eviQ Reference Committees

Terms of Reference

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1. Background

eviQ provides evidence-based information to guide the safe delivery of cancer treatments and patient management at the point of care. eviQ is a national program delivered by the Cancer Institute NSW and works within the bounds of the Commonwealth of Australia's regulatory and reimbursement process for drug marketing (Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)) and subsidy (Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS).

This document should be read in conjunction with eviQ Program Governance and eviQ compliance with TGA registration and PBS listing for drugs.

In this document:

eviQ reference committee refers to committees of cancer clinicians responsible for reviewing and developing eviQ content

eviQ chair refers to chairs and co-chairs of eviQ reference committees

eviQ content authors are employees of the Cancer Institute NSW who co-ordinate the development and review of eviQ content. eviQ content authors are health professionals with clinical experience in cancer care (nursing, pharmacy and radiation therapy).

eviQ content refers to all materials published on the eviQ website. This includes but is not limited to protocols, clinical calculators, clinical resources, patient information, consumer information, guides and audio-visual recordings

eviQ content stream refers to the content areas for which there are eviQ reference committees: medical oncology, haematology, blood and marrow transplant (BMT), cellular therapies, radiation oncology, cancer genetics, nursing and pharmacy.

Lead clinician refers to a clinician, usually a consultant, who is responsible for the approval of a protocol or resource. They may also be responsible for the supervision of an advanced trainee.

2. Purpose of eviQ reference committees

eviQ reference committees are clinical expert groups comprising cancer clinicians from Australia and New Zealand. eviQ reference committees critically appraise evidence supporting protocols and other documents published by eviQ. At eviQ reference committee meetings, lead clinicians present new and reviewed eviQ protocols and resources, which are discussed by the committee with the aim of reaching consensus regarding content. Reference committee members develop, review and revise eviQ content.

3. eviQ reference committee meetings

- Given the continuing challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, all eviQ reference committee meetings ('meetings') for the foreseeable future will be held virtually.
- The number of meetings per eviQ content stream will vary. On average, each year around four meetings per content area lasting up to 4 hours will be conducted.
- Where a meeting agenda contains drug treatment protocols an eviQ pharmacist and an eviQ nurse are required to attend.
- All meetings, except for cancer genetics, should be topic specific meetings, and the meeting attendance must include clinicians with specific expertise in the tumour stream/topic being discussed who understand eviQ governance requirements.
- eviQ content authors will organise each meeting, prepare its agenda in consultation with the chairs and provide secretariat support at the meeting. The agenda must consider new and reviewed eviQ content, internal or external protocol requests, recently published data, new drug listings and any discussion that has occurred out of session.
- At least one eviQ program manager may attend all meetings.
- Following each meeting, ratified minutes will be circulated to all reference committee members. Minutes will be kept as a permanent record and added to the relevant reference committee homepage.
- A digital record of reference committee meeting attendance and an audio-visual recording of all meetings will be retained by eviQ.

4. Reference committee membership

- eviQ reference committees will comprise:
    - Practising clinicians in medicine (consultant, fellow, advanced trainee or registrar), nursing, pharmacy, cancer genetics or allied health in the areas of blood and marrow transplant (BMT), cellular therapies, haematology, medical oncology or radiation oncology. For eviQ cancer genetics andpaediatric cancer genetics reference committee membership eligibility criteriasee Appendix A.
    - Representation from both public and private health sectors.
    - Representation from rural, regional and metropolitan areas.
    - Representation from all Australian states and territories and New Zealand.
- Membership of one eviQ reference committee does not preclude membership of others.
- Guests, for example academics or researchers working in a relevant cancer area or other relevant health care agency/organisational professionals, may be invited to attend with eviQ chair approval.
- Membership will be for two years. Members seeking to extend their membership beyond two years will be prompted to renew their membership which includes digital acceptance of the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
- All reference committee members except the chairs will have equal status in the committee.

5. eviQ chair appointment process and term

- For newly formed eviQ reference committees, temporary chairs are appointed by the eviQ Program Director until the reference committee is established.
- The appointment of new chairs is completed via a formal process:

  - Expressions of interest and nominations are requested from current reference committee members.
  - Successful appointments are determined by interview with the eviQ Program Director, a current eviQ reference committee chair and an eviQ program manager.
  - If there is more than one suitable candidate, candidates not appointed to the role may be placed on an eligibility list valid for two years.
- Chairs are appointed for a two-year term, which may be extended to a maximum of four years in total.
- For each eviQ reference committee, ideally, chair appointments are staggered to ensure continuity.
- For the cancer genetics adult reference committee, the chairs are a clinical geneticist, a genetic counsellor and either a medical oncologist, endocrinologist, molecular genetic pathologist or an additional clinical geneticist and can be from Australia or New Zealand; for the cancer genetics paediatric subcommittee, the chair is a clinical geneticist and co-chair a paediatric oncologist. The maximum term for eachposition will be 4 years.
- Chairs of one reference committee should not work at the same workplace and ideally will work in different jurisdictions.
- If a chair is consistently unable to fulfil their duties during the term, they may elect to stand down or be asked to stand down by the eviQ Program Director and the appointment process for a new chair will begin.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. eviQ reference committee chairs

- Each eviQ reference committee has at least two chairs who are practising clinicians.
- The role of the chair is to:
  - chair reference committee meetings to ensure the eviQ governance process is followed
  - ensure effective and open discussion relevant to content being presented at reference committee meetings and summarise an outcome for each agenda item following discussion
  - work in collaboration with eviQ content authors to ensure accurate documentation of the main points of discussion
  - participate in the prioritisation of content review and new content development
  - support digital review of content outside of reference committee meetings
  - represent reference committee members at annual eviQ all-chairs meetings.
  - provide a rapid response to time-sensitive issues identified by eviQ.
- Chairs are expected to participate in the appointment of new chairs.

6.2. eviQ reference committee members

- The role of the eviQ reference committee member is to:
  - develop, review and maintain eviQ content in line with eviQ Program Governance
  - advise on eviQ content accuracy and relevance to clinical practice and notify eviQ of errors or omissions in published content
  - attend reference committee meetings and participate in digital content discussions

  - provide timely email responses and adhere to deadlines
  - promote the use of eviQ and encourage reference committee participation among peers.
- Lead clinicians are responsible for the supervision of advanced trainees undertaking eviQ content development and review and for its final approval.
- Authorship of and responsibility for eviQ content is not attributed to any individual but to the relevant reference committee as a whole.

6.3. eviQ content authors

- The role of the eviQ content author is to:
  - plan and schedule eviQ content development and review, co-ordinate reference committee meetings, manage the committee membership and support stakeholders
  - support eviQ reference committees, facilitate meetings and ensure all eviQ governance processes are followed.

7. Communication

- All communication should be directed through the eviQ content authors for the relevant content stream.
- Any correspondence sent by the chairs relevant to reference committee members should be copied to the relevant eviQ content authors.
- All other communication relating to the workings of a reference committee or the development of content is the responsibility of the eviQ content authors and does not require prior approval of the chair.
- A regular meeting schedule between the chairs and the eviQ content authors should be agreed upon by both parties to ensure that timely discussion of relevant matters occurs.

8. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

- Information discussed during or related to all eviQ reference committee meetings is to be provided by clinicians in confidence (including email and verbal discussions).
- All members are required to:
  - adhere to the Terms of Reference and the Code of Conduct
  - declare any real or perceived conflict of interest.

  Members not doing so may be asked by the eviQ Program Director to leave the reference committee.
- All signed Confidentiality Agreements and Compliance with the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests will be stored digitally.

9. Review of Terms of Reference

- eviQ Reference Committee Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years.
- eviQ Program Managers and the eviQ Program Director are responsible for the final approval of the Terms of Reference.

Appendix A

eviQ cancer genetics and paediatric cancer genetics reference committee membership eligibility criteria

These criteria are in place to ensure diverse and national representation of healthcare experts working in the field of cancer genetics. These criteria apply to 1 May 2024 and will be reviewed at that time.

eviQ cancer genetics reference committee (RC) members are expected to attend at least one virtual meeting per year **AND/OR** to actively participate in eviQ cancer genetics document review and/or development.

As paediatric cancer genetics is a subspecialty, exceptions to these eligibility rules may be made when considering membership of the eviQ cancer genetics paediatric RC at the discretion of that committee's chair and co-chair.

Genetic counsellors

To be eligible to join the eviQ cancer genetics RC, genetic counsellors must:

- Possess FHGSA Certification in genetic counselling AND be registered with the HGSA AND have a minimum of two (2) years full-time equivalent (FTE) experience working as a genetic counsellor where a substantial component of work done is cancer genetics OR
- Possess FHGSA Certification in genetic counselling AND be registered with the HGSA AND have a minimum of one (1) year FTE experience working as a genetic counsellor where a substantial component of work done is cancer genetics WITH a reference from their Head of Department OR
- Possess MHGSA in genetic counselling AND be Provisionally Registered with the HGSA AND have a minimum of five (5) years' FTE experience working as a genetic counsellor where a substantial component of work done is cancer genetics WITH a reference from their Head of Department OR
- Provide evidence of other genetics or cancer genetics experience deemed suitable at the discretion of the eviQ cancer genetics RC chair and co-chair (including but not limited to overseas-qualified genetic counsellors with appropriate experience working as a cancer genetic counsellor, genetic counsellor working in Australia or New Zealand with substantial evidence of cancer genetics research, including PhD).

Geneticists/other specialists/medical

To be eligible to join the eviQ cancer genetics RC, medically qualified individuals must:

- Have six (6) months' FTE advanced training in cancer genetics OR
- Have 12 months' FTE advanced training in medical oncology OR

- Have completed FRACP, FRACS or FRCPA in a relevant specialty at the discretion of the eviQcancer genetics RC chair and co-chair OR
- Provide evidence of other genetics or cancer genetics experience deemed suitable at the discretion of the eviQ cancer genetics RC chair and co-chair (including but not limited to substantial evidence of cancer genetics research).

Cancer genetics researchers

To be eligible to join the eviQ cancer genetics RC, researchers must provide evidence of cancer genetics experience deemed suitable at the discretion of the eviQ cancer genetics RC chair and co-chair (including but not limited to substantial evidence of cancer genetics research).

Non-member observers

At the discretion of the eviQ cancer genetics RC chair and co-chair, an individual not eligible for membership of the eviQ cancer genetics RC may be granted permission to attend via teleconference one (1) reference committee meeting as an observer.

Individuals applying to observe an eviQ cancer genetics RC must provide in writing details of:

- Their cancer genetics experience AND
- Their reason for applying to observe the RC AND
- Their current position AND
- A reference from their Head of Department OR an introduction from a member of their service who is a current or past member of the eviQ cancer genetics RC.

Where an individual's application to observe an eviQ cancer genetics RC is approved, the non- member must be referred to eviQ to provide registration details for governance-required agreement to the code of conduct and terms of reference and to declare any potential conflict(s) of interest.

Non-reference committee members' expert input into eviQ documents

Where an eviQ cancer genetics RC member engages an expert non-member to provide input into eviQ content, the non-member expert must be referred to eviQ to provide registration details for governance-required agreement to the code of conduct and terms of reference and to declare any potential conflict(s) of interest.