

# SAMS Research Committee (SRC) Charter

## **Vision**

To position the SAMS community at the forefront of impactful, ethical, and innovative research that transforms healthcare delivery in conflict zones and among displaced populations. The Committee seeks to generate knowledge that not only advances medical care but also guides evidence-based practices, strengthens humanitarian response, and shapes global health policy.

## **Mission**

The SAMS Research Committee is dedicated to fostering, supporting, and disseminating high-quality research that strengthens SAMS's medical and humanitarian work. Through collaboration, capacity building, and ethical scientific inquiry, the Committee aims to generate knowledge that improves health outcomes, informs advocacy, and amplifies SAMS's impact in Syria and beyond.

### **1. Purpose**

The SAMS Research Committee (SRC) is established to promote, support, and oversee medical and public health research that advances SAMS's mission of improving healthcare delivery for populations in Syria and displaced communities worldwide. The Committee will facilitate evidence-based practices, foster collaborations, and disseminate knowledge that informs policy, quality, and medical care.

### **2. Objectives**

The Committee's main objectives include:

- Supporting and coordinating research initiatives relevant to SAMS's medical, humanitarian, and advocacy work.
- Ensuring ethical and responsible conduct of research, including protection of human subjects.
- Building capacity for research among SAMS members and partners both in USA and Syria.
- Publishing and presenting SAMS research in peer-reviewed journals and international forums.

- Serving as a resource to SAMS leadership, medical missions, and partner organizations on research-related matters.

### 3. Scope

The Committee's work may include, but is not limited to:

- Clinical, epidemiological, and public health research related to conflict medicine, refugee health, and healthcare delivery in resource-limited settings.
- Program evaluation and outcomes research on SAMS's medical and humanitarian programs.
- Research collaborations with academic institutions, NGOs, and international organizations.
- Help developing guidelines, protocols, and data-sharing policies.

### 4. Structure and Membership

- **Composition:** The Committee will consist of SAMS members with expertise in medicine, public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, clinical care, social sciences, and related fields.
  - **Chair (Monzr AlMaliki):** Provides overall leadership, strategic direction, and serves as the primary liaison with SAMS leadership.
  - **Vice Chair for Epidemiology (Chighaf Bakour):** Guides and supports epidemiological studies, surveillance projects, and outbreak investigations.
  - **Vice Chair for Statistical Support (Osama Tayyar):** Provides expertise in study design, data management, and statistical analysis.
  - **Vice Chair for Clinical Research (Ahmad Al-Moujahed):** Oversees clinical studies and ensures alignment with SAMS medical missions.
  - **Vice Chair for Policies and Research Quality (Maria Hafez):** Leads initiatives related to health systems, refugee health, and program evaluation that inform advocacy and humanitarian policy.
  - **Vice Chair for Data Integrity (Waddah Arafat):** Ensures accuracy, transparency, security, and ethical handling of all research data, from collection to dissemination.
  - **Vice Chair for Ethics & Compliance (Fayez Safadi):** Safeguards adherence to ethical principles, IRB requirements if used (existing and newly developed), and humanitarian research standards.

- **Vice Chair for Research Strategy & Development (Ammar Sukari):** Leads strategic research planning, fosters external collaborations with SAMS board, helps with funding and partnership opportunities across SAMS research initiatives.
- **Coordinator (Ayla Kouli):** Manages logistics, communications, tracking of approved studies and their progress, documentation of minutes and track communications, and supports day-to-day operations of the Committee.
- Membership Term: Members and officers will serve a renewable term of two years.
- Members ad hoc and added non-voting members can be invited based on needed expertise based on recommendation of the committee
- Subcommittees/Working Groups: May be formed to address specific projects, thematic areas, or technical needs.

## 6. Governance and Decision-Making

- The Committee will meet at least monthly, or more frequently as needed.
- Decisions will be made by consensus when possible (9 voting members); if consensus is not reached, a simple majority vote will decide.
- Minutes and reports will be documented and shared with SAMS leadership.

## 7. Reporting

The Committee will provide regular updates to the SAMS Board of Directors and Executive Committee, including:

- Annual research priorities and progress.
- Publications and presentations.
- Partnerships and funding opportunities.

## 8. Review and Amendments

This Charter will be reviewed every two years, or as needed, to ensure relevance and alignment with SAMS's mission. Amendments may be proposed by Committee members and must be approved by the committee leadership first then SAMS leadership.

## 9. Study Proposal Process



To ensure transparency, feasibility, and alignment with SAMS's mission, all research studies proposed under the SAMS Research Committee must begin with a **Letter of Intent (LOI)** submission.

- Purpose of the LOI: The LOI allows the Committee to review proposed studies at an early stage, provide feedback, and determine whether the study aligns with SAMS priorities, ethical standards, and available resources before a full proposal is developed.
- Required Components of the LOI: The LOI should be concise (1-2 pages) and include:
  - Title of Proposed Study
  - Principal Investigator(s) and Affiliation(s)
  - Background & Rationale: Why the study is important and relevant to SAMS's mission.
  - Objectives & Research Questions
  - Proposed Methodology (summary): Study design, population (inclusions and exclusion criteria), and setting.
  - Potential Collaborators/Partners
  - Expected Outcomes & Impact
  - Ethical Considerations: IRB status, protection of participants, and data security.
  - Resources Required: Estimated support needed from SAMS (personnel, data, logistical).
- Review Process: The LOI will be submitted to the SRC Coordinator, who will circulate it to the Chair and relevant Vice Chairs (e.g., Epidemiology, Statistical Support, Data Integrity, Ethics & Compliance) for review, assignment of mentor and detailed critique prior to present the concept in the monthly meeting.
- The Committee will review the LOI within 30 days.
- Feedback will be provided to the applicant, including one of the following decisions:
  - Approved for Full Proposal Submission
  - Revise and Resubmit
  - Not Approved

- Mentor Assignment: For LOIs approved to move forward, the Committee will assign a **mentor** from among the Committee members or affiliated experts (Ad hoc). The mentor's role will include:
  - Advising on study design, data integrity, and ethical compliance.
  - Guiding the applicant in preparing the full proposal and IRB submission.
  - Supporting capacity building for junior researchers within SAMS.
  - Mentor assignment will be coordinated by the Committee Chair in consultation with the Vice Chairs to ensure expertise alignment.
- Full Proposal Development  
If the LOI is approved and a mentor is assigned, the applicant will be invited to submit a full research data for Committee review and approval, including detailed methodology, budget, timelines, and IRB documentation.
- Manuscript and authorship. The manuscript will be written by the mentee and mentor as first and last author and will be curated for review and approval from the relevant members of the committee.