

Terms of Reference for BLS Scientific Committee

Revised September 2016

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To act as the scientific committee for the annual conference (to review abstracts and decide on acceptability)
- 1.2. To judge presentations made at conference of accepted abstracts and recommend awards for best overall and best 'novice' posters, best overall and best 'novice' oral presentations.
- 1.3. To act as the scientific committee to assess applications for the Lymphoedema Research Grant (LRG) including the Caroline Badger Clinical Research Fellowship Award (CBCRFA) and receive progress reports.
- 1.4. To liaise with an appropriate journal (reviewed and agreed annually) regarding the publication of conference abstracts.

2. Membership

- 2.1. Ideally, there will be a maximum of 10 members. Adequate expertise and stability are essential for the effectiveness of the Committee. It is therefore hoped that members will remain on the Committee for a maximum period of five years (see 2.5). A Chairperson and Deputy Chair will be selected from within the membership. It is anticipated that the Deputy Chair will fulfil this role for 3 years before taking up the role of Chair. The tenure of the Chair and Deputy Chair roles will usually be 3 years.
- 2.2. Essential criteria for membership of the Scientific Committee are: full membership of BLS; a first degree or equivalent; experience of writing for publication; experience of poster and presentation. Holding a higher degree is a desirable criterion.
- 2.3. There will be an "honorary" member of the Scientific Committee in addition to the 9 full members. This person will not have the experience to meet the criteria for full membership but, for example, may be someone carrying out an MSc. This membership will be for 2 years, following which the person will either become a full member or will step down. The honorary member would not be a "voting member" but will be asked to comment on the abstracts with the support of a named mentor from the Scientific Committee. The aim of this role would be to enable a BLS member to develop skills which would make them eligible for full Scientific Committee membership.
- 2.4. At least one member but no more than two will stand down each year.
- 2.5. The annual recruitment of at least one new member each year will ensure that the Committee is not static and those with less experience are facilitated in developing their skills. It is desirable that a mix of skills and abilities is represented on the Committee, i.e. different disciplines, research experience. The process of appointment will be by an expression of interest by email to the chair by the end of October, i.e. following the annual meeting at the BLS Conference. The vacancy will be advertised on the BLS website. The Chair will send a "proforma" for completion by the applicant, including a "mini-CV" and a checklist of the criteria for Scientific Committee membership.

If there are more eligible applicants than vacancies, then existing members will choose the new applicant by vote. If particular expertise is sought to ensure that the group fulfils its function, this will be made clear at the time of seeking applicants.

New members will take up their place on the Committee shortly after this so that they can take part in the review of abstracts etc for the next conference.

The tenure for Scientific Committee membership will normally be for 5 years, although it is recognised that members could be re-nominated for a further term in order to maintain a balance of experience and different professionals on the Committee.

- 2.6. The Deputy Chair will be elected from the Scientific Committee membership and will provide support to the Chair, particularly if there were issues requiring a "Chairman's vote" due to the lack of consensus. The Deputy will be "Chair Elect" and take over the role of Chair when the Chair steps down.
- 2.7. The chair of the Scientific Committee will be co-opted onto the BLS Committee as a means of communication between the two.
- 2.8. In recognition of their work for BLS, Scientific Committee members are able to claim expenses from BLS for conference attendance: either travel expenses or one night's accommodation.

3. Meetings

- 3.1. Annually at BLS Conference. A second meeting may take place after initial assessment of conference abstracts in July so that firm decisions can be made.

4. Operational issues

- 4.1. Most business to be conducted by e-mail: with copy to BLS Admin;
- 4.2. Notes of annual meeting to be kept, circulated to Scientific Committee Members and a copy sent to the office for circulation to the BLS Committee;
- 4.3. The Chair (or Deputy) of the Scientific Committee will present a written +/- verbal report on its activities at the Annual General meeting;
- 4.4. Applications / abstracts - BLS Admin to keep comments for 1 year after conference;
- 4.5. Decision-making methods by majority decision with the Chair taking decision if there is a "tied" vote, following discussion with the Deputy Chair;
- 4.6. Advice from external experts, e.g. statistician when necessary, should be available
- 4.7. Liaison with Conference Committee re abstracts / programme: need for Chair of Scientific Committee & Conference Committee to work together on this. The number of slots available for oral presentation will be decided by the Conference Committee and communicated with the Science Committee
- 4.8. Abstracts of invited speaker presentations will also be sent to the Scientific Committee Chair for information.
- 4.9. Applications will be invited for the LRG including the CBCRFA by an agreed date. Following agreement by the BLS Committee, applicants will be informed in writing and the membership will be informed through the Newsletter and Website.

Interim Reports from successful applicants will be noted and forwarded to the Committee Link person with any concerns about lack of progress or the process being highlighted.

- 4.10 Any member of the Scientific Committee who submits an abstract for the conference or application for a research award will be excluded from the review process in relation to their own work to ensure there is no conflict of interest.