



Psychotherapy & Counselling  
Federation of Australia

# PACFA Research Committee

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Introduction

PACFA has two major roles in relation to research:

- disseminating information to the profession about the evidence informed practices relating to counselling and psychotherapy;
- facilitating /commissioning high quality, original research, including literature searches and reviews, into the processes and outcomes of counselling and psychotherapy. Particular focus is given to areas that are important for the profession's development, particularly where research activity in Australia has been underdeveloped to date; and areas that underpin PACFA's position in policy and advocacy initiatives.

### Responsibilities

#### PACFA Board

The PACFA Board provides direction to the Research Committee about research priorities that support PACFA's policy initiatives, including advocacy to government, representing the profession, and supporting funding applications.

#### PACFA Research Committee

The PACFA Research Committee references and supports a broad range of research methods, across the spectrum of ontological research (*for example, theoretical, hermeneutic, qualitative*) and *epistemological (for example, empirical and quantitative)* and Indigenous knowledge systems, reflective of the range of disciplines that comprise the knowledge base of the professions of psychotherapy and counselling in Australia.

In carrying out its delegated responsibility, disseminating and facilitating evidence-informed research, the Research Committee will:

1. meet once annually for a full day face to face planning meeting, when the committee will develop a plan for the year's work;
2. meet monthly on-line throughout the year, to develop and monitor activities, including PACJA editor for appropriate part of the meeting;
3. provide written reports of its activities to Board meetings, and the Chair and/or Deputy will attend Board meetings;
4. review Terms of Reference at least every two years at the annual Planning Meeting;
5. review research projects to be advertised through the PACFA website;

6. invite external advisors and members to contribute to planning or regular meetings from time to time when their expertise is relevant for decision-making and disseminate meeting notes to those advisors and members after such meetings;
7. maximise the value of PACFA's research initiatives;
8. advance PACFA's research agenda by attending closely to priorities of PACFA's Board and Council, especially as published in the Strategic Plan;
9. ensure that PACFA produces or publishes high quality research by overseeing PACFA grants and commissions from conception to publication;
10. ensure that research undertaken by PACFA or commissioned by PACFA is undertaken ethically with appropriate Ethics Approvals in place;
11. ensure that ownership of research data research outputs is clearly defined as follows:
  - for research undertaken by PACFA or PACFA-commissioned researchers, the intellectual property including research data and research outputs will be owned by PACFA;
  - for research undertaken for PACFA by members of the PACFA Research Committee, the intellectual property including research data and research outputs will be owned by PACFA; this must be clearly outlined in the Ethics application;
  - for non-commissioned occasional research papers published by PACFA, all intellectual property will be owned by the researcher;
12. maximise the value of PACFA's research initiatives by overseeing the publication and dissemination of documents produced, including information on the PACFA website;
13. facilitate the publication of a high quality well-read journal (Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia; PACJA) by:
  - supporting the work of the Editor;
  - acting as Editorial Board in decision-making;
  - commissioning articles for publication;
  - encouraging members and other relevant professionals to write articles;
  - reviewing articles;
  - recruiting members as reviewers;
  - promoting the journal to potential readers and contributors.
14. advance evidence-informed practice in the psychotherapy and counseling professions by:
  - ensuring that PACFA Conferences consider evidence-informed practice, by providing one research-active Research Committee member as a Conference Committee member and other members to review abstracts;
  - assisting Member Associations to utilize the existing evidence base for counselling and psychotherapy and develop the evidence through research, by providing guidance and support to them and their members;
15. utilise the expertise of experienced researchers and stakeholders in all of these responsibilities;
16. ensure that PACFA Conferences prioritise evidence-informed practice;
17. organise research forums to disseminate and facilitate research.

Members of the Research Committee will be acknowledged as authors in any research outputs from PACFA research projects where they have been contributing researchers. Research Committee members may request permission from PACFA to use the data from these projects to undertake their own research and such permission shall not be unreasonably withheld.

## **Research Committee Chair**

The Research Committee Chair is appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Committee. The Chair must be a PACFA Member, have a Higher Degree Research qualification, have experience in conducting and publishing research and a demonstrated understanding of ethical issues in the conduct of research.

The Research Committee Chair will:

1. Represent the Research Committee on the PACFA Board.
2. Ensure implementation of PACFA's research agenda.
3. Provide leadership, guidance and advice to support Research Committee members.
4. Liaise with Research Committee members for input on Research Committee decisions and to delegate tasks relating research matters.
5. When required, provide support and advice to the External Consultant, in relation to Research Committee business.

## **Membership of PACFA Research Committee**

There shall be up to six people appointed to Research Committee who will provide a range of viewpoints based on their experience.

Membership of the Research Committee will be structured as far as possible to be inclusive of, but not limited to, members who can represent the viewpoints of a diverse range of interest groups.

The Research Committee will comprise the following members:

- A Chair appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Committee. The Chair must be a PACFA member or a member of a PACFA Member Association, have a Higher Degree Research qualification, experience in conducting and publishing research and a demonstrated understanding of ethical issues in the conduct of research;
- Up to five additional members, comprising of a member of the College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices (CATSIHP) and ordinary PACFA members or members of PACFA Member Associations, who have a higher degree research qualification and are research-active; or other relevant qualifications and experience;
- Up to two other experts, who have higher degree research qualifications, experience in conducting and publishing research and a demonstrated understanding of ethical issues in the conduct of research, who may be invited to act as external advisors as need arises. These individuals do not necessarily have to be PACFA members;
- One other person who is a member of a relevant national body representing Aboriginal health and wellbeing, consumers and/or carers, or other cultural or social groups may be invited to contribute on relevant matters as need arises. These members are not expected to be PACFA members.

Working groups to carry out specific activities may be formed from these members or other co-opted persons from time to time;

## **Process of recruitment and terms**

- Potential members may self-nominate or be invited to apply by current Research Committee member or other PACFA membership or leadership on the basis of appropriate skills and interests;
- Potential members should complete an EOI (as per attached Appendix) outlining their relevant skills, experience and interest to contribute to the Committee and send it by email to the Research Committee Chair;
- This initial application should be considered first by the Research Committee;
- If approved by the Research Committee, the recommendation should go to the Board for endorsement at its next meeting;
- Decision-making regarding membership should consider diversity of experience and circumstances including: gender, career stage; geographic location; type of employer; practice areas; research experience and interests; and other relevant issues;
- Appointments are ordinarily for a period of two years, in sequence with PACFA's AGM and election cycle.

## **Applicant skills and qualifications**

Research Committee members have:

- A higher degree research qualification and are research-active or have other relevant qualifications and experience
- Accredited training in psychotherapy and/or counselling
- Current or recent clinical practice in psychotherapy and/or counselling
- Eligibility for membership of a professional psychotherapy and/or counselling College:
  - Member of the College of Counselling
  - Member of the College of Psychotherapy

Members are free of adverse findings against them relating to a breach of ethical standards in relation to their clinical and/or academic and research practice.

## **Committee Meetings**

The Research Committee will meet formally once a month.

11 meetings per year will take place via Zoom web-conference and one meeting per year will be face-to-face. Additional meetings, if required, will take place via Zoom.

Committee members will participate in most meetings with allowance being made for reasonable absences due to other commitments.

In between meetings, discussions may take place via email to enable decisions to be made in a timely manner.

## **Responsibilities of Research Committee members**

Research Committee members commit to:

- attending meetings regularly; notifying in advance when they are unavailable; and attending a minimum 75% of meetings per year
- prepare appropriately for meetings including reading all papers circulated;
- contribute actively to meetings;
- undertake any agreed tasks between meetings and report in a timely way;
- contribute actively to PACFA's Research agenda by taking responsibility for specific task/s from time to time.

## **Review**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years.

The review process will include:

- Review of by the Terms of Reference by the Board in consultation with the Research Committee.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Expression of Interest form for Research Committee members**

**Name:**

**Contact email:**

**Relevant qualifications and training:**

**Current relevant work situation:**

**Previous relevant work situation and experience:**

**Statement of interest for this position (up to 200 words to explain why you would be a contributing member of this Committee)**

**Signed:**

**Date:**