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# Scientific Review Committee Guidelines 2025-2026 Academic Year

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# Scientific Review Committee Guidelines

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## 1. Terminologies

AHU = AdventHealth University

HSR = Human Subject Research

NHSR = Non-Human Subject Research

PI = Principal Investigator

QI/QA = Quality Improvement/Quality Assessment

RGO = Research and Grants Office

SRC = Scientific Review Committee

SubI = Sub Investigator, the other investigators besides the Principal Investigator

## 2. Purpose

The AdventHealth University (AHU) Scientific Review Committee (SRC) strives to ensure the scientific quality and merit of investigator-initiated research studies and other scholarly projects proposed by AHU faculty, staff, and registered students. AHU encourages both quantitative and qualitative projects that contribute to scholarly inquiry and enrich the academic climate of Advent Health University.

## 3. Goals

To advance this purpose, AHU SRC has adopted the following goals:

- 1.To review and approve the scientific merits of AHU scholarly project proposals.

2. To provide educational feedback to AHU investigators to improve the scientific integrity and merit of proposed scholarly projects.

#### **4. Projects Requiring Approval by Scientific Review Committee**

AHU personnel, when representing AHU, are required and responsible for submitting all research studies and scholarly projects involving data collection (whether retrospective or prospective) to the RGO for the appropriate Research Oversight Committees, including SRC.

#### **5. Projects Exempt from Review and Approval by Scientific Review Committee**

Projects that do not involve data collection are not required to be submitted for review by the RGO and the Research Oversight Committees, including the SRC. These projects include, but are not limited to:

1. Literature review (e.g., traditional, systematic, scoping)
2. Development of educational modules without data collection.

#### **6. Reliance Agreements and Dispute Resolution**

Studies that have already been approved by another scientific review committee, as well as formal consortium studies with their own internal review process, will receive automatic AHU SRC approval under “reliance agreement.” In this arrangement, the external committee providing the review is referred to as the “relying on SRC.” Although automatic approval applies, the proposal must still be submitted to the AHU SRC for record-keeping and acknowledgement. The SRC Chair has the authority to issue a written document outlining the reliance agreement without requiring review or approval from the SRC committees.

If there is a dispute about whether a study requires AHU SRC approval, the following process will apply:

1. The SRC Chair will consult with the Research Officer.

2. The Research Officer will consult with the Research Steering Committee.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the Chair will escalate the issue to the Provost.
4. The Provost's decision will be final and non-appealable.

## **7. Membership**

SRC members are expected to contribute actively to the work of the Committee.

Responsibilities include:

- ✓ Complete the required CITI training to ensure the fairness and integrity of the peer review process.
- ✓ Attend scheduled Committee meetings, an average of once a month and as needed. The Committee will meet as called by the Chair.
- ✓ Review submitted applications and complete evaluations within designated deadlines.
- ✓ Maintaining engagement in Committee business, which may be managed via email.

To qualify for membership, SRC members must hold a terminal degree in their respective fields and have experience of conducting and reviewing research projects.

Members and Chairs are assigned at the discretion of the Research and Grants Office and appointed by the President's Executive Cabinet annually prior to the new academic year.

### **2026-2027 SRC Members List**

**Chair:**

Lynn Rowe, PhD, RN

**Co-Chair and Recording Secretary:**

Chia-Wei Fan, PhD, OTR/L

**Members:**

Alessandra Swarowsky Martin, PhD, PT

Ali Amirkhosravi, PhD

Carolyn Fore, PhD, RN

Danette Mondary PhD, RN

Janice Lowden-Stokley, PhD, RN

Laura Podschun, PT, DPT, PhD, OCS, COMT, CDNS

Mohtashem Samsam, MD, PhD

## **8. Chair and Co-Chair Responsibilities**

### **Chair Responsibilities:**

The SRC Chair is responsible for preparing and retaining the appropriate documentation related to SRC activities. These records must include:

1. Copies of all applications reviewed, records of all continuing review activities, and meeting minutes. Detailed records of voting actions, including attendance at the meeting, actions taken by the SRC, voting results (number for, against, and abstaining), and justification for any required resubmission of applications.
2. All records of SRC are confidential. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years or three years after the project's completion, whichever is longer. They must also be available for inspection by the AHU Research and Grants Office or Provost, as deemed necessary.
3. In addition, the Chair is responsible for:
4. Creation of the SRC approval letters and submission to the Research and Grants Office for communication with Investigators.
5. Call meetings as needed and provide the necessary information with sufficient time for members to review it.

### **Co-Chair Responsibilities:**

The SRC Co-Chair is responsible for the following:

1. At the beginning of each school year, the following documents must be reviewed and approved by the Committee, submitted to the RGO to be uploaded into the AHU Document Library SharePoint/AHU Committees:

- i. Scientific Review Committee Charter.
  - ii. Scientific Review Committee Guidelines.
  - iii. Scientific Review Committee Rubrics.
2. Creation of pre-information of the SRC approval letter for any new submission.

## **9. SRC Review Process**

### **Submission Schedule**

There is an open submission system, meaning any investigator may apply online at any time. The Research Oversight Committees, including the SRC, will conduct reviews during working days (WD). Holidays and school breaks are not considered working days.

### **Definition of Working Days**

Working days (WDs) are defined as Monday through Friday, excluding public holidays, weekends, trimester breaks, and any official University closure periods.

### **Application Submission**

Applications for SRC review must be submitted through the AHU Research website at <https://my.ahu.edu/academics/research/online-submissions/new-proposal-application>.

Upon submission, an automatic email notification confirming receipt is sent to the PI listed in the submission.

### **Initial Review by RGO**

The RGO reviews the presence of all documents and forwards them to the SRC Co-Chair within 3 working days. Incomplete applications will not proceed until all missing documents or requirements are provided.

### **SRC Co-Chair Review**

1. The SRC Co-Chair has 3 WD to review the submission of completeness, assign reviewers, and create the pre-SRC approval letter. Each proposal application will be assigned to two or more members for review. If necessary, a full Committee review may be conducted. If the study topic falls outside the Committee's expertise, the Co-Chair may invite an additional reviewer.

2. In the case one reviewer is unable to review or does not confirm the receipt of the email, the Co-Chair assigns a third member as reviewer.

#### SRC Members Review

3. Assigned reviewers will conduct a written review using the SRC Evaluation Rubric and provide formative feedback to the SRC Chair in 7 WDs.

#### SRC Chair

4. The SRC Chair has 1 WD to combine the information from the reviewers of Rubrics into the Final SRC Approval Letter and submit it to the RGO.

#### Notification of Decision

5. Within 1 WDs of receiving the SRC's decision, the RGO will notify the PI by e-mail.

#### Extraordinary Circumstances

In rare cases where immediate approval is required due to unexpected circumstances beyond the PI's control, the SRC Chair reserves the right to render a decision without the Committee's input. The Chair must then inform the Committee members of the decisions *ex post facto*. Examples of extraordinary events include situations requiring expedited approval, such as when approval must be obtained before a grant can be submitted.

## 10. SRC Levels of Approval

For each application, reviewers will assign one of the following designations:

1. *Approved as submitted*: the proposal is approved without conditions. The project may proceed with the next step of the review and approval workflow.
2. *Approved with recommendation(s)*: The proposal is approved with non-mandatory suggestions for improvement. The project may proceed to the next step of the workflow.
3. *Approved pending required change(s)*: the proposal is conditionally approved, pending specific required revisions. The proposal cannot proceed until the requested changes are submitted and approved by the SRC. Investigators will receive a letter detailing the



Committee's concerns and required revisions. The project will proceed only upon final SRC approval.

4. *Resubmission Required:* The proposal is not approved and may not proceed with the next step of the review workflow. It must be resubmitted online as a new application and undergo a full re-review.

## **11. Level of Approval Granted**

- The lowest level of approval submitted by the Committee members to the Chair will constitute the final approval level granted for the proposal.
- In cases of significant disagreement regarding approval levels, the Chair will facilitate a discussion with the Committee to reach consensus.
- If disagreement persists after Committee discussion, the matter will be elevated to the Research Steering Committee, and, if necessary, to the Provost, whose decision will be final.