

Research Grants Review and Oversight Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Research Grants Review and Oversight Committee ("the Committee") is established to provide independent oversight of research grant application processes and funding recommendations. The Committee will ensure that grant funding decisions are made transparently, fairly, consistently, and in alignment with the organisation's strategic research priorities and available funding.

2. Objectives

The Committee will:

- Review and assess grant applications against approved funding criteria.
- Ensure applications are evaluated in a fair, objective, and impartial manner.
- Recommend projects for funding based on merit, feasibility, impact, and strategic alignment.
- Monitor compliance with relevant ethical, legal, and organisational requirements.
- Promote transparency and accountability in the allocation of research funding.
- Identify and manage actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

3. Scope of Responsibilities

The Committee will:

Application Review

- Assess all eligible grant applications submitted under the relevant funding round.
- Consider the scientific quality, methodology, feasibility, budget, and expected outcomes of proposed research.
- Seek external expert advice where specialist knowledge is required.

Funding Recommendations

- Rank or prioritise applications based on agreed assessment criteria.
- Recommend applications for approval, amendment, deferral, or decline.
- Provide a record of decisions and rationale for funding recommendations.

Oversight

- Ensure adherence to funding guidelines and evaluation procedures.
- Review any concerns, appeals, or complaints relating to the assessment process.
- Recommend improvements to grant processes and assessment criteria.

4. Membership

The Committee shall comprise:

- Chairperson (selected from within the membership and approved by Board of Trustees).
- 3–5 members with relevant expertise in research, funding, governance, or subject matter disciplines.
- An administrative secretary (non-voting) to support Committee operations.
- Membership should collectively provide appropriate expertise and diversity of perspectives.

5. Appointment and Tenure

- Members will be appointed for a term of up to three years, renewable by mutual agreement.
- Members may resign by providing written notice to the Chair.
- Vacancies may be filled at the discretion of the MND NZ Board of Trustees.
- As this is a voluntary function, no remuneration is offered, and expenses are expected to be limited, if any – it is intended that the committee will meet virtually. Any expenses will be considered on a case by case basis by the MND NZ Chief Executive.

6. Conflict of Interest

- Members must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest before consideration of applications.
- Members with a conflict must not participate in discussions or decisions relating to the affected application unless specifically authorised by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.
- All conflicts and actions taken shall be documented and a management plan put in place by the Chief Executive.

7. Meetings

- The Committee will meet as required to review applications and make funding recommendations.
- Meetings may be conducted in person, virtually, or through approved electronic means.
- Meeting papers will be circulated at least five working days prior to each meeting where practicable.

8. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of:

- The Chair (or delegated nominee), and
- At least 50% of appointed voting members.

9. Decision-Making

- Decisions should preferably be reached by consensus.
- Where consensus cannot be achieved, decisions will be made by a majority vote of members present.
- In the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- Approval of grant funding will be made by the Committee, within the delegated budget in turn approved by the Board of Trustees when each financial year's budget is set.

10. Confidentiality

Committee members must:

- Maintain confidentiality regarding applications, deliberations, funding recommendations, and applicant information.
- Use application materials solely for Committee business.
- Comply with applicable privacy and data protection requirements.

11. Reporting

The Committee will provide:

- Funding recommendations to the MND NZ Board of Trustees.
- A summary report following each funding round outlining the review process, decisions, and any significant issues identified.
- Recommendations for continual improvement of the grants programme.

12. Administrative Support

Administrative support will be provided by the MND NZ and will include:

- Meeting scheduling and coordination.
- Preparation and distribution of papers.
- Minute-taking and record management.
- Communication with applicants as directed.

13. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required, to ensure they remain fit for purpose and aligned with organisational requirements.

14. Authority

The Committee acts in an advisory and oversight capacity. Final approval of grant funding remains with the MND NZ Board of Trustees unless otherwise delegated.

Approved by: Board Approval by email (CE note)

Date: 23 July 2026

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