

Policy and Procedure Appointment of REC Chairs and Vice-Chairs and Reappointment of REC Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Author: Head of Corporate Governance

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Owner: Head of Approvals Support

Scope of Document: This document applies to HRA staff, HRA REC members and the Devolved Administration Staff and REC members as set out below

This guidance applies within:

Country	Applicability	Comment
England	Yes	Not applicable
Northern Ireland	No	Not applicable
Scotland	Yes	Read 'Scientific Officers' for Operational Manager Manager Read 'Health Boards' for HRA
Wales	No	Not applicable

This policy and procedure has been developed with consideration to the HRA's six core values: Inspiring Leadership, Integrity, Trusted, Transparent, Collaborative and Empowering. Further information on our values is available on the HRA Website.

1. Background

The Health Research Authority (HRA) attaches considerable importance to the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair positions and the influence this has on its organisational effectiveness. The HRA will expect officers to provide leadership and direction to committee members to support and take forward Research Ethics Service (RES) initiatives. The HRA will expect officers to be an ambassador for the HRA in their dealings with external stakeholders and researchers.

The standard term which a REC member may serve is five years; this may be followed by a second term of up to five years depending on the length of membership. The appointment process set out below for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Research Ethics Committees is in line with the Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees (GAfREC).

In Scotland, the Scientific Officers act as Operational Managers and the Health Boards as the HRA.

2. Purpose

This document details a procedure which will facilitate the appointment of Research Ethics Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs. The aim of the document is to ensure that the appointment process is fair and transparent.

The HRA recognises and actively promotes the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to treating all employees and volunteers with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. The HRA has an Equality and Diversity Policy. This requires the fair and equal treatment of all staff and those individuals in non-paid membership roles. The HRA wishes to ensure that all individuals are recruited, trained and promoted based on ability and the requirements of the role and those principles extend to the appointment of individuals who give freely of their time to serve voluntarily on Research Ethics Committees.

This document describes the approach to appointing REC Chairs and Vice-Chairs in a way that is free from bias and describes how monitoring will be carried out.

3. Scope

The procedures set out in this document are designed to provide a 'bank' of individuals who have been identified as suitable for future Chairing roles as well as appointing to immediate vacancies should they arise. This will aid in making timely appointments to REC Chair or Vice-Chair vacancies. The mechanism differs from the process for appointing Chairs and Vice-Chairs following a merger of RECs which is set out in the document: Management of Change - Closure or Merger of Research Ethics Committees and will continue to apply.

The procedures in this document will apply to RECs in England and Scotland. Appointments in Northern Ireland are public appointments and will not be affected. Current arrangements in Wales will continue to apply.

4. Reference Documents

- HRA Chairs Allowance and Payment Policy
- Management of Change Guidance for the Closure or Merger of Research Ethics Committees
- Governance Arrangement for Research Ethics Committees (GAfREC)

- Standard Operating Procedures for Research Ethics Committees
- Interview Questions and Scoring for Chair and Vice Chair Interviews (document held in confidence by the HRA Corporate Projects and Management Support Officer).

5. Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the recruitment of REC Chairs are split into two aspects.

The interview process

The Member Support Officers are responsible for arranging interviews. The Head of Approvals Support is the Appointing Authority lead for the organisation and is responsible for Chairing the interview panel. The Appointing Authority lead is responsible overall for the interview process.

The appointment process

Following the completion of the interview process, the Research Ethics Service is responsible for the appointment of officers to particular RECs. The Member Support Officers are responsible for holding and maintaining the bank of appointable officers. The Head of Approval Support will oversee this process and ensure that consideration is given to future planning for Committees.

6. Process for appointing Chairs and Vice-Chairs

6.1. The HRA's favoured position is normally to appoint to vacant Chair or Vice Chair positions from within a Committee. To facilitate the timely appointment to vacant positions the HRA operates a recruitment procedure which involves the appointment of REC members to a bank of appointable Chairs and Vice Chairs.

6.2. REC members with more than 1 years' experience who are interested in becoming a Vice Chair or Chair are invited to apply for an interview on a regular basis throughout the year.

6.3. This document sets out the process for appointing officers to the bank of appointable Chairs and Vice Chairs as well as the process for certain situations where it may not be possible to utilise the bank.

6.4. Appointment to the Bank

6.4.1. On a regular basis, depending on expected vacancies and when the Head of Approvals Support deems necessary, interested REC members with over one year's experience will be invited to apply for an interview to become a Chair or Vice Chair. The Member Support Manager will manage this process on behalf of the Appointing Authority lead.

6.4.2. Individual REC members who express an interest in appointment will be provided with a copy of the relevant role description and will be invited to provide a written statement indicating why they wish to stand as a potential Chair/Vice-Chair and what they would bring to the role, alongside a CV.

6.4.3. Members will be asked to identify a referee, normally the Chair of their current committee, and may include the collective views of the committee. The Member Support Officers will arrange for a reference to be sought prior to interview.

6.4.4. Upon receipt of an expression of interest and CV the Head of Approvals Support and the Member Support Manager will shortlist the candidates. To be eligible for an interview the candidate must:

6.4.4.1. Have a reference, supporting their application, from their current REC Chair or appropriate other e.g. (Vice-Chair, member, or previous REC chair)

6.4.4.2. Meet the terms and conditions of service as a REC member including relevant attendance and training requirements.

6.4.4.3. Have been a REC member for a minimum of 1 year.

6.4.5. REC members who have not met their terms and conditions of service will not be shortlisted.

6.5. Interview Process

6.5.1. Selection interviews will be organised by the Member Support Officers who will arrange an interview day and invite shortlisted candidates to attend. The interviews should take place at a time and location which is convenient to the majority but may necessitate candidates travelling to other REC Centres to attend an interview. Expenses for attending an interview will be paid in accordance with the Reimbursement of HRA Committee members' expenses policy. Interviews may also be held remotely using video conferencing options.

6.5.2. The selection panel should comprise:

- a. the Head of Approvals Support or an appropriately qualified HRA manager as identified by the Head of Approvals Support (will Chair the panel),
- b. the Member Support Manager or an operational manager identified by the Head of Approvals Support,
- c. Two existing Chairs or Vice-Chairs (drawn from RECs where no member has expressed an interest) or a member of the NREAP.

6.5.3. The membership of the Panel may be adjusted, with the agreement of the Head of Approvals Support and the Member Support Manager where panel availability is a problem. At least one member of the panel should have attended recruitment and selection training.

6.5.4. A robust scoring mechanism is in place. Candidates achieving an overall rating of 16 and above are normally deemed appointable as a Vice Chair. Candidates who achieve an overall rating of 20 and above may be considered as a Chair. Candidates achieving an overall rating of 15 or below would not normally be considered as suitable for either post.

6.5.5. The interview panel will have some flexibility in making any decisions which may differ from the above scoring mechanism. For example, the panel may decide a candidate with a score of 21 is suitable to be appointed as a Vice-Chair but not suitable as a Chair at this point in time with more experience as Vice-Chair required. Or alternatively a candidate who scored 17 may still be deemed not appointable if the panel had serious concerns regarding an answer to a particular question. The panel will make this decision on a case by case basis and detail any reasons for the decision taken.

6.5.6. The interview panel has the option to request mentorships with an experienced REC Chair or initial introductory periods to help support certain candidates.

6.5.7. The Interview Questions and Scoring for REC Chair and Vice Chair Interviews will provide the interview panel with further information regarding the interview procedure itself and the scoring of answers.

6.6. After the interview

6.6.1. The day after the interview or as soon as possible thereafter the Head of Approvals Support will contact, by telephone where possible, each of the candidates to provide feedback on the interview. This should include discussion of areas they performed well in, and also a discussion regarding any improvements or gaps in training or knowledge which may be helpful when they commence the role or if they were to apply for the role again.

6.6.2. The Head of Approvals Support will confirm to the Member Support Officers the scores from the interview, any provisos to certain appointments such as mentorship requirements, and confirmation that the candidate has been contacted and informed of the outcome.

6.6.3. The Head of Approvals Support will email the successful candidates to confirm they are appointable as a REC Chair / Vice Chair and to specify whether they will be added to the bank of appointable officers or whether they can be appointed straight away (depending on whether a suitable vacancy is available). The Head of Approvals Support will copy this email to the REC email address and the REC Chair (if applicable).

6.6.4. The Member Support Officers will maintain the bank of appointable officers and ensure it is updated following each interview day.

6.7. Appointment to a REC

6.7.1. As a part of their role in managing the membership of their committees, Member Support Administrators should proactively monitor the Appointments tab in HARP to identify upcoming Officer vacancies and raise these with the Member Support Manager. Vacancies may arise at the end of the permitted maximum term of office or as a result of a change in personal circumstances or resignation.

6.7.2. When a specific vacancy for a REC Chair/Vice-Chair is identified, this will be brought to the attention of the Member Support Manager who will consult with the Head of Approvals Support to identify a suitable candidate from the bank of appointable members. The HRA's favoured position is normally to appoint to vacant Chair or Vice Chair positions from within a Committee. If a suitable candidate is not available on the bank from within the REC, vacancies should generally be offered in line, with highest scoring candidate first bearing geographical factors in mind, however some discretion is allowed to ensure the constitution of the REC is not compromised and to provide expertise where it is required. Though not mandatory it is deemed good practice to match a Lay Chair with an Expert Vice Chair (and vice versa).

6.7.3. The Member Support Manager will agree the appointments with the Head of Approvals Support. The individual identified will be contacted by the Member Support Member or Head of Approvals Support to confirm their interest and availability. They should be offered the opportunity to discuss the vacancy and to attend a meeting of the REC as an observer and to meet with the current Chair and HRA staff if attending from outside of the REC. A member of the operations management team may accompany the member at the observation meeting.

6.7.4. Subject to confirmed interest, the Member Support Manager/Head of Approvals Support will liaise with the Member Support Officers to arrange the issue of a Letter of Appointment and notify the Chair / Vice Chair and HRA Operations staff.

6.7.5. The Member Support Manager should ensure that the HRA Chairs Allowance and Payment Policy is followed, finance is informed, and the Office Holder Payroll Starter Form and Bank Details (BACs) Form for Office Holders (within the HRA Chairs Allowance and Payment Procedure) are completed.

6.7.6. For the first meeting the Vice Chair of the REC may, in the absence of the outgoing Chair, chair the meeting to allow the new Chair to observe the practice of the meeting.

6.8. Instances when appointment via the bank is not possible

6.8.1. There may be instances when appointment using the bank of appointable officers is not possible; for instance, a sudden resignation where there are no suitable officers on the bank.

6.8.2. Also, whilst there will be regular invitations to REC members to apply for interview, sometimes REC members may have missed the opportunity to apply or changed their decision.

6.8.3. Upon identifying that there are no suitable candidates on the bank an urgent invitation will be sent by the Approvals Officer to the REC Committee members of the REC or region with the Officer vacancy. This will ask any interested members who fulfil the role requirements to apply for interview with an urgent interview to be arranged.

6.8.4. In the event no REC members apply for the role the Head of Approvals Support will consider the next steps. These may include in the interim seeking a REC Chair from another Committee to act as Chair, appointing an acting officer from within the Committee on a short-term basis whilst an alternative is identified or potentially suspending the REC.

7. Reappointment process for Chairs and Vice-Chairs

7.1 The standard term of office of a Chair or Vice-Chair appointed under this process will be five years from the date of appointment. Where a member is appointed as an officer during their second term, their membership may be extended until the completion of their term as an officer.

7.2 A Chair/Vice Chair may serve a second term of office. This application will be considered by the Head of Approvals Support in consultation with the Member Support Manager. Issues which will be taken into account may include: meeting attendance; meeting the training requirements; the performance of the committee in terms of meeting timelines and the accreditation process. Subject to agreement, the Member Support Manager will liaise with the Member Support Officers to arrange the issue of reappointment documentation. Any decision to reappoint a Chair/Vice-Chair will be confirmed by (at least) e-mail. A copy of that e-mail will be sent to the REC email address and uploaded to HARP.

8. Appointment of Alternate Vice-Chairs

8.1 The appointment of Alternate Vice-Chairs should be undertaken within the REC. The Member Support Officer will ask the Approvals Officer to add the Alternate Vice Chair vacancy to the next meeting agenda for the Chair to invite expressions of interest. Any member wishing to apply for the Alternate Vice-Chair position should let the Chair and Member Support Officer know by emailing <mailto:member.support@hra.nhs.uk>. Once a list is drawn up of interested applicants, an interview should be arranged. The interview panel should comprise:

- a. the Chair of the REC
- b. the Member Support Manager or another operational manager identified by the Head of Approvals Support.

If there is only one interested applicant, the appointment can be agreed by the Chair and members at a committee meeting and the decision recorded in the minutes.

9. Monitoring of activities covered by the process

The Approvals Support team will keep the membership of the committees, including the terms of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair, under on-going review to ensure continuity, the REC is constituted

correctly and that a quorum can be maintained. Where upcoming vacancies can be anticipated well in advance (Chairs/Vice-Chairs approaching the end of their terms of office), the Member Support Administrators will alert the Member Support Manager and Head of Approvals Support.

The Member Support Officers will maintain a central record in respect of the bank of appointable officers to ensure that the numbers and geographical distribution of those on the list is appropriate to the pattern of anticipated vacancies.

Quality Control checks and internal audits will be undertaken regularly to monitor the activities covered in this process.

10. How lessons are learnt and incorporated into the process

Approvals Support staff may submit any comments on their experience of the application of this process to the Head of Approvals Support to highlight any issues which may arise.

Interview panel members will be encouraged to feedback any comments on the process to the Head of Approvals Support with the procedure updated regularly.

Findings from Quality Control checks and internal audits will be incorporated into this process.

11. Management of Documents and Records

Records for all recruitment processes will be kept by the Member Support Officers for a period of 5 years after the interview following data protection requirements for the storing of confidential and personal information.

Any individual on the bank who is no longer a member of a REC will be removed from the list.

The Member Support Officers will keep a file for the appointed Chair/Vice-Chair which follows data protection requirements. Documents in respect of applications described in this policy and procedure will be retained on that file as follows:

- *Application Form - 3 years following termination of membership.
- Statement- 3 years following termination of membership.
- Letters of appointment - 6 years after membership has terminated.
- Record of agreement to serving 2nd term of office from Head of Approvals Support -3 years following termination of membership.

*Where an application form is not held for the original REC membership, this must be submitted at the time of application for the role of Chair/Vice Chair.

12. Supporting documents/forms

A set of suggested interview questions and a scoring mechanism is held by the Management Support Officers and will be provided to the Chair of the interview panel in advance of the interview.

Supporting documentation:

Documents	Location/owner
Chair – Role Description	Hub
Vice Chair – Role Description	Hub
Standard letters	Member Support Officers (G:Drive)
Invitation to interview	Member Support Officer (G:Drive)
Successful at interview/appoint to waiting list	Head of Approvals Support (G:Drive)
Unsuccessful at interview	Head of Approvals Support (G:Drive)
(Chair/Vice Chair appointment letters)	(Hub with Recruitment and Selection procedure)
Interview questions	Member Support Officer (G:Drive)
Scoring sheet	Member Support Officer (G:Drive)
Waiting list	Member Support Officer (G:Drive)

13. Screening Questions – HRA Equality Analysis and Privacy Impact Assessment

Equality and privacy screening questions

Equality/Privacy	For every HRA Policy (defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as a function, strategy, procedure, practice, project, or decision) please answer the questions below to determine whether further analysis is required.	Yes/No
Equality	With due regard to our Equality Duty, could this policy have the potential to have a detrimental impact on anyone with a protected characteristic?	Yes
Privacy	With due regard to the Data Protection Act, does this policy involve the use of Personal Information?	Yes

If yes, please complete as required either the HRA Initial Equality Analysis and / or Initial Privacy Impact Assessment Template and copy and paste the completed assessment (s) below. This one document can be found on the Intranet.

Initial Equality Analysis

An Equality Analysis is an examination of a proposed function, strategy, procedure, practice, project, or decision to see if it could adversely affect those with protected characteristics.

Aims and outcomes	Description / Details
<p>Give a brief summary of the aims, purpose and outcomes of the policy / procedure in relation to equality and diversity.</p>	<p>This document describes the approach to appointing REC Chairs and Vice-Chairs in a way that is free from bias and describes how monitoring will be carried out.</p> <p>The HRA recognises and actively promotes the benefits of a diverse workforce and are committed to treating all employees and volunteers with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.</p> <p>The HRA wishes to ensure that all individuals are recruited, trained and promoted based on ability and the requirements of the role and those principles extend to the appointment of individuals who give freely of their time to serve voluntarily on Research Ethics Committees.</p>

Questions for you to answer in the analysis process	YES	NO
1. Will or does the policy / procedure directly or indirectly affect our workforce (including volunteers), stakeholders or the public?	X	
2. Could the policy/procedure involve or have an adverse impact on the Public Sector Equality Duties to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate unlawful discrimination 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote equality of opportunity 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not 		X

3. If you have answered YES to any of the questions in 2 above, please explain the impact you have identified.

N/A

4. Could the policy / procedure have an adverse impact on some of our workforce (including volunteers), stakeholders or the public because they have one or more of the protected equality characteristics:	YES	NO
Race (race, colour and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)		X
People with disabilities (including mental, physical, sensory, long term health, learning disabilities)		X
Gender (male, female)		X
Age (young and old)		X
Religion or belief (incl. non-believers)		X
Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual)		X
Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one gender to another)		X
Pregnancy/ maternity		X
Marital/ Civil Partnership status		X

5. If you have answered yes to any of the protected characteristics above in question 4 please give further information about the potential adverse impact.

N/A

6. Based on the responses above, please describe any actions that will be or have been taken to mitigate or minimise any negative impact for our workforce (including volunteers), stakeholders or the public.

N/A

7. Where appropriate give details of any consultation carried out related to the policy or procedure.

N/A

8. Give details of any changes to be made to the policy or procedure as a result of the analysis. N/A

If you have answered YES to any of the questions in 2 and 4 above and the answers to question 6, 7 and 8 do not mitigate and adequately address the adverse impact, you may need to complete a full Equality Analysis. Please consult the Corporate Secretary.

Full Equality Analysis required? NO

Author to type in name and date to verify analysis. (If further analysis is required, the Corporate Secretary must be informed).	NAME: Stephen Tebbutt DATE: 10.03.2016
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Initial Privacy Impact Assessment

What is Privacy?

Privacy refers to freedom from intrusion and relates to all information that is personal or sensitive in nature to an individual.

Questions for you to answer in the analysis process	YES	NO
Does the policy or procedure have any impact on privacy?		X

If Yes please give details below of the impact and the actions being taken to address any adverse impact. Documents stored confidentiality according to data protection requirements.

If you have answered Yes to the questions above and the answers do not mitigate and adequately address the adverse impact, you may need to complete a full PIA.

Please consult the Corporate Secretary.

Full Privacy Impact Assessment required? NO

Author to type in name and date to verify analysis. (If further analysis is required, the Corporate Secretary must be informed).	NAME: Stephen Tebbutt DATE: 10.03.2016
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Document Control

Change Record

Version Status	Date of Change	Reason for Change
1.0 Draft	2009.10.13	Initial draft in new format / replaces 19.11.08 version
2.0 Draft	2009.11.30	New terminology (Centre Manager) / section 11 revised / corrections
2.1 Final	2010.02.01	6.7 – add reference to involvement of NREAP (on recommendation of UKRDG)
v3.0	07.03.2011	Discussions at NRES / SHA Leads meeting February 2011
v3.0x	08.03.2011	Omit local recruitment processes / fully centralised
V4.0CP	23.09.2011	Add request for reference. Expand process to notify current REC members of vacancies.
V4.1	05/12/2011	Revised to replace SHA with HRA as the appointing authority, and to include 6.13 to accompany new Chair to first meeting.
V1.0 draft	07/03/2012	Revised to make changes suggested by NMG and include reference to associated documents, also to revise numbering of the document to make V1 HRA document.
v.1 Final	14.3.2012	Additional comments from HRA Interim CE
V1 Final	20.3.2012	Addition of reference to Scotland in the Background
v1 final	20.04.2012	Applicability information added to front cover
v1.2 (not released)	02.07.2012	Adjustment to 'reappointment process' @ 7.2 following June 2012 UKRDG
V1.3 final	14.10.2012	To remove the need to offer interviews to members of RECS where a vacancy has arisen and where members have not previously expressed an interest. Changes to staff titles and responsibilities
V1.4	01 08 2013	To add detail regarding discretion to appoint based on REC requirements. To allow the removal from the waiting list those who have not been appointed within

		12 months and who are no longer a member of a REC. Changes to staff titles. Reference to HRA Chair's Allowance Payment Policy.
V2.0	16 11 2015 16.02.2016	Updated with significant changes to the process and responsibilities section. Reviewed by OMG and UKREDG
V2.2	18.03.2016	Minor changes requested by OMG and UKREDG (and subsequently change of job title of AA Lead)
V2.3	03.07.2020	Minor changes

Reviewers

Name (name of reviewer and/or management group reviewing)	Date Reviewed	Version Reviewed
UKRDG		2.0
UKRDG/NMG		1.0 draft (became V1 following establishment of HRA)
Janet Wisely		1.0 draft
Craig Gilbert		1.0 final
UKRDG/NMG		1.2/1.3 final
Joan Kirkbride, Stephen Tebbutt, Sheila Oliver		1.4 draft then final
OMG & UKREDG	16.02.2016	2.0
Stephen Tebbutt and Sheila Oliver	18.03.2016	2.2
Ann Tunley, Charlotte Allen	03.07.2020	2.3

Distribution of Approved Versions

Platform (e.g.HRA intranet or website)	Date of Publication	Version Released
To all RECs via OMEA 24		2.1 Final 2010.02.01
Extranet		4.0cp Final 2011.10.10
Extranet		4.1cp Final 2011.12.05
Extranet		1 Final 15.3.12 (became V1 following establishment of HRA)
Extranet		1.3 Final November 2012
G: Drive		1.4 Final
Intranet		2.2 Final
Hub		2.3 Final