



**Australian
Clinical
Trials
Alliance**

Clinical Trial Network Executive Officer/Network Manager Duties

Guidance for CTNs
MARCH 2019

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PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document will assist clinical trial networks (CTNs) to understand and define the duties of a CTN Executive Officer/Network Manager. We have identified that across Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) network members these roles are very similar; throughout the document the role will be referred to as Executive Officer only, although many CTNs use the term Network Manager.

ROLE OF ACTA IN DEVELOPING EXECUTIVE OFFICER DUTIES

ACTA provides advice to assist CTNs to define their necessary Executive Officer duties. The generic advice provided by ACTA should be considered and applied by each CTN taking into account the specific individual circumstances and needs of the CTN.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the contributions of ACTA CTN members and members of ACTA's Efficient and Effective CTNs Reference Group in the preparation, development and review of this document.

USE OF THIS DOCUMENT

ACTA requests that the following acknowledgement is included in any CTN operational processes that are developed and documented using knowledge gained from this document. This will assist ACTA in identifying the usefulness and impact of this document in creating efficient and effective processes for CTNs.

"[name of CTN] acknowledges the contribution of Australian Clinical Trials Alliance to the development of operational processes within our network (reference: Executive Officer duties)".

DISCLAIMER

The information in this document is for general guidance only. ACTA does not make any representations or warranties (expressed or implied) as to the accuracy, currency or authenticity of the information provided.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Changes made to document	Author
1.0	19 March 2019	First version	AB, MS, KL, AB, MG

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTA	Australian Clinical Trials Alliance
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CTN	Clinical Trial Network
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
HR	Human resources
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CTNs are largely clinician-led and maintained, with activities such as design and conduct of trials, peer-review of new proposals; CTN governance; and preparation of publications largely completed by clinicians. However, many operational activities critical to the success of a CTN (1) that require administrative and project management duties are delegated to a CTN Executive Officer.

While the Executive Officer role in a CTN shares some similarities with Executive Officer roles in other industries, some of the features of a CTN predispose the Executive Officer to unique duties. In most CTNs, the Executive Officer would be expected to:

- support the governance committee(s)
- maintain membership and key stakeholder engagement through communications, including the website and coordination of events, smaller interest groups and meetings
- coordinate activities to maintain the CTN reputation and promote community awareness
- successfully implement and measure the impact of strategic objectives
- manage the operational budget

Depending on other roles in the CTN, the Executive Officer may also have responsibilities for staff line management, financial reporting, oversight of the clinical trial program, event management and preparation of funding applications. Some of the larger CTNs with more sustainable funding, larger teams and more complex programs of work may like to consider employing a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with commensurate duties.

ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Often working in isolation, reporting remotely to the CTN Chair and governance committee(s), the Executive Officer requires the ability to work autonomously, communicate effectively and to respond to emerging issues while minimising risk to the CTN. The Executive Officer should possess strong leadership and problem-solving skills and the ability to foster strong working relationships and connections both within the membership and with external stakeholders.

POSITION DESCRIPTION OF AN EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A properly written job description describes the expectations the organisation has of an employee. It states the general responsibilities of the role, the duties that must be performed, and the key skills, attributes and competencies required for the role. As such, the position description aligns the expectations of employer and employee, providing the basis for a productive working relationship and for managing employee performance.

A position description should provide specific detail regarding the key duties of the role but be written in a manner that accommodates the employee taking initiative, developing greater skills and efficiencies, and is sufficiently flexible that responsibilities and duties may be upheld through different strategies of growth in the organisation.

A sample position description for a CTN Executive Officer can be found in Appendix 1. We recommend that the governance committee or CTN Chair considers duties relevant to their CTN when preparing a position description for an Executive Officer. Duties more appropriate to a CEO have also been highlighted. An editable version can be obtained by contacting acta@clinicaltrialsalliance.org.au.

REFERENCES

1. Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA), (2019) *Activities critical to success and sustainable growth in clinical trial networks- sector consultation*. Report in preparation

APPENDIX 1– SAMPLE POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title	Executive Officer		
Division			
Position Purpose	To manage the Clinical Trial Network (CTN), business and general operations including human resources (HR) and administrative activities.		
Level/Advertised Award/Classification			
Work Location			
Reporting Relationship	[CHAIR]		
Position Term			
Staff Member		Signature	Date
Position Description attached	Yes:	Ref:	N/A:
Accompanying Documents			

1. Organisation

[Insert the mission, vision and values of your CTN]

2. Position Summary

The Executive Officer is responsible for managing the business and general operational, HR and administrative activities of the clinical trial network (CTN). The Executive Officer, in conjunction with the governance committee plays a key role in the development and implementation of the strategic plan of the [CTN NAME] CTN. Working closely with an [active governance committee] the Executive Officer maintains a comprehensive knowledge of the CTN’s key research portfolio and agenda, working to ensure that goals and objectives set out in the strategic plan are appropriately supported and achieved. The Executive Officer develops and manages the CTN operational budget and available resources including staff; provides secretariat support for the CTN governance committee; and leadership and supervision/line management for staff and other team members. A pivotal aspect of this role is to work closely with the CTN [governance committee] to support growth in CTN membership and to ensure other key stakeholders are kept informed of CTN activities, promoting engagement and involvement in the efforts of the CTN.

3. Key Accountabilities, Outcomes & Activities

3.1 CTN Operations:

- Implement the CTN strategic plan/objectives.
- Prepare the annual operating budget in conjunction with the Treasurer/Business Manager and manage finances according to the budget, ensuring regular and accurate financial reports are received by the governance committee as per agreed reporting timelines.

- Design and implement appropriate prospective risk management practices and respond to emerging issues/risk to ensure effective resolution, in an effort to minimise harm to the CTN/ to the organisation/institution.
- Design and implement appropriate quality management policies, plans and processes to ensure quality is always embedded in the practice of the CTN.
- Provide support to the governance committee and other committees, acting as the central point of contact, coordinating actions and outcomes to proactively ensure all outcomes and objectives of the committee are met efficiently and effectively. This includes preparation and timely circulation of agendas, meeting minutes and all necessary meeting planning activities.
- Contribute to the development of funding strategies and growth initiatives to support the conduct of the CTN, including the preparation of grant applications.

3.2 Leadership:

- Develop CTN strategic plan (*more suited to CEO*).
- Develop, lead, monitor and report to CTN Chair/governance committee on key operational performance measures and project-related items to illustrate achievement or current status of organisational objectives that will inform future decision making.
- Develop and oversee the implementation and evaluation of administrative practices, systems and processes in order to optimise CTN efficiency and support the achievement of quality outcomes.
- Effectively coach team members and lead the organisation, ensuring appropriate professional development of all staff (*more suited to CEO*).
- Present the CTN's activities at senior forums and represent the CTN in interactions with government and advocacy groups (*more suited to CEO*).

3.3 Stakeholder engagement:

- Identify opportunities to forge new partnerships, build research capacity and raise the profile of research conducted by the CTN (*more suited to CEO*).
- Build strong connections and positive working relationships with key stakeholders that contribute to the creation of a coherent, connected community among CTN members and the broader public and research communities nationally and internationally.
- Plan and coordinate scientific meetings or other forums as necessary.

3.4 Communications:

- Ensure that the integrity and reputation of the CTN is protected and promoted in all external communications.
- Develop and maintain various communication strategies to enhance stakeholder and broader community awareness of the CTN, including preparation of the annual report, maintenance of the website and other social media and marketing activities, and production of newsletters (where appropriate).
- Prepare regular reports and submissions for the governance committee, CTN members and key stakeholders, including funding bodies.
- Monitor and coordinate the appropriate use of mailing lists ensuring terms of use are current and upheld.

3.5 Resource and Staff Management:

- Demonstrate and continue to develop effective leadership and management skills to promote a cohesive and supportive workplace for all staff, embedding a culture of quality and excellence across the CTN.
- Develop or maintain current HR processes and policies for the CTN, including occupational health and safety (OH&S) policies in alignment to organisational or institutional requirements.
- Ensure appropriate recruitment, training, management and performance review of staff in accordance with CTN human resource practices and policies.
- Facilitate development and management of work plans with efficient use of available resources.
- Manage external service providers to ensure optimal delivery of services and products.
- Responsible for health and safety of all staff, including contractors, casuals and staff based off-site and/or travelling to regional/interstate locations.

3.6 Professional Conduct:

- Maintain ongoing personal professional development and continuing education.
- Act in accordance with workplace policies and follow established procedures, including participation in an annual performance review.
- Maintain collegial relationships with peers and contribute positively to the workplace team.
- Attend the CTN annual scientific meeting.

4. Selection Criteria

4.1 Essential

- A tertiary qualification in a scientific, analytic, or nursing discipline and a post-graduate qualification in public health, project management, or a related field. In the absence of formal qualifications, an equivalent combination of relevant experience and/or education/training will be considered.
- Appropriate management / leadership experience.
- Experience in health, health research, health management and/or health advocacy.
- A demonstrated capacity to work autonomously and as part of a team, to demonstrate initiative and to manage the available resources efficiently and effectively.
- A proven track record in delivery of strategic objectives, including development of relevant policies and procedures.
- Highly developed interpersonal, negotiating and problem-solving skills.
- A proactive, flexible, energetic approach to challenges in the workplace and the ability to work in changing environments.
- Ability to travel, with notice, nationally and internationally.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to independently prepare reports and be responsive to the needs of multiple stakeholders.
- Experience in budget development and management, including appropriate reporting to the governance committee.
- Proficient experience in the use of the Microsoft Office suite including MS Excel.
- Experience supervising or managing staff in a professional environment.
- Understanding of and ability to apply OH&S and equal employment opportunity (EEO) in the workplace.
- Sound understanding of clinical research processes, with Good Clinical Practice (GCP)/clinical trial experience highly regarded.

4.2 Desirable

- Experience working with boards or committees within an academic, health or not for profit environment.
- Experience operating in a senior management position in a member representative organisation (*more suited to CEO*).
- Database and/or website management experience.
- Conference or event management experience.
- Experience in preparation of successful grant applications.

5. Conditions of Employment

Remuneration: {[CTN] [Level?]} Salary commensurate with responsibilities of the position and level of experience), superannuation of [No.] percent contribution to the provider of choice, [No. hour] working week, [No.] weeks annual leave, leave loading, sick leave, and family leave (carer's/bereavement leave)} or adherence to employment standards and policies (for example EEO, equity and fairness, OH&S, conflict of interest, privacy, research conduct etc).

6. Performance and Development Review

An initial performance and development review will be undertaken following completion of a [timeframe] probationary period.

Annual performance and development review will be undertaken with the CTN Chair. The position description will be reviewed every [timeframe] months.

7. Special Conditions

Conference attendance and out of hours/weekend work, interstate/international travel is required.

Driver's license; police check; working with children check

[Others-include]

8. Organisational chart {optional}

Insert organisational chart here.

APPROVAL

As the incumbent of this position, I confirm I have read the Position Description, understand its content and agree to work in accordance with the requirements of the position.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature _____ Date: _____

Manager's Name: _____

Manager's Signature _____ Date: _____