understanding of Cerebra's Research Strategy and any additional priorities or restrictions around the research that the organisation will and will not fund;
- Keep all information submitted to them (organisational and individual) secure and confidential at all times.
- Use Cerebra's resources responsibly, and when claiming expenses do so in line with the charity's expense policy.
- Members should be prepared to spend an appropriate amount of time reading papers and preparing for review meetings. A minimum attendance of 75% of all meetings is required of Members to ensure that best practice in governance is reached and maintained.

4.2 Confidentiality and Managing interests

Members of the RAC have to manage conflicts of interest responsibly and effectively by self- declaration of any Conflicts of Interest, or potential Conflicts of Interest, throughout the research grant review process and at the earliest time this becomes known to them, in accordance with the RAC Terms of Reference.

All RAC members agree to abide by Cerebra's Conflict of Interest Policy and must commit to take responsibility for their own impartiality and integrity. Self-declaration of any Conflict of Interest or potential Conflict of Interest is a key requirement, as soon as it becomes known within the review process. Members are accountable to Cerebra for their actions, and as such decision making and governance issues should be as transparent as possible.

4.3 Meetings/Teleconferences

RAC members will be invited to attend meetings/teleconferences when appropriate. If attendance proves problematic members should notify staff as soon as.

Members should prepare fully for all meetings/teleconferences. This will include reading all the information supplied, thinking through issues and completing any tasks assigned in the agreed time.

When attending meetings, RAC members are encouraged to engage in discussion, contribute their opinion in a considered and constructive way, challenge sensitively and avoiding conflict.

4.4 Governance

Members of the RAC must develop and maintain a sound and up-to-date knowledge of charity best practice. This includes an understanding of the charity's activities, the nature and extent of its work and the external environment in which it operates.

Ensure when attending meetings that they are available to commit to the day in full, allowing for full participation right from the start time until the finish time of the meeting, as per the agenda.

4.5 Working with others

Members of the RAC are expected to treat members of staff, other RAC members, volunteers and anyone else they come into contact with at Cerebra with respect and courtesy. Where members also volunteer with the charity, they must maintain the separation of their role as a RAC member and as a volunteer.

Members should not make public comments about the charity unless authorised to do so and must inform staff of any engagements to speak publicly on any subject related to the work of the charity.

5. Leaving RAC

RAC members need to be aware that:

- Substantial breach of any part of this code may result in procedures being put in motion that may result in their removal from the committee.
- If members wish to stop being a RAC member at any time, they have to inform the charity in writing, stating their reasons for leaving.

6. Review

The charity will revise this Code of Conduct on a regular basis and notify members of amendments.

Full name (Block Capitals)

Signature

Date completed

The Research team can assist with any enquiries. Please contact Georgia Mappa
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