

Terms of Reference: Psychedelic Science Advisory Committee
Dimensions Health Research Collaborative, Queen's Health Sciences
December 2021

1. Introduction

The Psychedelic Science Advisory Committee (“the committee”) provides advice to the Dimensions Health Research Collaborative on science matters related to the field of psychedelics and human health. The committee is advisory in nature, as decision-making responsibility rests with the Executive Director responsible for the Dimensions Health Research Collaborative.

2. Mandate

The Committee provides the Executive Director with timely scientific, technical and methodological advice related to the conduct of research in the area of psychedelics. This includes vetting and advice related to the pursuit of pre-clinical and clinical research opportunities, as well as support for translational research, implementation science, and health services and policy research.

3. Reporting Structure

The Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Executive Director and Staff Scientist. The Executive Director serves as the Executive Secretary of the Committee.

The Executive Director reports to the Vice Dean, Research for QHS.

4. Membership

Members of the Committee are recruited through an open process, which will be posted on the web site of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Recommendations will be made to the Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences. A Chair of the Committee will be recommended by the Executive Secretary from among the members.

Members will be chosen based on a broad array of factors including: academic background, membership in scientific and health professional societies, and track record in fields related to the area of psychedelic research, and/or treatment.

The committee will have relevant expertise and experience, and a variety of perspectives, aligning with Faculty commitments in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion. In addition, membership of the Committee will reflect the value of various areas of expertise, knowledge, and perspectives, including health professionals, scientists, entrepreneurs, patients, and community members.

a. Areas of Expertise

The Committee’s collective expertise should include, but not be limited to:

- Clinical trial design

- Neuroscience
- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Pharmacology
- Medicinal chemistry
- Medicine
- Health services and policy research
- Regulatory science
- Palliative medicine
- Biochemistry
- Physiology
- Public health

b. Types of Members

The Committee comprises two types of members, core and *ad hoc* members, selected for their scientific, technical and clinical expertise and knowledge. Core members are permanent members for the duration of their terms. *Ad hoc* members may be invited to serve for a limited time, as specific expertise may be required.

c. Tenure

Members are appointed for an initial two-year term, which may be extended for an additional two years. In consultation with the Chair, the Executive Secretary will review membership on a regular basis and make recommendations to the Dean regarding additional membership.

d. Size of the Committee

The committee will have at least six core members and will not exceed ten. Membership may be periodically adjusted to ensure the appropriate representation of expertise and experience.

5. Conflicts of Interest

As a condition of appointment, members will be required to disclose to the Executive Secretary and circumstances that may place or be seen to place the member in a real, apparent, or potential conflict of interest. This information will be considered confidential and will not be made public without the member's permission. Members will be asked periodically to update this information. At the beginning of a meeting, the Executive Secretary or the Chair will ask members to declare any conflicts they may have related to the agenda items of the meeting. The level of participation of a member in conflict will then be determined by the Chair, in consultation with the other members of the Committee.

Members are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, to ensure the use of their positions cannot be used for their own private gain or that of any other person, company, or organization. All members are expected to protect and maintain as confidential any trade secrets or privileged information divulged during the work of the Committee. Members must not discuss this information with persons not on the Committee.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Members

Members of the committee will offer their independent and objective scientific advice regarding:

- Assembly of competitive research teams and proposals for research funding opportunities (e.g., through the federal research granting councils or foundations);
- Selection of contract research opportunities to be pursued by members of the collaborative, as well as other partnership opportunities with industry and other stakeholders;
- Preparation and review of research presentations to be pursued at various conferences and colloquia;
- Review of knowledge synthesis and other products designed to inform and education various knowledge user communities (e.g., policymakers, clinicians and the public).

b. Chair

In addition to all the responsibilities of a member, the Chair will also:

- Provide input to and consulting with the Executive Secretary on the selection of members;
- Consult with the Executive Secretary to determine whether to limit the participation of a member in the meeting, depending on the nature of the person's affiliations or interests;
- Oversee and chair the meetings and facilitating discussion among members;
- Ensuring that all members agree with, or note their disagreement with, recommendations and advice of the committee.

c. Secretariat

The Office of the Executive Director responsible for the Dimensions Health Research Collaborative is the Secretariat. The Secretariat acts as a resource for members. It also provides leadership and strategic advice in the management of the committee and works closely with the Chair.

In addition, the Secretariat:

- Coordinates membership processes such as the declarations of affiliations and interests declarations, and a membership list;
- Coordinates the preparation of the meeting agenda, prepares background information packages, and drafts the record of proceedings for the members and the Chair's approval;
- Maintains any public information about the committee, its mandate, or work;
- Helps to prepare any members designated as public or media spokespersons, as appropriate;
- Coordinates requests for reimbursement for collaborative-specific research-associated travel;
- Monitors and evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of the committee;
- Carries out additional duties as appropriate in support of the committee;
- Reports back to the members as to how their advice has been used.

d. Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary represents the interests of the collaborative as well as the Faculty of Health Sciences and makes decisions about the committee and its advice. The Executive Secretary provides leadership and strategic advice in the management of the committee and works closely with the Chair and Secretariat.

e. Media and Communications

All members are expected to protect and maintain as confidential any trade secret or privileged information divulged during the work of the Committee. Discussion of committee work with the media or at conferences or other external events should only be done when authorization is given by the Executive Secretary.

In the case of media requests, the Executive Secretary, will coordinate a response, in consultation with the Chair, and will appoint a member to be the media spokesperson when circumstances warrant this.

7. Travel and Expenses

As meetings will generally be held in Kingston, with teleconference or videoconference option, travel and accommodation costs are not anticipated. In special circumstances, efforts may be made to accommodate costs incurred by members outside Kingston.

8. Resignation or Termination from the Committee

An individual may withdraw from service on the committee at any time upon fourteen days written notice to the Secretariat. The letter should state the effective date of resignation.

Reasons for termination include, but are not restricted to:

- Core members who are absent from three consecutive meetings of the committee will forfeit membership.
- Generally, a member's failure to act according to the Terms of Reference may give cause for termination, including failure to disclose real or apparent conflicts of interests may result in their removal from the committee.

Decisions on removal of a committee member will be made in consultation with the Chair and the executive secretary. In this event, the executive secretary will advise the member in writing, stating the reason for the termination and the effective date.

9. Management and Administration

a. Meeting agendas

The agenda, specific topics and issues for committee discussions will be determined by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Chair and the Secretariat.

b. Meeting notice and invitation

Meetings are held at the call of the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Chair. Meeting attendance is by invitation only. The notice is sent by the Secretariat. Members receive the agenda, briefing material and presentations, in advance of the meeting.

c. Frequency, type, and location of meeting

Meetings will generally be held in Kingston on a monthly basis, generally with the option of virtual attendance. A meeting cannot be held unless quorum is achieved. Quorum is determined to be at least one-half the number of existing core members, one of which must be the Chair.

d. Deliberations and reports

Deliberations during the meeting are held *in camera* in order to foster open, frank, and free-flowing discussion. All members have equal status during discussion, and are expected to demonstrate fairness and a commitment to in-depth examination of matters under review.

At the discretion of the Executive Secretary and with the approval of the Chair, specific external parties may be invited to make presentations to the Committee in writing or in person. The Chair and the Executive Secretary may grant observer status, for all or part of the Committee deliberations to selected individuals.

Members provide advice in the form of recommendations. These recommendations are captured in a record of proceedings (RoP). The committee is encouraged to reach a consensus in providing advice whenever possible.

When a consensus is not possible, the RoP will reflect the diversity of opinions. The reasons for a lack of consensus, if any, must be clearly identified and substantiated. In such cases, the committee shall make a recommendation with respect to further study of the issue and a proposal for resolution. In cases where there is a major divergence of opinion, the different opinions will be documented, and the number of members supporting each opinion recorded.

A draft RoP is prepared by the Secretariat and circulated to members for review, and final approval by the Chair and Executive Secretary. The final RoP will effectively summarize the proceedings to reflect the advice offered and there will be no attribution, i.e. there will be no references to comments made by individual members or the public. The Secretariat is responsible for the distribution of the RoP.

e. Review

Although recommendations for improvement will be considered on an ongoing basis, the Secretariat will also initiate a more formal evaluation of the Committee every two years, and will work with the Executive Secretary and the Chair to review the mandate, activities, Terms of Reference, and relevance of the Committee to ensure that it continues to meet ongoing needs. The Faculty of Health Sciences retains the prerogative to disband the committee following such a review.