

## Terms of Reference for Grant Allocation Committee

### Introduction to the Ruth Strauss Foundation (RSF) Grants Programme:

The RSF non-smoking small grants programme supports research or projects that focus on improving the quality of life for people diagnosed with or living with non-smoking lung cancers. The upper limit for each grant is £50,000.

### Principles of Peer Review:

Grant for research/projects made to the RSF may be reviewed by an external expert called a 'written expert reviewer' and then assessed by our Grants Allocation Committee (GAC) which meets annually to assess and award all grant applications. The members of the GAC are health care, research, clinical or medical professionals and include people living with non-smoking lung cancer. The RSF is an Introductory member of the Association of Medical Research Charities and abides by the five principles of peer review:

#### 1. **Accountability**

Charities are open and transparent about their peer review procedures and publish details online, including the names of the members of their research review committee or other decision-making bodies, at RSF this is called the Grants Allocation Committee.

#### 2. **Balance**

The research review committee called GAC, reflects a fair balance of experience and research disciplines.

#### 3. **Independence**

The research review committee called GAC is independent of the charity's administrative staff and trustees. There is one Trustee representative on the Grants Allocation Committee as the funding decision is made by the GAC.

#### 4. **Rotation**

Members of the research review committee called GAC have a fixed term of office. The current committee will have *a term of three years with one extension for a second term of three further years.*

#### 5. **Impartiality**

Research review committees, GAC comprise a significant number of experts who are not in receipt of charity research funding. You can see the members of the GAC [here](#). There is a conflict of interest policy and those with a conflict are not in a position to influence funding decisions.

**Terms of reference:**

**Purpose:** The Grants Allocation Committee is responsible for reviewing all applications made to the Ruth Strauss Foundation non-smoking lung cancers small grants programme. They are responsible for scoring each application against the criteria and providing funding decisions for each application.

**Committee frequency:** the Grants Allocation Committee will meet once a year.

**Committee format:** virtually via Zoom or MS Teams.

**Chair responsibilities:** the chair will agree on the order in which applications will be discussed by the Grants Allocation Committee. The chair will be sent all applications and they will allocate each application to a member of GAC to read, assess and present to the annual meeting. The allocations will be administered by the Head of Mission Services. The chair has the final vote if more than one application is in joint place for awards. The chair may recommend that some applications do not meet the threshold for 'expert written review', either because a small amount is requested and it would be disproportional to gather a written review, or because there is expertise within the panel. All applicants will be asked for two named individuals who could review their applications and it is at the chair's discretion whether these are utilised.

**Committee members' responsibilities:** each member of the panel will be allocated a number of applications along with their external expert written reviews, where sought. Each GAC member will be sent all the applications which they may choose to read. The GAC member will review their allocated application ahead of the annual GAC and come prepared with a score and recommendation for the applications. The GAC will be provided with at least four weeks to read and review all applications. The persons living with non-smoking lung cancer who are a key part of the GAC will be sent all the applications if there is only one member or the applications will be equally split if there is more than one. People living with non-smoking lung cancer will not score the applications, but provide their views on all applications, making use of the lay summary sections.

**Quora:** The Grants Allocation Committee meeting can go ahead if 50% of the members can attend, including the chair and Trustee member of GAC. If panel members cannot attend, they must send in their scores with a summary to the chair, copying in the Head of Mission services. The chair can present on behalf of the panel member not in attendance.

**Minutes:** Scores and decisions of the Grants Allocation Committee will be recorded and documented by a minute taker from RSF.

**Reporting to Board of Trustees:** The chair of the Grants Allocation Committee will attend the next Board of Trustees meeting immediately after the Grants Allocation Committee meeting. The chair will provide an overview of the grants awarded with a brief reason why. The Board will be

provided with a written report by the Head of Mission Services on the number of applications, a lay summary of the applications awarded, the total amount awarded, the total amount requested from all applicants, the percentage of applications awarded compared to received, and any themes/trends from the type of applications.

**Conflict of interest:** No member of the Grants Allocation Committee can apply to the RSF for research grants. If Grants Allocation Committee members have a conflict of interest, they cannot review the application with which they have a conflict. They cannot partake in a discussion about that application either at the Grants Allocation Committee meeting. They may sit in on the discussion. Conflicts include:

- Current and recently departed (within 3 years) colleagues from the same department in the same organisation are considered a conflict of interest
- Where the applicant has co-published with the applicant within the last 3 years this is a conflict of interest
- If the publication involved a large number of collaborators, then this should be considered as most will not have worked closely together
- If an applicant is a relative of the GAC member

**Confidentiality:** All members of the GAC will maintain the confidentiality of the research/project applications they review and only use the information for the purpose of reviewing the application for a grant award at the Ruth Strauss Foundation.

**Term for the committee:** Chair and Grants Allocation Committee members can serve for one three-year term. Any existing member can ask for one further extension and should be agreed upon at the Scientific Advisory Group and with the Head of Mission Services. Trustee representatives can serve more than one three-year term, and this should be agreed upon by the Scientific Advisory Group.

**Committee membership:** The membership to RSF's Grants Allocation Committee consists of medical, clinical, scientific and at least one person living with non-smoking lung cancer. A minimum of five members will be required for the Grants Allocation Committee.

**Recruitment for the committee:** In the first three-year term the member of the Grants Allocation Committee will be the same as RSF's Scientific Advisory Group. After the three-year term of the group, roles will be advertised via the Ruth Strauss Foundation website and through their network and membership organisations. Any existing member can ask for one further extension lasting three years.

The Chair of the Scientific Advisory Group and Grants Allocation Committee will be the same person. After the first three-year term, members of the Scientific Advisory Group can apply to become members of the Grants Allocation Committee, but this will not be a requirement. The Scientific Advisory Group and the Head of Mission Services will allocate new committee members.