CALL FOR NEW TRUSTEES

We are looking for keen and capable individuals to volunteer their time to be trustees of our organisation which works to protect international human rights and prevent torture.

Who we are

Omega Research Foundation is a national charity based in Manchester which monitors the international trade, manufacture and use of military, security and police equipment. Our research has been used to develop and monitor effective trade controls and standards, challenge questionable transfers and help torture survivor support groups seek legal redress from the companies producing such equipment. Our other educational work includes training to prevent the abuse of force by law enforcement agencies, including at protests.

What Trustees do

Our board of trustees leads the charity's governance and management. This voluntary role does not involve a big time commitment but is essential for the charity to carry out its important work. You will work alongside people who share your values and gain valuable experience and skills. The role is unpaid but reasonable expenses are reimbursed, eg for travel (although recently most meetings are remote).

Never been a trustee? Don't understand what trustees do? No academic qualifications? That's not important. Trustees are given an induction and advice and support from staff and other trustees to help them undertake their role.
What matters is:

- A keen interest and commitment to human rights
- Support for the control of arms and prevention of torture and state abuse of force
- Good at engaging with others in discussions and decisions
- Able to read and assess reports and papers and simple accounting statements (help and advice can be provided and we access and share training and resources)

The areas considered by the Board of trustees include:

- Policy decisions on staff matters, data protection, funding etc
- Review of strategy, plans and progress
- Consideration of budgets, financial statements and accounts.

We encourage everyone interested in becoming a trustee to apply. We especially encourage applications from people with any of the following experience:

- Fundraising
- Legal Expertise

Survivors of torture or human rights violations can offer a valuable perspective on our work, and we would especially welcome applications from them.

Omega Research Foundation

Trustee Meetings

Trustees meet four times each year online or in our Manchester office. Meetings are midweek and last 2-3 hours. We schedule them according to trustee availability. We have one longer meeting of staff and trustees each year. These are held in Manchester and last 5-6 hours. All Trustees are able to join any meeting remotely if they wish.

Diversity

The Omega Board of Trustees seeks to represent all sectors of society and believes that a diverse board is stronger. We welcome applications from under-represented groups and a range of identities. We are keen to hear from and support applicants who are Black and Asian and/or who have disabilities. We are committed to continuing to educate ourselves and reflect on our experiences to ensure we are a supportive and inclusive organisation.

Further information

Please see our paper: Role of a Trustee for more information on what is involved. To find out more about us, visit our website: www.omegaresearchfoundation.org or email Fiona: info@omegaresearchfoundation.org We are happy to arrange an informal chat by phone or other electronic means

How to apply

To apply, please write a covering letter explaining why you are interested in being an Omega trustee, and send this with your CV to: Fiona Gorton, Head of Finance and Operations at the email address above. Please respond by 23rd November. We expect interviews to be held during the week commencing 7th December.

If you have any difficulty in sending your application or need help, please contact us with your request. Do let us know of any reasonable adjustments you need to facilitate your participation in this process.

Omega Research Foundation

The Role of a Trustee

Overall purpose

The board of trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the charity. This includes overseeing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals; strategy, plans and activities; financial control and management; appointment and management of staff. They must ensure the charity acts in accordance with legal and regulatory guidelines.

All trustees should be aware of, and understand, their responsibilities. Whilst many of the tasks required to meet these responsibilities will be delegated to staff, overall responsibility for the charity remains with the trustees. All trustees should be able to read the accounts and financial reports to a level that they can ask questions and understand the answers. Trustees without prior experience are welcome to join the Board on the basis they will be expected and supported to become competent to discharge their responsibilities.

Main responsibilities

- To achieve the purpose of the charity and follow its charitable objects for public benefit.
- To ensure that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- To ensure that the charity acts within the requirements of its governing document and in accordance with its charitable objects.
- To ensure effective and efficient management and administration of the charity, striving for best practice.
- To ensure sound management and control of the charity's resources, funds and assets so as to optimise its potential.
- To ensure the preparation of annual financial statements, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and its income and expenditure.
- To ensure the keeping of proper accounting records which disclose at any time the financial position of the charity.
- To safeguard the assets of the charitable company and take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
- To ensure effective and appropriate process and systems for recruitment, appointment and monitoring of staff.
- To oversee the organisation's management of risk.

Omega Research Foundation

Standards of behaviour

All Trustees:

- Undertake their duties in a way that supports public confidence and trust in the charity.
- Continually strive for best practice in governance.
- Take appropriate professional advice in all matters where there may be a material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.
- Avoid any personal conflict of interest.
- Act at all times in the best interest of the charity and its beneficiaries and future beneficiaries.
- Maintain absolute confidentiality about all aspects of the trustees' business, bearing in mind the over-riding legal obligations placed upon trustees.

Trustee Code of Conduct

All Trustees of the Omega Research Foundation strive to:

- be committed to the purpose, objects and values of the organisation
- be constructive about other trustees' opinions in discussions, and in response to staff members' contributions at meetings
- be able to act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking such duties and performing tasks
- be able to maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information
- be supportive of the values and ethics of the organisation
- understand the importance and purpose of meetings, and be committed to preparing for them adequately and attending them regularly
- be able to analyse information and, when necessary, challenge constructively
- be able to make collective decisions and stand by them
- be able to respect boundaries between executive and governance functions

Omega's staff work within a flat structure, and staff make decisions on a consensus basis. Trustees seek to reflect this in their conduct, and work in a spirit of collaboration with staff, while maintaining an element of constructive challenge.

Training and support

Trustees must gain an understanding of their responsibilities and obligations as set out above. Advice and information are available from the Charity Commission and other sources and we have a shared folder of useful resources. Trustees are encouraged to undertake occasional short training sessions to support the trustee role.