

**Healthcare Ethics Committee of NBC**  
**Terms of Reference**

*After discussion during first meeting Feb 18 2012*

The committee shall be known as the “Healthcare Ethics Committee (HCEC)” of the National Bioethics Committee (NBC), Pakistan. In this document, the term “committee” will refer to HCEC.

1. The HCEC will function as an overarching body to assist and guide education and training in clinical ethics at a national level to help meet the needs of the country.
2. Mandate:
  - a. As a part of the NBC, the HCEC will serve as the national arm to help foster ethics within healthcare related education and services in the country.
  - b. The committee will also serve as a resource for Provincial Bioethics Committees (PBCs) as and when these are formed, and for relevant institutions of the provinces.
  - c. It will explore ways and means to help introduce and foster healthcare ethics to medical professionals, medical, dental, and nursing students, postgraduate trainees, practitioners, and other stakeholders who may include relevant healthcare administrators.
  - d. The committee will develop bioethics curricula relevant to national needs for inclusion in current medical curricula for undergraduate and postgraduate students.
  - e. It will assist and facilitate PBCs and concerned institutions to organize and conduct clinical ethics workshops and seminars to train trainers.
3. Chairperson:
  - a. Appointment and tenure:
    - i. The committee will be chaired by a nominee of the NBC who must be a member of the NBC.
    - ii. The tenure of the Chairperson will be 5 years.
    - iii. The Chairperson, after assigning a reason, may resign after giving notice of 6 months.
    - iv. In the event of due cause, a majority of HCEC members may request the NBC to ask the committee Chairperson to step down. The authority to act on this request will lie with members of the NBC. If the request is approved, the HCEC chairperson will be required to step down with immediate effect.
  - b. Responsibilities:
    - i. The Chairperson will be responsible for organizing meetings, generating an agenda and circulating it prior to meetings.

- ii. She/he will be responsible for recording and circulating minutes of each meeting. Copies of the minutes will be forwarded to the NBC Secretariat for record, and for action as needed.
  - iii. The HCEC Chairperson may appoint from within the membership of the committee a secretary to facilitate with these functions.
- 4. Membership: The membership of HCEC will consist of no less than 5 and no more than 9 members at any given time.
  - a. Members appointment and tenure
    - i. Members of HCEC will be drawn from within NBC members.
    - ii. In addition, the HCEC can co-opt up to 3 non-NBC members with relevant backgrounds at the recommendation of the chairperson and by consensus of its members.
    - iii. The tenure of membership will be 5 years.
    - iv. In order to ensure continuity in the first cycle of membership, in the first cycle of membership half the members will retire after 2 years and 6 months.
    - v. Selection of retiring members in the first cycle of membership will be on voluntary basis. Thereafter, all members can have a full tenure of 5 years.
    - vi. Based on need and availability, and consensus of HCEC members, a retiring member may be asked to serve an additional tenure of 5 years.
    - vii. Members who fail to attend 3 consecutive meetings without providing justifiable reasons for their absence, provided ahead of time, will be dropped from HCEC membership.
- 5. Meetings:
  - a. The meetings will be held at a venue convenient for a majority of members of the committee. The HCEC Chairperson will have the discretion to assign the venue.
  - b. Possible days and times for meetings will be suggested and circulated by the Chairperson. The final choice will take into account the preference of the majority of its members.
  - c. Meetings will be held at least once every 3 months. Additional meetings may be called as and when the need arises.
- 6. Functioning of the committee:
  - a. The committee may appoint subcommittees tasked with specific goals set by the committee. The subcommittees will report to the HCEC.
- 7. Budget:
  - a. The committee **will not** be required to generate its own funding.
  - b. NBC, the parent organization, in consultation with its members, will be responsible for providing the budget for all HCEC activities.

**Feb 18, 2013**