

UKCRF NETWORK

Quality Assurance Work Group Terms of Reference

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Introduction

A work group is a specialist group that have come together at the request of the UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network (with the agreement of the Senior Management Team), with a specific area or piece of work in mind, which can be finite or ongoing. The main purpose of a work group is to develop and share best practice.

Objectives and Purpose

The Quality Assurance Work Group was established and continues to support the UKCRF Network in achieving its objectives related to workforce development and the promotion of a culture of regulatory compliance and continual quality improvement.

The primary purpose of the group is to support collaborative working and sharing of good practice through networking and the development of tools and guidance documents that promote high quality, safe and compliant research practices across the UKCRF Network.

Scope of Work

- **Sharing Best Practice:** Facilitating the exchange of best practices among CRFs to support members in the delivery of their QA role to a high standard and promote a quality culture.
- **Developing Guidance Documents and Tools:** Creating comprehensive guidance documents and tools to enable standardised approaches to the management of key quality systems and promote regulatory compliance.
- **Staff Networking and Development Forum:** Creating a supportive environment for the continued professional development of CRF QA staff by providing a platform for discussion of relevant topics through group meetings, online forums, and workshops.
- **Supporting the UKCRF Network Conference:** Contributing to the annual conference to support the UKCRF Network and maintain the profile of the Quality Assurance Work Group.
- **Remaining Relevant and Responsive:** Liaising with other relevant organisations to ensure that the work of the Quality Assurance Work Group is up to date, responsive and complementary to that of other key research organisations and structures.

Responsibilities

Group Chair and Deputy Chair:

- Organise and facilitate group meetings, online forums, and workshops to encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Ensure members meet the membership criteria (by working with the Project Officer), and encouraging diversity where appropriate (e.g., geographically, professionally).
- Agree and deliver annual objectives for the group.
- Establish and oversee task-and-finish groups to deliver specific objectives, when required.
- Promote a culture of regulatory compliance and continual quality improvement in CRFs across the Network.
- Lead the development of conference workshops for staff with a QA role at the Network's Annual Conference.
- Ensure guidance documents and tools developed by the group are updated to reflect evolving standards and regulations.

Group Members:

- Actively contribute to the group's objectives and attend scheduled meetings and events.
 - It is encouraged that one member from each represented CRF attends all meetings to ensure group cohesion and support group objectives.
 - While occasional absence is understood members should, where possible, arrange for a suitable deputy or send apologies.
 - Membership will be reviewed annually, considering membership criteria, attendance and contribution, and may be revised if necessary.
- Share expertise, local practices and peer support with the group to promote a culture of regulatory compliance and continual quality improvement.
- Promote group resources and key messages with colleagues at their respective CRF.
- Join task and finish groups to support the maintenance and development of tools, training resources, and guidelines.
- Obtain approval from their Line Manager or CRF Manager before joining.

Membership Criteria

The Quality Assurance Work Group consists of representatives from various CRFs across the UK and Ireland who have expertise and experience in regulatory compliance and managing quality systems.

Group Members should be in a lead QA role or have a remit for quality management as part of their role. Multiple members can join from a single CRF, but a maximum of two members per CRF can attend Quality Assurance Work Group business meetings.

The Quality Assurance Work Group is an open group with no cap on membership, however, all members are expected to be active contributors to group objectives.

The Chair may invite members from outside the CRFs if their expertise aligns with the group's purpose and areas of work, such as representatives from partner networks or research infrastructure.

The Operations Team manages the storage and sharing of group member details in line with the [UKCRF Network Staff Data Management Policy](#). Members' contact details will be shared with other members of the group via a private Google Sheet. Members can only access these details if they have a Google-linked account.

Meeting Management

The Group will meet formally at least two times a year. Meetings will routinely be held via MS Teams, although occasional face-to-face / hybrid meetings may be convened with the agreement of group members.

- The meeting must have a Chair or nominated deputy present.
- The agenda must be set no less than three working days prior to the meeting.
- Representatives from other parts of the infrastructure may be invited as guests when appropriate, and members should be notified in advance.
- Administrative support (agenda, notes/minutes) should be identified from an appropriate source.
- All virtual meetings will be recorded and stored on the MS Teams Group for members to access.
- Chairs should remind members at the beginning of each meeting that the meeting is being recorded.
- A summary of the key messages and actions should be shared with members within two weeks of the meeting date.

Task and finish groups will have a separate meeting schedule based on the needs of the project.

Dissemination and Outputs

The Chair will upload the following documents to the Group's MS Team:

- Meeting agendas
- Meeting summary and action list
- Annual objectives
- Terms of reference

All new projects and pieces of work should be submitted to the WP Lead, Deputy Leads and Operations Team for review using the UKCRF Network's New Project Request Form.

The Group's MS Team can be used to share CRF documents with the members, and for task and finish groups to collaborate on project outputs. The Chair will work with the Operations Team to provide all the required information for the promotion and dissemination of project outputs and updates through emails, social media, website, workshops, conferences.

Leadership and Accountability

The Group Chair is appointed by the WP Lead and Deputies in line with the UKCRF Network Role Selection Process (2023-2028).

Reporting

The Group Chair will provide updates on group achievements, challenges, and upcoming initiatives to the WP Leads, who will then present these updates at SMT meetings.

Group activity will also be summarised in the UKCRF Network annual report and submitted to the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the UKCRF Network's funder.

Review

The ToR should be reviewed every three years by the Chair to ensure that it's still fit for purpose. Any amendments should be submitted to the WP Lead, WP Deputy Lead and Operations Team.

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