



PEER REVIEWING POLICY

IT'S TIME TO STOP WASTING!

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1. INTRODUCTION

Peer reviewing allows Action Duchenne to seek independent, expert advice in order to make decisions about which research to fund.

Peer reviewing is expert advice provided by appropriately qualified, independent professionals and experts. A 'peer' is an individual that the applicant would consider to be of at least equal standing in the field, or have equal knowledge, and whose opinions are most likely to be respected. Lay experts can be used to provide advice on other aspects of research, such as the potential benefits to patients or how well it fits with the research strategy of the organisation.

Funding decisions are ultimately made by the Charity's Board of Trustees based on the recommendations made by the SAB and any external peer reviewers.

2. AIMS

The essential aims of the peer reviewing process are to ensure that the proposed research is:

- Relevant to the charity's objectives and research strategy;
- Within the capabilities of the applicant(s);
- Novel and not a duplication of other studies;
- Using appropriate methodologies;
- Conducted by competent researchers, in a suitable research environment and that the level of financial support requested is appropriate for the work to be undertaken.

3. REVIEWERS

- Internal reviewers are considered as those serving on the Action Duchenne Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). SAB members will not be employed by Action Duchenne.
- External reviewers are considered as those not serving on the board, and are sought for their specific expertise. The SAB can use external experts to seek additional informed opinions, in writing or in person, about the applications under review.
- Members of the SAB will have relevant experience and expertise in the field that Action Duchenne's research strategy is focused on, and the majority will be active in research.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Action Duchenne will:

- Publish details of all SAB members on their website, including the charity's procedures for the evaluation of research;
- Provide details on their website on the types of research that they fund, and if possible will indicate the likelihood of success for each particular funding scheme;
- Provide written feedback to all applicants once a decision has been reached by the SAB;



- Ensure that there is transparency of the review process, with an outline of the decision-making process and a timetable put in place.

5. INDEPENDENT DECISION-MAKERS

- Action Duchenne will ensure that their administrative staff are not responsible for deciding the scientific quality of the research;
- If a preliminary screening process is used then the way that this is implemented will be clearly laid out;
- Trustees of the Charity should ideally not sit on the Board, nor chair the board - where the chair is a trustee, they must not apply for funding during their term of office;
- It is recommended that the Chair of the SAB attends trustee meeting to maintain a line of communication between the SAB and the trustees.

6. BALANCE

- The SAB will reflect a balance of experience, scientific disciplines reflecting the remit of the charity, institutions, age, gender, ethnicity and geographical location;
- A variety of methods of selection will be used, which will avoid the reliance on one person to nominate individuals;
- If lay members are to be included on the SAB then Action Duchenne must make clear the reasons for involving lay members.

7. ROTATION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISERS

- Scientific advisors serving on the Board must not have tenure;
- A fixed term of office will be served and this will be made clear to those on the Board at the time they join - a period of three years, with a two year renewal is recommended;
- The Chair of the Board should also serve a fixed term of office.

8. IMPARTIALITY

- The board should include a significant number of non beneficiaries, and beneficiaries should not be present when the decisions are made;
- Terms of Reference and Conflicts of Interest forms should be put in place to ensure that Board member are aware of their responsibilities;
- It is recommended that new members are given an induction and information about how the Board works;
- It is recommended that the Chair should not be eligible for funding during their tenure, however if this cannot be avoided then a Vice Chair must be nominated and ready to step in at meetings where an application by the Chair is being considered.