



RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (REC)

The Child and Family Agency (Tusla) invites applications from suitably qualified individuals who are interested in becoming the Independent Chairperson of Tusla's Research Ethics Committee

Opening date for Applications: 30th January 2020

Closing date for Applications: 24th February 2020 12 noon.

How do I apply: All interested persons must provide the following:

- Comprehensive CV to include; contact details, details of qualifications, relevant experience and specific skills relevant to the task
- Completed "[Eligibility Criteria Questions](#)" as requested within this document – click [here](#) for form.
- Names of two referees

All of the above must be **emailed** to Elaine Mcgrane, National Recruitment Operations Manager, elaine.mcgrane@tusla.ie before 12 noon 24th February 2020.

Role description

The current role is available for three years, with the possibility of a second consecutive term with Tusla's Board approval.

Remuneration

Remuneration is currently paid at a rate of **€220 per seven hour working day and pro-rata for any periods of less than a seven hour working day**. The anticipated time commitment for the role is 21 working hours over 6 week rolling period. Entitlement to remuneration for this role is subject to the public sector One Person One Salary (OPOS) rules for committee and board members.

Remuneration for this role is subject to payroll taxes, which requires vendor/service provider set up on payroll and payroll payment requests for remuneration payments. Expenses will be met under the terms and conditions of TUSLA's financial regulations and subject to public sector travel and subsistence rules, requiring **TUSLA travel set up / authorisation and completion of Declaration and Disclaimer form**. Please note that the role may impact on a potential applicant's current working and/or pension terms and conditions and may be subject to pension abatement.

Location

Meetings will be convened in Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8. A desk will be made available to the successful applicant for the 21 working hours over 6 week rolling period.

Proposed Interview Dates: March 2020

The criteria for short listing are based on the requirements of the role as outlined in the eligibility criteria and skills, competencies and/or knowledge section of this application. Therefore it is very important that you think about your experience in light of those requirements. Those successful at the shortlisting stage of this process (where applied) will be called forward to interview with a selection panel comprising two independent panel members and an independent Chairperson.

Contact for Informal Enquiries: Marian Brattman, 01-7718640

Background and independence of function

In line with the statutory function of the agency, the Agency is in the process of establishing its first Tusla Research Ethics Committee. The Child and Family Agency's (Tusla) Research Ethics Committee (REC) is a group of people appointed by the Agency to review research ethics applications to assess formally if the research is ethical. A REC provides independent advice to participants, researchers, funders, sponsors, employers, care organisations, and professionals on the extent to which proposals for research studies comply with recognised ethical standards (HIQA, 2012). One of the specific functions of the Agency, as set out in the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013 Part 2 Section 8 (1)(f) is to "Undertake or commission research relating to its functions".

The REC is an impartial and independent committee of the Agency, formally approved by the Tusla Board and governance of Tusla's REC sits under the Tusla Board's Quality and Service sub-committee. The independent Chairperson's appointment will be approved by the Board. The REC's implementation and operations will be supported by Tusla's National Research Office, Transformation and Policy Directorate.

Role of Chairperson

The main purpose of the role is to Chair the independent and impartial Tusla Research Ethics Committee to ensure that all proposed research applications seen by the Committee receive ethical review within the REC guidelines 2015 and the REC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) 2019.

The Chairperson as leader of the committee is responsible for the committee function, ensuring that all ethical issues are explored and clear decisions made and recorded.

As this is the first independent Research Ethics Committee to be established by the Agency, and prior to the full operation of the Committee, the Chairperson will have a role in membership selection of other members of the REC, supported by the National Research Office, through a skill match informal interview process.

The Chairperson will work with the REC Administrator, recognising their separate but complementary responsibilities in managing REC functions; the Chairperson will receive support

from the Administrator on all issues of process, which are governed by the REC SOP, including the use of the forthcoming National Research Database.

The Chairperson is responsible for monitoring the progress of all approved studies from the time the research commences through to its termination. The Tusla Board appointed Chairperson duties are to:

- Chair 6-weekly meetings of the Research Ethics Committee ensuring that ethical issues are explored and debated. Responsible for reading all applications, taking part in ethical review, assuming lead reviewer role, where necessary, and to be responsible for the time management of the committee meeting.
- Ensure compliance with the Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures
- Process all REC communication in line with REC SOP processes and timelines
- Promote the courteous treatment of members, researchers, and other attendees, if required, attending the meeting
- Ensure that during the meeting a decision is reached and recorded and that the methods of making decisions are agreed and appropriate in line with REC SOP processes
- Promote the effective working of the committee as a cohesive group
- Be available to the REC Administrator (via email or in person) on a planned or ad/hoc daily basis, at least 21 working hours every 6 weeks, or as necessary to include the following:
 - Check and approve the Minutes (drafted by the REC Administrator) in a timely manner to allow decision letters to be sent within timelines
 - Sign the minutes
 - Sign letters when required
- Provide general advice and guidance to the REC Administrator and Committee members
- Liaise with the relevant research structures and other relevant structures within Tusla, where appropriate
- Liaise with relevant academic institutions, where appropriate
- Ensure an annual report is issued to the Tusla Board
- To be aware of and ensure that applicants to the REC, REC members and potential members, are treated fairly and equally in accordance with Equality legislation

A Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee who is formally appointed and approved by the Tusla Board must agree to take part in continuing professional development appropriate to their role.

As Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee, candidates must maintain confidentiality regarding applications, meeting deliberations, information about research participants and related matters.

As Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee, candidates must be willing to have their name, profession and affiliation published on the Tusla Research Ethics Committee webpage.

As Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee, candidates are expected to attend at least two-thirds of all scheduled Research Ethics Committee meetings in each year.

Specific duties:

Lead the Research Ethics Committee through the convening and chairing of meetings to ensure:

- Review of research proposals within Tusla's remit and scope
- Provision of timely, comprehensive and independent reviews of the ethics of proposed studies

- Oversight of the authority of the Research Ethics Committee to approve (with or without revisions) or decline proposals for research, on the basis of ethical considerations only
- Promote responsible research and practice through the operation of the Research Ethics Committee¹
- Assess the potential benefits and risks of proposed studies to research participants, the organisation and to wider society
- Advocate and encourage ethical standards of practice in research; protect research participants from unnecessary harm; preserve the research participants' rights and through its functions, provide reassurance to the public that best practice is being applied

Relationship with the Research Ethics Committee Administrator

- Liaise with Research Ethics Committee Administrator, both by phone and email and also through the proposed National Research Database system regarding:
 - scheduling of an annual calendar of Research Ethics Committee meetings
 - attendance at the Research Ethics Committee or ensuring the attendance of the Vice-Chair to be quorate in order to proceed with a meeting
 - scheduling of issues to be brought before the Research Ethics Committee
 - Ensuring meetings follow a previously prepared agenda including:
 - the date, time and venue of the meeting
 - declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda
 - minutes of the previous REC meeting
 - matters arising at the previous meeting(s) that the Committee specifically indicated that it wished to consider again
 - applications for ethical review to be considered at the meeting
 - consideration of requests for expedited reviews
 - consideration of whether applicants should be invited to present proposals or to elaborate on specific issues
 - consideration of whether people with additional expertise, including practitioners, should be invited to the meeting or asked to provide written comments
 - seeking advice from Tusla's Legal Services as required
 - ensuring deliberations and decisions of the Research Ethics Committee meetings are accurately presented in the form of written minutes, which will be added to and stored within the National Research Database
 - sign off an annual report detailing the activities, actions and decisions of the Research Ethics Committee
 - Manage appeals in accordance with the REC SOP and complaints in accordance with the REC SOP and Tusla's Tell Us Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure

Relationship with the Research Ethics Committee Vice-Chairperson (appointed by the REC)

- Liaise with Research Ethics Committee Vice-Chairperson regarding:
 - attendance at the Research Ethics Committee or ensuring the attendance of the Vice-Chairperson to be quorate in order to proceed with a meeting
 - coordinating review for approved requests for expedited reviews with Vice-Chairperson and placing on the agenda for discussion at the next scheduled meeting

¹ Good research practices include research environment; training, supervision and mentoring; research procedures; safeguards; data practices and management; collaborative working; publication and dissemination; reviewing, evaluating and editing. For further information on research integrity: Irish University Association (2013) *National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland*. Dublin.

- formally delegating to Vice-Chairperson in Chair's absence

Relationship with the Research Ethics Committee Members

- Liaise with Research Ethics Committee Members to ensure all applications are previewed and to carry out a detailed review on all applications assigned to them by the REC Chairperson
- Convening and chairing the decision-making procedure as follows:
 - ensuring decisions are arrived at through consensus where possible when the proposal under review will be approved when all members present are willing to allow the proposal to proceed.
 - inviting members who have conflicts of interest to declare these at the meeting and ensure these are recorded in the minutes.
 - in cases of approval pending revision(s) suggested by the REC, ensuring clear suggestions for revision and the procedure for having the proposal re-evaluated are specified
 - ensuring declined proposals are supported by clearly stated reasons.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided to committee members with regard to the induction training, on-going education, mentoring, training and in-service needs of the Research Ethics Committee
- Address attendance with Research Ethics Committee Members who do not attend at least two thirds of scheduled Research Ethics Committee meetings.

Administration/ Operational

- Consider renewal of Research Ethics Committee membership for a second consecutive term and provide recommendation to the Board of Tusla
- Monitor attendance of Research Ethics Committee Members and exercise discretion as to whether those who do not attend a number of meetings or do not attend three consecutive meetings, be asked to step down
- Ensure Research Ethics Committee Members who wish to resign from the Research Ethics Committee, inform the Chair in writing providing a minimum of four weeks and no more than eight week's notice
- Consult with Board of Tusla, as required, regarding seeking replacement of members at the end of the term of appointment, or, mid-term make an interim appointment for a limited time

Eligibility Criteria / qualifications and / or experience²

The applicant must possess the following:

(a)

- A relevant professional qualification from a third level institution (minimum QQ1 Level 8)
- at least a minimum year's experience as a member of a REC
- relevant methodological and ethical **expertise** in clinical, non-clinical qualitative, quantitative and other research methodologies in health, education and social science fields or a relevant sector or discipline, including but not exclusively: social work or social care in statutory or voluntary organisations, education, child health or mental health or nursing, youth justice, advocacy or public redress, law, psychology, disability, policing etc. At least two years' experience of chairing meetings or committees involving multiple stakeholders Possess skills in chairing meetings training or at least a minimum two year's experience of chairing meetings or committees involving multiple stakeholders.
- **Knowledge** of appropriate international good practice guidelines, relevant EU Directives, national guidelines and/or legislation pertaining to the ethical conduct of research e.g. GDPR and Data Protection legislation, with respect to both applicants and the community e.g. Public Patient Involvement

and

(b)

- Applicants must possess the requisite knowledge and ability, including a high standard of suitability, for the proper discharge of the role including:
 - A working knowledge of appropriate international good practice Guidelines, relevant EU Directives, national guidelines and/or legislation pertaining to the ethical conduct of research e.g. GDPR and Data Protection legislation, with respect to both applicants and the community e.g. Public Patient Involvement

Skills, Competencies and / or knowledge

The Chairperson must possess the following:

- **Professional Knowledge & Experience**
 - Experience of chairing meetings or committees involving multiple stakeholders.
 - Develops and maintains a broad knowledge of the policies and procedures of the organisation together with the relevant legislation.

² Former employees of Tusla (or the HSE) will not be eligible until a minimum of two years has elapsed between the last date of their employment in the Agency and the date of submission of their Expression of Interest.

- Knowledge of relevant methodological and ethical **expertise** in clinical, non-clinical qualitative, quantitative and other research methodologies in health, education and social science fields or a relevant sector or discipline.
 - Working knowledge of appropriate international good practice Guidelines, relevant EU Directives, national guidelines and/or legislation pertaining to the ethical conduct of research e.g. GDPR and Data Protection legislation, with respect to both applicants and the community e.g. Public Patient Involvement.
 - Demonstrate commitment to continuing professional development.
- **Teamwork & Building and Maintaining Relationships**
- Demonstrate team work skills including the ability to work as part of a multidisciplinary team environment.
 - Demonstrate ability to support, supervise, develop and empower staff in changing work practises in a challenging environment within existing resources.
 - Demonstrate leadership skills and the capacity to inspire teams to the confident delivery of excellent services.
 - The ability to effectively lead others and achieve results including the ability to effectively manage change and organisational development.
 - Delegates tasks to others and makes sure deadlines are met.
 - Treats team members in a fair and equitable manner.
- **Managing & Delivering Results**
- Demonstrated service user focus in the delivery of services.
 - Takes responsibility for the equitable distribution of resources and equality of access to services.
 - The ability to work effectively within a multi-disciplinary organisation in complex and pressured environment.
 - A core belief in and passion for the sustainable delivery of high-quality user focused services.
 - Puts measures in place to ensure an accurate, regular evaluation of the extent to which the service meets the needs of its users.
- **Communications & Interpersonal Skills**
- A high level of interpersonal and communication skills including presentation, negotiation skills, conflict resolution and the ability to build and maintain relationships.
 - An effective communication style appropriate to the audience and situation.
 - Self-motivated with the ability to cope well under pressure and prioritize several initiatives with tight deadlines.

- Strong administrative and organisational skills with the ability to focus on and produce results and prioritise objectives.
- Ability to work from an interagency and multi-disciplinary perspective.

Other requirements of the role: Meetings will be held in Dublin.

Written Terms of Appointment and conditions of role

Written Terms of Appointment will be signed by the successful applicant, which will commit them to the terms and conditions of the role.

The Child & Family Agency indemnifies the work the Chairperson. Details of this indemnity will be set out in the Written Terms of Appointment

The Appointment shall remain in force for the Service Term unless it is terminated earlier.

Full detail is available within the Written Terms of Appointment, which will be issued to the successful applicant on engagement.