

MEDSAC Trustee Role Outline (August 2026)

MEDSAC is a Charitable Trust whose purpose is to support clinicians and allied professionals to improve the well-being of all people affected by sexual harm and abuse and to lead the sector in best practice through advocacy. The Trust Deed establishing MEDSAC has set out a range of charitable purposes that provides further clarity to the Board.

MEDSAC's Trust Deed enables the appointment of up to ten trustees to the MEDSAC Board, seven of whom are appointed by the Trustees, and the remaining three by the Clinician Affiliates (formerly known as members when MEDSAC was an incorporated society).

Role of the Board

The Board [the Trustees] of Medical Sexual Assault Clinicians Aotearoa [MEDSAC] are explicitly responsible for the stewardship and future wellbeing of MEDSAC. The Board are all expected to understand the business of MEDSAC and exercise leadership, enterprise, integrity and judgement in directing MEDSAC to provide assurance of its continuing and lasting prosperity. The Board and individual Trustees have a duty to act with due care and diligence, in a transparent, responsible and accountable manner, and in the best interests of MEDSAC irrespective of any personal, professional, commercial or other interests, loyalties or affiliations.

The Board is ultimately responsible for the successful operation of MEDSAC, delivering on its charitable purposes set out in the Trust Deed, setting the strategy and monitoring performance and responding to changing circumstances. The role of the Board is to govern rather than manage MEDSAC, determining the policies, practices, and compliance frameworks necessary to achieve MEDSAC's strategy and charitable purposes. It should strive to apply and achieve the highest standards of organisational governance.

The Board's Charter is available on the MEDSAC website and has further detail on the role of the Board.

Role of the Trustee

The Trustees have an obligation to act collectively and in the best interests of MEDSAC to assure its success. In particular, individual Trustees have the following obligations and responsibilities:

- Be aware of their governance obligations and act with high ethical standards and integrity, in accordance with the MEDSAC Code of Conduct and to always act in MEDSAC's best interests regardless of personal position, circumstances or affiliation
- Comply with the duties and responsibilities of Trustees as set out in Schedule 2 of the Trust Deed
- Disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in accordance with MEDSAC's policy and to manage any such conflict as determined by the Board
- Have the relevant skills, experience and motivation to make a significant contribution to the Board's governance role
- Be future oriented and focus on strategic issues rather than operational detail. Trustees should have a good understanding of MEDSAC and its operating and regulatory environment, an ability to take a conceptual view and synthesise complex information and ideas

- Prepare, attend and participate effectively in a professional manner in all Board activities
- Actively foster the development of MEDSAC by effectively representing and profiling MEDSAC to its stakeholders
- Respect the confidentiality of all Board discussions and deliberations and confidential information and accept and respect the collective decision-making processes of the Board by supporting the spirit and letter of all Board decisions in any discussions with third parties.

Desired Attributes

Clause 11.3 of the Trust Deed sets out the criteria to be considered in the selection and appointment of Trustees. These are:

- Skills and experience that is relevant to the Trust and the functions of the Board;
- Relevant skills and experience that provide diversity across the Board or as identified by the Trustees;
- Willingness to be engaged, ability to travel and have time available to be an active Trustee;
- Experience in other governance or leadership positions, relevant to the functions of the Trust; and
- The capacity to govern effectively and represent the Trust impartially, ensuring their decisions are made in the best interests of the Trust and its charitable purposes without bias or personal interest.

Range of Capabilities Required by the Board

The MEDSAC Board has identified a list of capabilities that it aspires to have access to around the board table:

- Māori whakapapa and/or understanding of te ao Māori
- Active SAATS clinician in a contracted service
- Active NFSSAS clinician in a contracted service
- Nurse/nurse practitioner who is active in a contracted SAATS/NFSSAS service
- Active Paediatric clinician in a contracted service
- Crisis services knowledge
- Broader sexual health sector knowledge
- Data utilisation and/or research methodology
- Advanced financial expertise
- Data, technology and AI understanding and skills
- Strategic leadership
- Governance experience
- Knowledge/experience with government funders

When a vacancy arises, the Board agrees what capabilities it is looking for in new trustees. It also has regard to the need to continue generational change on the Board, to ensure MEDSAC is growing its future leaders, and a mix of clinicians from regional and urban services.

Soft Skills Required

Trustees also need to demonstrate the following skills and behaviours:

- Constructive challenge – asking probing questions without being confrontational, staying focused on the issues and not the person, surfacing concerns in a way that opens the conversation
- Active listening - listening to understand, not to respond; attending to what is not said as well as what is; reading the dynamics in the room
- Good judgment and sense making - identifying the key decisions and risks, and distinguishing between the information provided and the information actually needed
- Effective team member – being collaborative and open to new ideas
- Excellent communication skills
- Presence and participation - contributing actively in every meeting; not deferring to more senior or more vocal members
- Discretion and professionalism - maintaining confidentiality; keeping board conversations within the meeting and not taking disputes outside the board

Time Commitment and Other Considerations

The Board meets six times per year during the working day for six hours each meeting. The trustees meet the night before for up to 3 hours 'Board only' time, over dinner. Five of the six face to face meetings are held in Nelson, with the sixth being held in Wellington, before the annual Update. The Board also meets in the evening for 2 hours six times a year, in between the formal board meetings. All the meeting dates are known one year in advance.

In addition, there may be an additional day that Trustees need to attend (e.g. strategy development)

The Board agendas can be substantial with up to 150 pages of reading. The papers are generally concise and well written. The size of papers is often driven by the attachments to the papers – for example, a new Board Charter or draft Trust Deed. The papers are circulated up to one week before the Board meeting, with generally a weekend between receiving the papers and the meeting.

Every Trustee is a member of one of the two Board committees (Clinical Governance and Corporate Governance). This is a meeting commitment of around two hours six times a year, either during the day or evening depending on the committee. In addition, there is preparation time and the expectation is that all participants have read the papers before the meeting and reflected on their content. These committees can also have significant agendas, but often the same papers then go to the next board meeting, reducing your reading commitment later in the month.

Trustees need to have their own laptop/iPad to enable them to read meeting papers online and bring the tech to the meeting with them.

Clinical trustees are likely to be a MEDSAC contributor and involved in other MEDSAC work, providing clinical advice and input. Other opportunities will be to lead or contribute to governance work. Time commitments vary but on average this may be another two to four hours per month.

Institute of Directors membership

The MEDSAC Board has a corporate IOD membership, so all Trustees become members of the IOD when they join. As part of this you are expected to spend time developing your governance skills and expertise outside the board meetings as well as attending board development sessions.

Induction

MEDSAC has developed a Board induction programme, which you will work through over your first three months as a Trustee. You will also be provided with a buddy on the Board when you first join.

Honorarium

Each Trustee is eligible to claim a Board honorarium, of \$4,290 per annum, paid quarterly. Board committee meetings are paid at \$110 per hour, based on the meeting hours. Work done as a member or lead of an Advisory or Working Group is also able to be paid, set at \$110 per hour. Budgets are set for and the work commitments have to be delivered within this, with the focus being on resolving issues or producing something, rather than attending meetings.

Expenses

Actual and reasonable expenses are reimbursable, but must comply with MEDSAC's Travel Policy.

Nomination and Selection Processes

These are set out in the Nomination, Selection and Appointment of Trustees to the Medical Sexual Assault Clinicians Aotearoa ('MEDSAC') Board Policy available on the MEDSAC website, and are tailored to whether the vacancy is for a Board or Clinician Affiliated Appointed Trustee.