



**Oncology Executive Committee  
(OEC)**

**Terms of Reference**

**4<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

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## Aim & Purpose

The aim of the Executive Committee is to drive scientific excellence within a sustainable environment. It will do so by scanning the horizon of scientific developments so as to future proof the Department of Oncology whilst simultaneously observing scientific rigour and integrity in all our work.

In achieving this aim, the purpose of the Executive Committee is threefold:

1. Ensure the delivery of the Scientific Strategy 2020-2025;
2. Ensure the financial viability of the Department of Oncology; and
3. Ensure good governance so that 1. and 2. are delivered, and the requisite assurances can be provided to members of the Department, the Medical Sciences Division and the University.

## Membership

The Executive Committee will comprise the:

- Head of the Department;
- Director of OIRO;
- Head of Administration & Finance;
- Athena Swan lead;
- Director of Education; and
- Theme Leaders.

The Secretariat shall comprise the:

- Executive Officer (Operations) as Secretary to the Executive Committee.

# Main terms of reference

## 1. Delivery Plans

- 1.1 The Theme Leaders and the Director of Education will submit, annually, their delivery plan for scrutiny by and approval of the Executive Committee.
- 1.2 The delivery plans will relate directly to the Scientific Strategy 2020-2025, but will include delivery relating to Departmental activities, for example Public Engagement and Athena Swan.
- 1.3 The delivery plans will set out the programme of work to be delivered, the resources required to deliver that work, the costs of those resources, and the funding that will cover the costs.
- 1.4 The Theme Leaders and the Director of Education will provide an update report to the Executive Committee on a rolling fourth meeting basis. The Director of Education's report will include planning for the studentship applications – including evidence of support – received by the themes.
- 1.5 However, where required either by a Theme Leader or by the Executive Committee itself, reports can be submitted, or called in, in addition to the normal programme.
- 1.6 The Head of Administration & Finance will submit an annual delivery plan that proposes a strategy for excellent governance and supports the operational delivery of the Scientific Strategy.
- 1.7 The Executive Committee will approve and monitor the HAF's delivery plan by providing quarterly reports against activity.

## 2. Programmatic funding

- 2.1 All applications for programmatic funding will need to be reported to the Executive Committee prior to commencement of preparing the application so that it has full oversight of all funding strategies.
- 2.2 Such applications will need to be proposed to the Executive Committee no less than 12 months ahead of the final submission, or as soon as possible if 12 months is not feasible. Applications will include any implications for students.

- 2.3 In proposing a programmatic application, the Theme Leader will need to set out the review and support such an application process will be subject to. Such a process will be expected to include external scrutiny, i.e. from outside the University of Oxford, as well as within Oxford.
- 2.4 Throughout the application period, regular update reports will be submitted by the Theme Leaders to the Executive Committee to provide assurance that it is progressing appropriately.

### **3. Non-programmatic funding**

- 3.1 The Executive Committee will not approve applications for grants below the programmatic level. However, Theme Leaders will report on such applications being made so that there is oversight of all applications being made, including those that the Medical Sciences Division has invited its Departments to apply for.
- 3.2 The Executive Committee will approve and review applications that are over the value of £500k.
- 3.3 This oversight will ensure:
- there is a cohesive approach across the Department;
  - that applications are appropriate in that they fit with the direction of the Scientific Strategy and can be accommodated within the infrastructure of the Department;
  - that opportunities for engagement within and external to Oxford are being realised and
  - there is no duplication of submissions to the same funding call from sponsors.
- 3.4 The GAAAF information will be included in both programmatic and non-programmatic reports.

### **4. Scientific Research Facilities**

- 4.1 The Executive Committee will be responsible for approving which SRFs are embedded in the department. In approving an SRF the Executive Committee will be responsible for ensuring that it:
- Delivers sustainable scientific support;
  - Operates against an approved financial plan; and
  - Has a strategic plan for maintaining/replacing resources.

## 5. Athena Swan

- 5.1 The Athena Swan lead will provide a short report against the Department's Athena Swan action plan to all full meetings of the Executive Committee.
- 5.2 Such updates will highlight where the plan is being delivered and concerns about non-delivery. Where the Department is falling short in its undertakings the report will provide suggestions for remedial actions and any resources required.
- 5.3 The Athena Swan agenda will also feed into the Executive Committee's public engagement plan and the staff engagement plan (see sections 7 and 8)
- 5.4 The Executive Committee will agree changes to the action plan as required including where more resources and/or effort needs to be made.

## 6. Governance

- 6.1 The Executive Committee will specify to the Head of Administration & Finance the reporting it requires to execute its governance responsibilities. Those responsibilities are:
  - Monitoring the Department's financial progress against its on-going financial plan;
  - Monitoring the operational and managerial delivery of staff, including a matrix of data such as absence rate, number of disciplinaries, grievances (both formal and informal). This matrix will be broken down by staff group.
  - Identifying where more resource needs to be invested and how this resource will be funded;
  - Monitoring Health & Safety.
- 6.2 The Executive Committee will also consider issues affecting the infrastructure of the Department. This will include approval of the following:
  - **Space:** the Executive Committee will approve any and all plans to change how the Department uses its space, including but not limited to, major re-scoping and/or refurbishment of existing space and intentions to expand into other space to accommodate new groups;
  - **Equipment:** Each Theme Leader will be responsible for putting forward plans for the equipment needed within the scope of the work of that theme. The procurement of equipment will also include those for communal use, which can be put forward by any Theme Leader.

- 6.3 The Head of Administration & Finance will provide a dashboard report at each full meeting on the operational functions by which it can monitor that the operational support the Department receives is:
- a) Appropriate;
  - b) Demonstrates that the A & F support is delivering effective services to the Department; and
  - c) Provides the opportunity to propose changes to the way the Department is operating and raise any resource implications.
- 6.4 In addition, the HAF will report at each meeting whether any scientific misconduct has arisen during the previous six weeks.
- 6.5 It is important for the Executive Committee to be confident that the way in which new employees are being recruited to the Department is rigorous, transparent, and consistent. To this end, the Executive Committee will receive a report from the HAF, at every other meeting, on:
- a) The recruitment process employed for senior appointments (Principal Investigators and Administrative and Professional vacancies at grade 7 and above;
  - b) Activity against these processes; and
  - c) Forthcoming recruitment.
- 6.6 The Executive Committee can agree a revision to any of the existing processes if it considers any are not fit for purpose.
- 6.3 The Theme Leads, Director of Education and the HAF will submit annual reports on the previous year's activity.

## **7. Public Engagement programme**

- 7.1 The Executive Committee will agree the Department's public engagement programme. The purpose of the public engagement programme is to support the Scientific Strategy. All members of the Executive Committee will play an important role in delivering this programme and promote the following approach:
- All members of staff are given opportunities to take part in PE across the Department;
  - Staff are involved in helping shape how PE is delivered; and
  - Staff feel fully sighted on how PE delivery supports the delivery of the Scientific Strategy.

- 7.2 The Athena Swan agenda will also shape the PE programme, with the Athena Swan lead being a key person in the development of the PE objectives and delivery plan.
- 7.3 The importance of the PE work is such that there will be a sub-group of the Executive Committee. This will be led by one of the Theme Leaders, appointed by the Executive Committee. Other members will include the HAF, the HR Manager, and three members of staff. These three members will be identified by a self-nomination process and appointed by the Executive Committee.

## **8 Staff engagement**

- 8.1 The Executive Committee will agree an overall approach to engagement so that all staff understand the part they have to play in the Department delivering its Scientific Strategy 2020-2025. The purpose of such a plan is to ensure all the Department's staff feel connected with their managers and leaders, and that their work not only matters but makes a difference.
- 8.2 Such an approach will ensure that staff believe they are receiving the information they need and that decision making is transparent.
- 8.3 Established staff engagement techniques and initiatives will be employed within a plan proposed by the HAF and approved by the Executive Committee.
- 8.4 Such a plan will include, but not be limited to:
- a) Regular opportunities for people to see their leader(s) in action, for instance to observe the Executive Committee meetings;
  - b) Regular lunches – both formal and informal, for instance formal ones will include some key information exchange, whereas informal ones will be an opportunity to meet up with colleagues from other teams;
  - c) Questionnaires – ‘pulse’ reports that are brief and regular concentrating on one or two areas, a full annual survey, and the possibility of externally recognised questionnaires such as The Times 100;
  - d) Surgeries – where the support services provide regular opportunities for staff to ask questions;
  - e) Involving our people in debating significant questions so as to reach a unified outcome;
  - f) A number of communication approaches, including intranet, newsletter, weekly Head of Department emails;
  - g) Asking staff for feedback as part of the Executive Committee's annual review of its effectiveness.



- 8.3. The Head of Administration & Finance will propose such a plan to the Executive Committee which it will approve and monitor regularly. The plan will be reviewed annually, and such a review will include involving staff feedback.

# Meeting Schedule

## 1. Full meetings

- 1.1 Full, formal, meetings of the Executive Meetings will be on a Tuesday, every six weeks. An annual timetable will be set out by the Secretary to the Executive Committee.
- 1.2 The meetings shall be deemed as quorate if five or more members of the Executive are present.
- 1.3 The Head of Department will be the chairperson of the meetings and is therefore required to attend every meeting. However, the Head of Department can delegate the chair if they cannot attend.

## 2. Ad hoc/extraordinary meetings

- 2.1 In addition to the full, formal meetings of the Executive Committee, the Head of Department may, as necessary, call ad hoc meetings, or extra-ordinary meetings.
- 2.2 Members of the Executive Committee may make a request to the Head of the Department for an ad hoc/extraordinary meeting.
- 2.3 In doing so, the quorum of five members of the Executive Committee will still be required.

## 3. Sub-groups/committees

- 3.1 The department has the following sub-groups/committees all of which will report to the Executive Committee:
  - Department Safety Advisory Committee\*
  - Graduate Studies Committee\*
  - Undergraduate Teaching Committee
  - Training & Development Committee

\* required by the University
- 3.2 The Executive Committee may decide to form sub-groups from its membership, for instance in focusing on a particular policy issue.

- 3.3 Any sub-group that is created will have terms of reference and report back to the full Executive Committee at each of the scheduled meetings.

## Timescales for papers

- 1.1 Items for the agenda of the full Executive Committee will be submitted to the Secretary 10 days before a meeting.
- 1.2 The Secretary will agree the final agenda with the Head of Department seven days before a meeting.
- 1.3 All papers for agenda items will be submitted to the Secretary seven days before a meeting.
- 1.4 The agenda and all papers will be circulated to the members of the Executive Committee five days before the date of the meeting.

## Circulation

- 1.1 The agenda will be posted on the intranet.
- 1.2 The minutes of each meeting will be posted on the intranet, save for those items that were confidential.

## Review

- 1.1 The Executive Committee will review its terms of reference annually, at its December meeting.