National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme

Committee Deputy Chair - Person Specification

Post: Deputy Chair for the HTA Funding Committee
Accountable to: HTA Programme Director
Time Commitment: 0.5 days per week
Salary: Reimbursement of salary to employing institution
Tenure: 3 years in the first instance
Proposed Start date: 1st February 2020

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<th>Knowledge, qualities and skills</th>
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<td>Knowledge and extensive experience of health technology</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>assessment</td>
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<td>Ability to communicate efficiently and effectively</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Confident negotiation skills</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Discretion in the handling of confidential information</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<th>Experience</th>
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<td>Proven experience of chairing large committees</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Proven track record of research achievements and leadership</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<td>Knowledge of current developments in R&amp;D in the NHS and NIHR including research methods</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<th>Qualifications:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Higher degree</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background in health services research</td>
<td>Essential</td>
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Job Description

Title: Deputy Chair, HTA Funding Committee

Accountable to: HTA Programme Director

Background information

The NIHR Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme commissions research to produce independent information about the effectiveness, costs and broader impact of healthcare treatments and tests for those who plan, provide or receive care from NHS and social care services. It works alongside the other programmes of the NIHR.

The HTA Programme is committed to ensuring the appropriate involvement of the public throughout its processes and activities. Public and patient involvement helps to ensure that we assess funding applications according to patient need, offers a broader and more relevant perspective on research proposals as well as increasing the range of knowledge and insight on our committees.

The HTA Programme funds research in three ways; through a commissioned stream, a researcher-led stream and through a call-off contract with research teams to undertake technology assessment reports for NICE. The last of these is outside the scope of this post.

How the programme funds research

Commissioned stream

The HTA Programme invites proposals on specific questions about health technologies that have been prioritised by the programme. An invitation for proposals is advertised in several media and put out through the HTA programme website. Standard documentation is provided along with a commissioning brief for the topic in question.

The granting of research funds is a competitive process. All proposals are assessed by three funding committee members. The proposal assessment criteria include the following.

- Does the proposal clearly address the issues outlined in the commissioning brief?
- Would successful completion of the project lead to a reduction in uncertainty?
- Would this result in measurable health gains and/or benefits for patients and the NHS?
- Is the team capable of undertaking the project?
- Do the requested costs represent good value for money?
- Are the proposed time scales realistic?
- Are the objectives of the research clearly stated?
- Is the study designed to achieve its objectives in an appropriate, feasible and ethical manner?

Full proposals are peer-reviewed by referees external to the HTA Programme. The proposals and referees’ comments are then considered by three designated committee members who present the proposal at the funding committee meeting. The HTA Funding Committee assesses the scientific merit of the projects, scores the projects and makes a funding recommendation.
Feedback is provided to applicants shortlisted at Stage 1. The ‘open’ comments of external referees (full proposals only) and the funding committee are fed back to the lead applicants.

**Researcher-initiated stream**

The HTA Clinical Evaluation and Trials (HTA CET) is an ongoing open call to researchers to submit applications for funding of HTA primary research and evidence synthesis studies, with three closing dates per year. Although researcher-led, this stream maintains a needs-led focus by identifying the importance of the proposals to patients and the NHS. The assessment and selection of proposals is similar to the commissioned stream outlined above. The principal difference is that proposals are not assessed against a commissioning brief, and each is assessed on its own merits, since there is no competing proposal on the same topic.

**NIHR Themed calls**

A second researcher-initiated funding stream is Themed Calls. In this instance, the NIHR identifies and defines a broad clinical or technology area, and all programmes within the NIHR invite proposals to undertake research on a topic of the researchers’ choosing within this. Researchers are currently able to submit proposals for primary research or evidence synthesis to a themed call. A themed call is usually issued annually and proposals are assessed in a similar way to researcher-led applications.

**The HTA Funding Committees**

The HTA Programme has three Funding Committee’s (~28 participants), which meet 3 times a year, usually for two days per meeting, to assess the scientific merit of the proposals received and to make funding recommendations to the HTA Programme Oversight Committee (POC). The current Chairs are:

- Commissioning Funding Committee Chair is Professor Steve Goodacre.
- CET Funding Committee Chair is Professor Lucy Chappell.
- General Funding Committee Chair is Professor Andrew Farmer.

All recommendations from HTA Funding Committees are sent to the HTA Programme Oversight Committee (POC) which makes the final funding recommendation. The role of POC, is to formulate the best mix between the priority of the topic area and the quality of the proposal, weighing up the likely delivery to the NHS of valuable information, whilst scrutinising the cost of projects to ensure value for money. POC currently consists of the HTA Programme Director, the Chairs of the HTA Funding Committees, three Advisory Committee Chairs, and NETSCC HTA representatives.
**Job Summary**

We are currently seeking a Deputy Chair for one of the HTA Funding Committees. In this role you will play an important part in developing the work of the HTA Programme through the contract awarding process (with responsibility for commissioning a portfolio of research contributing to an overall current budget of £76 million), and as a member of the HTA Funding Committee’s Policy Group.

The Funding Committee is managed by the secretariat at NETSCC who provide all the necessary support to the Deputy Chair to facilitate their role.

You will be sent papers in advance of your committee meetings and will be expected to have read all proposals for consideration. You will attend a chairs brief teleconference before each meeting with the Chair, Programme Director and members of the secretariat to prepare for the committee meeting. You will be expected to Chair around a third of the items being considered at the funding committee, particularly those for which the Chair is conflicted.

You will work with your Chair to ensure that all items are sufficiently discussed so that a consensus is reached on the outcome for each proposal, according to the criteria for assessment (an electronic voting system is used when assessing Stage 2 proposals). You will also support the committee in agreeing feedback to applicants.

Following the funding committee meeting you will attend a HTA Programme Oversight Committee POC Post Funding Committee Teleconference to agree and prioritise the recommendations of the HTA funding committees. A secretariat team at NETSCC will support you with this and all aspects of your role.

In addition to your role with the Funding Committee, you will be a member of the HTA Funding Committee’s Policy Group, which meets three times a year for three hours by teleconference to review the ways in which the commissioning and funding committee process is conducted.

You will attend up to five monitoring visits per year to review progress of ongoing research projects and up to four teleconferences.

As a senior member of HTA programme you will attend a yearly one-day meeting to discuss the strategic direction of the programme.

You may also be invited to attend ad-hoc workshops and teleconferences that are relevant to the role.

**Conditions of service**

Salary: Reimbursement to institution for 0.5 days per week.

The Health Technology Assessment programme (HTA) is managed by NETSCC as part of the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre at the University of Southampton.

**Application Process**
For informal discussions about the role prior to application please contact Karen Williams at hta.funding@nihr.ac.uk.

You may also wish to discuss the role with the Programme Director, Professor Hywel Williams: Hywel.Williams@nottingham.ac.uk.

Applications in the form of a CV and a supporting statement of suitability should be sent to Karen Williams at hta.funding@nihr.ac.uk.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 2nd September 2019. Interviews will be held in London on the 23rd October 2019.