



## **Medical Advisory Committee**

### **Terms of Reference**

The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust's Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) provides independent scientific advice to ensure that the Trust invests its funds as effectively as possible and in line with the charity's mission.

The Committee will be asked to advise the Board of Trustees and the Trust Director on its research strategy, to make recommendations as to which research grants the charity should support and to recommend change and development as appropriate. Members of the Committee will be selected to ensure a broad range of relevant expertise and experience from clinicians and researchers.

### **Introduction**

The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, the research funded by the Trust is of the highest quality and delivers cutting edge translational results. The Trust will continue to develop its strategy for research investment, taking into account the global research effort and scientific advice. This document sets out the role and membership of the Committee.

### **Role of members**

1. To maintain an overview of biomedical research to identify and make recommendations on the most appropriate areas for research investment.
2. To maintain an overview of research projects previously funded by the Trust, including areas, results, impact and research spend.
3. To make recommendations on existing processes for calling research applications, to evaluate external peer review feedback and the process in which the Trust makes decisions on which applications to fund.

## **Research strategy**

To provide advice on the Trust's research strategy, keep under review the achievement by the Trust of its agreed research strategy and to recommend changes as appropriate.

## **Integrity and Confidentiality**

1. To assess all research investment processes undertaken by the Trust and the research institutions funded, against the highest standards of ethical and research best practice.
2. To support the AMRC's position statement on the use of animals in research.
3. To maintain strict confidentiality ensuring all verbal or written information shared is kept within the MAC.

## **Peer review**

1. External and internal reviews are used for deciding the scientific quality of research applications.
2. Applications will be assessed by a minimum of two external experts with appropriate experience and expertise relating to the application. Once external reviewers have provided a written report on the research application, their feedback is passed onto the MAC to assist in assessment of the applications.
3. The MAC is the Trust's internal peer review committee, made up of independent experts, who, on behalf of the charity, assess applications and make recommendations for funding to the Board of Trustees.

## **Conflict of Interests**

1. The MAC operates within the Trust's conflicts of interest policy. All members must declare any interests which may potentially cause a conflict in the course of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as a committee member.
2. Members of the Committee, other than the Chair, are eligible to apply for funding but he/she must be absent from the meeting room whilst the application is being discussed. He/she would not be shown the external review reports.

## **Independence**

The Chair attends meetings of the Board of Trustees to report on the work of the Committee. The Chair may only vote on whether applications should be funded once; at the Committee meeting.

## **Working Meetings**

1. The MAC will usually meet three times a year (unless agreed otherwise):
  - a. January – to ‘long list’ applications to The Sir Jules Thorn Award for Biomedical Research and consider other business relevant to the Trust’s funding of medical research.
  - b. July – to review the results of the peer review process, short list applications to The Sir Jules Thorn Award for Biomedical Research and consider other business relevant to the Trust’s funding of medical research.
  - c. September – to interview short listed applicants to The Sir Jules Thorn Award for Biomedical Research and provide a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.
2. The usual quorum for meetings will be 60% of the current MAC membership.
3. Members are required to declare at the beginning of every meeting if they have a conflict of interest with any agenda item.
4. The Committee will endeavour to take decisions by consensus. However, in the event of a vote being taken each member will have one vote with the Chairman holding the casting vote.
5. The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust staff or trustees may be in attendance at a meeting but will not be involved in the committee's decision process on research applications.
6. Members may also be contacted in-between meetings to ask for specific advice, including review of applications to The Sir Jules Thorn PhD Scholarship Programme and comment on reports arising from medical research funded by the Trust.

## **Membership**

1. The number of members may vary according to the skills and expertise required for the Committee to function effectively.
2. Membership of the MAC is by invitation only, with potential new members being recommended by existing Committee members or identified by other means, including previous Award winners, reviewers or interview experts. New members will be appointed on the basis of their expertise in fields relevant to the Committee’s work. MAC will also look to

encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in its membership, reflecting the research community.

3. The Chair and members of the MAC will be co-opted onto the committee by the charity's Board of Trustees for a three-year term. This term may be renewed for a second term of up to three years.
4. MAC will nominate a Chair from amongst its existing members, on the basis of his/her expertise, skills and experience of comparable review panels for other research funders. The Committee's nomination will be subject to confirmation by the Board of Trustees. The Chair will normally serve for a period of three years, with their appointment co-terminus with their term as a member of the Committee.

### **Remuneration and Reimbursement**

1. All members of the committee will be reimbursed for any reasonable travel costs and any other pre-authorised expenses incurred in the role. Travel should be undertaken by the most reasonable economic means. Reimbursement will be made in arrears on production of a valid receipt or other evidence of expenditure.
2. MAC members may receive an annual honorarium in recognition of the time spent in assisting the Trust. The level of this honorarium will be agreed by the Board of Trustees and reviewed periodically.

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