

Constitution and Rules of the Collaborative Group

Version 2 August 2021

**STEER (Surgical Trainees in East of England Research) Collaborative Group**

(Established in 2018)

Constitution:

1. **Title**

The name of this regional research collaborative group is called the STEER (Surgical Trainees in East of England Research) Collaborative Group.

1. **Objectives**

STEER is the regional research collaborative group that is led and run by general surgical trainees with the East of England training deanery. Its objectives include:

* To promote high-quality research and collaboration in the field of general surgery within the region
* To co-ordinate and run high-quality multi-centre collaborative research projects
* To support involvement in national research collaborative projects
* To support surgical trainees with research-related activities within the region
* To aid surgical trainees develop research-related knowledge and skills
* To promote learning and academia in the region

1. **Constitution**

The collaborative group will consist of the following members:

* **Executive committee members**:
  + Chair
  + Immediate past Chair
  + Vice-chair (maximum of 2)
  + Secretary

Additional members will be permitted at the discretion of the Executive committee via majority vote of ≥75%.

* **Council members:**
  + Communications Officer (Webmaster/Social Media)
  + Project Coordinators (minimum 2)
  + Honorary STEER members
  + Core Surgical Trainee Representative
  + Foundation Representative
  + Journal Club Coordinator
* **Local Hospital Representatives**

The STEER collaborative council consists of the Executive committee members and other council members as mentioned. They STEER members have voting rights. Local Hospital Representatives do not have voting rights.

All members must be in surgical training within the East of England. The executive committee members must be of ST3-8 or Post-CCT general surgical registrar level trainee within the East of England deanery. Substantive or locum general surgical consultants can also be a member of the STEER executive committee or council at the discretion of the STEER committee or in creation of a new post within the committee.

1. **Officers**

The following officers will be appointed to the STEER collaborative group:

1. **Chair -** elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Chair position shall end on decision of the Chair to stand down or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council.
2. **Vice Chair** – elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Up to two Vice Chairs can be elected. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Vice Chair position shall end on decision of the Vice Chair to stand down or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council.
3. **Secretary** - elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Secretary position shall end on decision of the Secretary to stand down or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council.
4. **Communications Officer/Webmaster -** elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Communications Officer/Webmaster position shall end on decision of the Communications Officer/Webmaster to stand down or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council.
5. **Project Coordinators -** elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Project Coordinator position shall end on decision of the Project Coordinator to stand down or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council.
6. **Honorary STEER members –** eligibility criteria to apply for this position include:

* Previous involvement within STEER council for at least 2 years
* Within 3 years post-CCT or becoming a surgical consultant

This post can be taken by a junior substantive or locum general surgical consultant within the East of England region. Once beyond 3 years post-CCT or holding a surgical consultant post, this member must step down from their position in STEER council.

1. **Core Surgical Trainee (CST) Representative -** elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Core Surgical Trainee Representative position will be at least one year or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council. If the trainee holding this post progresses beyond the position of a CST, a new CST representative must be appointed. There will be flexibility at the discretion of the STEER council in regard to transitioning from one CST representative to another.
2. **Foundation Representative -** elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Foundation Representative position will be at least one year or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council. If the trainee holding this post progresses beyond the position of a Foundation representative, a new Foundation representative must be appointed. There will be flexibility at the discretion of the STEER council in regard to transitioning from one Foundation representative to another.
3. **Journal Club Coordinator -** elected by voting from the executive committee and council members. Duration of an individual trainee holding the Journal Club Coordinator position will be at least one year or on vote of no-confidence of ≥75% of the executive committee and council.

Election of positions within STEER will be based on average score markings from all Executive committee and council members on applications received for individual roles. Applicants applying for Executive committee positions should already hold a position within the STEER collaborative council. Marking of applications to the Executive committee member roles will be non-anonymised. Marking of all other roles (other council members and local hospital representatives) will be anonymised.

In the situation of one than more applicant obtaining equivalent joint top average scores, the top average score of the Executive committee will be used. If this still fails to establish the highest scoring application, the successful applicant will be decided at the discretion of the Chair whose decision will be final.

1. **Member Meetings**

The STEER collaborative group will hold meetings at least 4 times a year during which subjects on the agenda will be addressed. This will include meeting registration, apologies, matters arising from previous meeting minutes, STEER updates, new project proposals and updates on existing projects and any further issues. An action plan will be summarised at the end of each meeting.

All members are expected to attend meetings (in person or virtual) throughout the year. If unable to attend, members are expected to inform the Executive committee (in particular, the secretary for apologies) in good time prior to the meeting. If a member fails to attend 2 meetings in a row without good reason, their further involvement in STEER may be questioned. In this scenario, the Executive committee and Council will vote on whether to dismiss that particular member. To dismiss a member from STEER committee, a vote of ≥75% would be required.

1. **Constitution amendments**

Any additions or changes of this constitution must be approved by ≥75% of the Executive committee and Council prior to formal amendment. Any decisions to add additional positions to the STEER Executive committee or Council must be agreed by ≥75% of the existing Executive committee and Council.

1. **Individual roles within the collaborative**

**Chair –** responsible for overall activities within STEER and the following:

* To provide leadership and direction to the STEER collaborative group as per the objectives stated in this constitution
* To chair STEER meetings/events
* To ensure all meetings are planned effectively with involvement of other relevant STEER members
* To ensure the constitution is adhered to and if any discrepancies can initiate a vote of no-confidence of individual STEER members
* To represent the collaborative at national events/meetings
* To ensure decisions taken by STEER Executive committee and Council are clear and that responsibility for taking forward action plans is appropriately allocated
* To ensure that decisions represent the collective views of the STEER Executive committee and Council
* Overall decision on design of newsletters/formal STEER emails

**Vice Chair –** main responsibilities are to support and deputise the STEER chair and the following:

* To support the Chair in leading the STEER collaborative group’s activities
* To support the Chair in planning and chairing meetings/events
* To represent the collaborative at national events/meetings
* To deputise the Chair in the situation where the Chair is unable to fulfil their defined roles

**Secretary –** main responsibilities are to support the Chair in ensuring the smooth running of STEER and the following:

* To ensure meetings are effectively organised (agendas and liaising with STEER members for dates) and minuted
* To maintain STEER administration (agendas, meeting minutes)
* communication and correspondence including emails and newsletters
* Maintenance of STEER online cloud drive and email account

**Communications Officer/Webmaster -** main responsibilities are as following:

* To write and distribute content to promote STEER
* To act as liaison between STEER and surgical trainees/public
* To engage in activities to promote STEER in order to encourage surgical trainee involvement/subscription
* Maintenance and additions to STEER website directed by meeting outcomes
* Maintenance and additions on STEER social media presence (Twitter)

**Project Coordinator -** main responsibilities are to oversee and coordinate specific research projects assigned to them within STEER as per the following:

* To maintain and monitor project plans, schedules and progress
* To engage, promote and recruit hospital sites within the East of England to multi-collaborative projects
* To provide updates and take action on action plans during STEER meetings
* To prepare necessary presentations (poster/oral) for meetings/conferences
* To ensure project deadlines are met
* To ensure projects adhere to agreed frameworks and issues/problems are flagged to the STEER Executive committee and Council
* Maximise stakeholder engagement

**Honorary STEER members -** main responsibilities are to provide senior input/ mentorship to those involved with collaborative studies and within the STEER collaborative as well as represent the view of post-CCT trainees/surgeons within East of England. Other responsibilities include the following:

* To ensure there is a true representation of post-CCT surgical trainees and surgeons’ views within STEER
* To support research project proposals to STEER from post-CCT surgical trainees/surgeons

**Core Surgical Trainee (CST) Representative -** main responsibilities are to represent the view of core surgical trainees within East of England and the following:

* To ensure there is a true representation of core surgical trainees’ views within STEER
* To support research project proposals to STEER from core surgical trainees
* To encourage and promote core surgical trainee engagement with STEER activities
* To provide updates and communicate STEER activities/events to core surgical trainees in East of England

**Foundation Representative -** main responsibilities are to represent the view of foundation trainees within East of England and the following:

* To ensure there is a true representation of foundation trainees’ views within STEER
* To support research project proposals to STEER from foundation trainees
* To encourage and promote foundation trainee engagement with STEER activities
* To provide updates and communicate STEER activities/events to foundation trainees in East of England

**Journal Club Coordinator -** main responsibilities are to coordinate and operate journal club events (virtual or in person) within STEER as per the following:

* To be the primary STEER member responsible for the coordination of journal club events (working with other STEER committee members to decide time, frequency and format of the journal club)
* To timetable planned journal club events in advance with assigned individual journal club hosts and presenters
* To keep an active database of high impact papers/studies to be discussed/critiqued at future journal club events
* To organise logistics of journal club events including running live polls and setting up feedback platforms
* To help promote and actively involve surgical trainees within the East of England to the STEER journal club

**Local hospital Representatives -** main responsibilities are to oversee and coordinate specific STEER projects at a local hospital level as per the following:

* To maintain and monitor project plans, schedules and progress locally
* To engage and promote STEER multi-collaborative projects at a local hospital level
* To liaise and collaborate with assigned STEER project coordinators for STEER activity and conceptualisation of new proposed projects
* To prepare necessary presentations (poster/oral) for meetings/conferences
* To ensure project deadlines are met
* To ensure STEER project registration at a local hospital level (i.e. registering with audit/research department)

1. **Inter-Member Issues, Disputes & Resolution**

All members are encouraged to resolve inter-personal/professional issues and disputes amongst themselves by agreement. In cases where this is not possible or appropriate, members must escalate any issues for mediation by the Vice Chairs and Chair. In situation where the Vice Chairs and/or Chair are involved in the dispute, open discussion by the Executive Committee and Council Members will take place to resolve the issue(s).