

Research Review and Governance Committee (RRGC) Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Research Review and Governance Committee (RRGC) will provide research governance oversight and strategic direction and leadership to ensure that research undertaken at Bolton Clarke (BC) is feasible, methodologically, scientifically and ethically sound, and that ethical standards are maintained to protect research project participants, the researcher(s) and BC.

Research governance oversight endeavours to ensure that research is conducted according to established ethical principles, guidelines for responsible research conduct, codes of practice, relevant legislation, regulations and institutional policy - reference Research Governance Document [How to Conduct Research with Bolton Clarke](#). Key elements of this governance include consideration of:

- ethical acceptability;
- legal matters, including contracts, and indemnity/insurance frameworks;
- financial management, risk management and site-specific assessment;
- institutional policies and procedures for responsible research conduct and managing research misconduct, and
- management of collaborative research reporting requirements.

All research projects undertaken at BC carrying greater than low risk to participants, the researcher(s), others involved in the research and/or the organisation, must obtain approval from BC Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

The RRGC is the first point of contact at BC for researchers who wish to conduct research, utilising BC data, staff, volunteers, clients, residents or carers as participants. The RRGC provides advice to potential applicants as well as manages the process of reviewing research projects and funding applications.

This process has three stages:

1. Review of research projects by RRGC with respect to submission quality, feasibility, risk of adverse outcomes, determination of risk level, alignment with BC research priorities and approval by BC Head of Research;
2. Review and approval by relevant Bolton Clarke Business Stream Leader(s) and service delivery management having consideration for the impact on resources, staffing and any other service-related issues;
3. Peer review undertaken by two BC researchers not involved in the project.

If considered by RRGC to be a greater than low risk , a review by the Bolton Clarke HREC is required. If considered a low risk project, RRGC will notify researcher(s) that their project is exempted from Bolton Clarke HREC review. The RRGC aims to facilitate progress through stages 1, 2 and 3 within 28 days.

Objectives

1. To develop and model a culture of good research, quality assurance and quality improvement project governance and conduct at BC;
2. To support the implementation of current BC strategic research priorities;
3. To review preliminary grant applications for alignment with BC strategic research priorities and BC Executive sponsorship;
4. To avoid duplication of existing or future research, quality assurance or quality improvement projects at BC;
5. To provide advice and support to external and internal applicants who seek to undertake research, quality assurance or quality improvement projects at BC;
6. To provide guidance on whether projects are research, quality assurance or quality improvement;
7. To ensure research project applications are ready for BC HREC review.

Chair and membership

The RRGC has a core membership made up primarily of BC researchers with the ability to co-opt members to assist with the conduct of its business. Co-opted members will be BC staff, usually members of the BCRI, but may be from other BC departments if specific subject matter expertise is required.

The core membership of the committee consists of four members:

1. BCRI Head of Research (Chair)
2. BCRI RRGC Coordinator (a BCRI Senior Research Fellow)
3. BCRI Research Fellow/Research Officer (rotates on a six-monthly basis)
4. Secretary BC HREC

Meetings

The committee meets on a fortnightly basis or, as needed should an expedited project review be required.

Dispute or complaint resolution process

Disputes and complaints adhere to guidance provided by the NHMRC National Statement 2023 [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023 | NHMRC](#)

Any disputes or complaints regarding decisions made by the RRGC are to be directed to the Chair of RRGC in writing.

If the Chair is unable to resolve a dispute or complaint, the Chair will ask the other members of the RRGC to assist with the resolution process. If the RRGC cannot resolve a complaint, the Chair will refer the matter to the Chair of the Executive Research Management Committee (ERMC).

Accountability

A quarterly report on the work of the RRGC will be provided to the ERMC.

Review

This document is to be reviewed May 2025.