UK Health Security Agency

Terms of Reference for UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (UK SMIs) Working Groups

The Working Groups for the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (UK SMIs)[1].

The UK SMI Working Groups include:

- Joint Working Group Meeting for Syndromic Algorithms.
- Working Group for Microbiology Standards in Clinical Bacteriology.
- Working Group for Microbiology Standards in Clinical Virology/Serology

Additional UK SMI Working Groups may be set up to develop UK SMIs on topics which are not covered by the listed working groups.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTHORITY

The development of UK SMIs is undertaken under the custodianship of UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)[2]. UKHSA[2] is responsible for facilitating the development and hosting of UK SMIs but does not have full ownership. UK SMIs are developed in equal partnership with the professional societies and UKHSAE[2] which display their logos (if available) on the UK SMIs; these bodies are hereafter referred to as “partner organisations” and are listed below.

The Working Groups for UK SMIs are accountable to the UK SMI Steering Committee. The Chairs of the Working Groups report to the Chair of the Steering Committee. The Working Groups are responsible for the laboratory, clinical and public health input into the UK SMIs.

The Working Groups work with the Standards Unit which is responsible for managing the development, revision, archiving, publication and access of UK SMIs.

[1] Background information regarding UK SMIs is available in Appendix 1

[2] Reference to UKHSA througout this document includes any successor organsiation

ROLE

The role of the Working Groups is to recommend and present microbiology standards which are produced to a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) accredited standard. The Working Groups achieve this by reviewing and writing UK SMIs in line with the Appraisal of Guidelines Research & Evaluation (AGREE) instrument http://www.agreetrust.org/resource-centre/agree-ii/ used for NICE accreditation.

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

Membership

Membership of each group is drawn from the relevant partner organisations and includes a Chairperson, Standards Unit scientific staff, nominees from partner organisations, and lay representation. The nominees participate in the development of the UK SMIs although their views need not be rigorously representative of the members of the partner organisation nor the corporate view of the organisation. Nominees provide individual subject matter expertise and act as conduits for two way reporting and dialogue. Lay representatives evaluate and comment on the documents and any other agenda items under discussion, and also the UK SMI development processes from a patient and public perspective. Lay representatives act as a conduit to specialist interest and/or patient and public involvement groups via the UKHSA[2] People's Panel.

Members include:

a) Chair of Working Group (appointed from the membership of the partner organisations but does not represent a partner organisation in the role of Chair)
b) Staff from the Standards Unit
c) Lay Representatives
d) Partner organisations:

1. Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine
2. Association of Clinical Oral Microbiologists
3. Applied Microbiology Society
4. British Infection Association
5. The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy
6. British Society for Medical Mycology
7. British Society for Microbial Technology
8. British Society for Parasitology
9. Healthcare Infection Society

10. Institute of Biomedical Science
11. Microbiology Society
12. Northern Ireland Microbiology and Audit Group
13. Northern Ireland Public Health Agency
14. Public Health Scotland
15. Public Health Wales
16. Royal College of General Practitioners
17. The Royal College of Pathologists
18. Society for Anaerobic Microbiology
19. Scottish Microbiology and Virology Network
20. UK Accreditation Service
21. UK Clinical Mycology Network
22. UK Clinical Virology Network
23. UK Health Security Agency
24. Welsh Microbiological Association

All partner organisations are invited to send a representative to sit on the appropriate Working Groups. It is permissible for a Working Group member to represent a maximum of three partner organisation when the nominee of said organisation is unable to attend. It is the responsibility of the covering member to act as the conduit for two way reporting in these situations. It is also permissible for a Working Group member to sit on more than one Working Group plus the UK SMI Steering Committee.

The Chair has discretion to invite multiple members from a partner organisation, where necessary, to ensure balance of representation and to assist the Working Group in fulfilling its role.

Attendance

The Chair and a minimum of one half of partner organisations that have nominated representatives (excluding Standards Unit staff and lay representatives) are required to be in attendance at a meeting to be quorate.

In the absence of the designated Chair, a member of the Working Group or Standards Unit will chair the meeting.

Working Group members are expected to attend scheduled meetings. Where possible, members should notify the Standards Unit when they know they will miss a meeting. This is important due to the resource consequences if a quorum is not reached.

A review of attendance will be undertaken annually. Results discussed with the Chair and discussed with the member and the relevant partner organisation where appropriate.

Duties of members

All members are expected to:

i) Attend meetings (including face to face, virtual and teleconference)

ii) Review and write UK SMIs in line with the AGREE instrument

iii) Engage with all stages of the development process by reviewing documents, sending comments or stating nil return when requested by the Standards Unit

iv) Collect information from and consult widely with members of partner organisation, other interested stakeholders and individuals with relevant expertise where appropriate

v) Contribute their experience and knowledge of good practice to reach consensus decisions

vi) Maintain an understanding of the development of UK SMIs

vii) Maintain professional competence in clinical microbiology

viii) Act as a champion for UK SMIs within their partner organisation and promote them elsewhere when relevant.

Duties of Partner Organisations

All partner organisations are expected to:

i) Nominate individuals to sit on UK SMI committees

ii) Fund the travel expenses of nominees

iii) Maintain a strong input into the production of UK SMIs

iv) Maintain a system for regular progress reports to Council

v) Establish consultation procedures for commenting on UK SMIs

vi) Reinforce own perception of ownership.

Tenure of Membership

The tenure of members of the Working Group is 5 years. The tenure of members may be extended with the agreement of the partner organisation. The tenure of the Chair is 5 years

which can be extended by a further term. When the post becomes vacant, members of the Steering Committee oversee the process for the appointment of a new Working Group Chair.

The tenure of the lay representatives is 5 years and this may be extended with the agreement of the Chair.

Appointment of a chair

The partner organisations are invited to submit nominations for the position of Chair. The candidates forward a short CV and a letter of interest which is considered by a selection or interview panel.

A job description and personal specification for the post is available.

MEETINGS AND FUNCTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Meetings are held at least two times a year, with additional meetings including teleconferences arranged at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair, with the support of the Working Group members may invite a guest or co-opt an individual to assist the Working Group in fulfilling its role.

The scientific and administrative support is provided by the Standards Unit. The Standards Unit circulate the agenda and papers to the members of the group approximately 10 working days in advance of the meeting. Circulation of papers is restricted to Working Group members, guests and co-opted members.

When documents are circulated electronically before consultation, members are expected to engage with the process and highlight areas of inaccuracy or gaps in content at this time. Discussions in the Working Group meetings need to centre on the particular stage in the development process reached at that time.

Non-verbatim, contemporaneous minutes of each meeting are maintained. The minutes are completed and approved by the Chairs and sent out to members 6-8 weeks after the meeting.

Meetings generally take place on UKHSA[2] premises or elsewhere at the discretion of the Standards Unit with refreshment and lunch provided.

All meetings are CPD approved by the Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biomedical Science.

REVIEW

The terms of reference, performance and appropriateness of the Working Groups will be reviewed by the Chairs of the Working Groups, Chair of the Steering Committee and the Head of the Standards Unit, taking into account the views and recommendations of the members of the Working Groups.