



Guide to
Election Procedures

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Definitions

These procedures, and other RCN regulations relating to elections, sometimes use words with a specific meaning. The meaning of these words is set out below.

Day, in relation to the calculation of time periods, excludes Saturdays, Sundays, and any Bank Holidays or other Public Holidays. If the voters in an election include RCN members with notified addresses in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, all national Bank Holidays and Public Holidays in all of these countries will be excluded. For elections in which members from only one country are participating (e.g. Board elections) only the Bank Holidays and Public Holidays from that country are excluded. The term “Day” also requires the passing of 24 hours.

Independent scrutineer – means the person or company appointed to carry out independent scrutiny services in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. There is more information about this role in Appendix B

Notified address means the mailing address of the Member on the database of members, or database of student members, or such other address that the Member has notified to the RCN, at the time of the closing date for the receipt of nominations in an election.

A proposer is a person who nominates a candidate. S/he must be a RCN member, and must meet any further eligibility criteria applying to the election (e.g. membership in a particular area). A candidate may not act as his/her own proposer (*except for Forum Steering Committee elections*). A proposer may not also act as a seconder for the same candidate.

RCN member means a person whose name and address are on the RCN membership database and who has been ratified as a Member by Council.

Returning Officer means the UK Returning Officer appointed by RCN Council for Council elections and with whom the Returning Officers for the Boards and other elections will liaise. There is more information about the role of returning officer at Appendix A.

A seconder is also a person who nominates a candidate, in addition to the proposer. S/he must be a RCN member, and meet any further eligibility criteria applying to the election (e.g. membership in a particular area). A candidate may not act as his/her own seconder. A seconder may not also act as a proposer for the same candidate.

Signature means either a written signature or (where the Returning Officer has agreed to accept it) an electronic signature or a facsimile of a hand written signature. An electronic signature is “anything in electronic form as

- (a) is incorporated or otherwise logically associated with any electronic communications or electronic data; and

- (b) purposes to be so incorporated or associated for the purpose of being used in establishing the authenticity of the communication or data, the integrity of the communication, or both.”

(Electronic Communications Act 2000)

Unique Identification Number means a number issued to a voter for the purposes of an election, or elections, which is exclusive to them, but does not overtly relate to the member in any way, or enable the member to be identified from it, and which enables the member to vote in the election.

Voter means a Member of the RCN who is eligible to vote in a specific election.

Voting record means the record of a member’s vote in an election conducted by some means other than by postal vote or poll. Where telephone or electronic voting is used, this will be the record of the votes cast. It is the equivalent of a completed ballot form. A voting record may be in printed or electronic form.

1. Core Principles for RCN Elections

The RCN is a membership organisation and the participation of the membership in elections is vital for the success of the organisation. Elected officers must have a clear mandate from the membership. To ensure this, the election systems used need to be accessible to all members, and trusted by those members.

The core principles to be followed in all elections are

- That the election is democratic, and that each vote will carry equal weight. Whilst there are some elections in which members can vote for more than one category of candidate, the general principle is of “one member, one vote”.
- That all members should be encouraged to participate in elections. The RCN will take steps to ensure that elections are accessible to all eligible members (both as candidates and voters); that elections are well publicised; and that it is easy to vote. The RCN will ensure that the criteria for standing as a candidate; nominating a candidate; and voting in the election will not be arbitrary or excessively restrictive.
- That the systems for voting must be secure and accurate. These election procedures are designed to ensure that only people eligible to vote can vote, and that the votes are recorded and counted accurately.
- That the administration of the election is transparent. Procedures and criteria will be written in clear English, and available to all members. The results of the election will be announced promptly, and full information on the results will be available to all members.
- That the election process is objective. Procedures will be applied consistently and impartially. The administration of the election and counting of votes will be conducted by someone who is not a member of the RCN.
- That all members have the right to vote in secret. For elections to Council, all voting must be by secret postal ballot. All possible measures to ensure privacy and security of voting will be applied as required by Trade Union law.

2. RCN Elections to which these Procedures refer

These procedures apply to the following elections

- Agenda Committee
- RCN Students Committee
- Boards
- Chair and Vice Chair of Congress
- Council
- President
- Deputy President
- Student Members of Council
- UK Safety Representatives Committee
- UK Stewards Committee
- UK Learning Representatives Committee

All RCN elections are subject to the Charter, Standing Orders and Regulations (Rules until 2012) of the RCN, and where there is a conflict between these Procedures and the Charter, Standing Orders, and Regulations (Rules until 2012), it is the provisions of the Charter, Standing Orders, and Regulations (Rules until 2012) that must be complied with. The elections are also covered by the constitution and regulations for the relevant bodies (for example the Regulations of the Boards). In the event of a conflict between any Regulations and this Guide to Procedures, the Regulations will apply. Any such conflict shall be reported to Council for appropriate action in due course.

These Election Procedures set out the overriding principles and rules that apply. However, there are a number of additional provisions that will apply to each specific election. These deal with

- timing of elections;
- eligibility to vote;
- eligibility to nominate;
- eligibility to be a candidate;
- terms of office and re-election criteria;
- voting methods;
- casual vacancies.

Please refer to the constitution and/or regulations governing each election for these provisions.

3. Trade Union Law and When It Applies

Trade Union law applies for elections to voting places on the RCN Council. In the RCN this includes elections for

- Members of Council
- President
- Deputy President
- Student Members of Council.

The Chair of Congress is a non-voting member of the RCN Council.

The requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 are that

- candidates have a right to prepare election addresses that are circulated to members. The Trade Union can fix a maximum length for the election address, which must be more than the legal minimum of 100 words, and set a deadline for submission of election addresses.
- the elections must be supervised by independent scrutineers who produce a report on the election.
- an independent person must undertake the administration of the vote.

- members must be told who the scrutineers are, and their names must appear on the ballot paper.
- all members (within a particular class or area) must be entitled to vote.
- voting must be by postal ballot.
- voting must be secret (so far as is reasonably practicable).

When an election is governed by Trade Union law the relevant provisions must be complied with, and these Election Procedures applied in a way that does so. Therefore where the Election Procedures give options, only those that comply with Trade Union law can be used.

4. Equal Opportunities in Elections

All members must be able to participate equally in elections. RCN elections should reflect the diversity that exists within the organisation. Care must be taken to ensure

- that all election materials are published in formats that are accessible for all members. On some occasions consideration may also need to be given by the Returning Officer as to whether translations of election materials are required or their production in other formats, e.g. large print, on tape or Braille.
- that the language used in all election materials is not gender specific, or unnecessarily excluding in any other way.
- that eligibility criteria do not work indirectly to disadvantage some members.
- that alternative methods of voting are available for members who may not be able to vote in the customary way. The Returning Officer is authorised to agree special voting provisions in this instance, providing that the core principles set out above will still be met.

5. Responsibility for Elections – Returning Officer and Independent Scrutineer

The RCN has a Returning Officer, who is appointed by the RCN Council. The Returning Officer is responsible for the conduct of elections. It is the job of the Returning Officer to apply and interpret these procedures, and all other applicable procedures; ensure that the count is carried out in accordance with requirements, and to announce the results.

The Returning Officer for the RCN may appoint someone else to act as Returning Officer on his/her behalf, for a specific election. The Returning Officer may also appoint agents for the purposes of assisting with an election. In addition, the Boards may appoint an alternative Returning Officer for the elections to the Boards. There are further details about the role of Returning Officer in Appendix A.

Returning Officers, or their agents, must not be members of the RCN.

The role of the independent scrutineer is described in Provision 49 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation Act) 1992. A summary of the role is described in Appendix B.

6. Timetable for election

To ensure that there is consistency in the approach to elections, all elections will follow the order of events set out overleaf.

Action	Notes
Agree the voting method	If the voting system and method of election is not already set these should be approved, by the Returning Officer, before the election is called.
Call the election	The date of the election will normally be determined by the appropriate regulations, but in some instances a formal decision to call an election may be required.
Appoint scrutineers (if applicable)	If Trade Union law applies independent scrutineers will need to be appointed. Independent scrutineers may also be appointed for other elections at the discretion of the Returning Officer.
Publish and circulate the notice of election	See section 10
Closing date for nominations	See section 13
Publish the list of candidates	See section 14
Closing date for withdrawals	See section 16
Deadline for objections to nominations	See section 14
Despatch the voting papers and manifestos	See section 19
Voting opens	Voting will normally commence from the date voting papers are despatched to members, but in some circumstances, it may be appropriate to formally open the voting at a date after papers have been sent out.
Close of voting	See section 19
Count the votes	See section 23
Notify the candidates of the results	See section 27
Publish the results	See section 27
Archive the papers for 12 months	See section 28
Destroy ballot papers / voting records after 12 months	See section 28

In organising elections, care must be taken to ensure that adequate time is allowed for the election process. The following are the recommended minimum standards for all RCN elections but may be subject to change at the discretion of the Returning Officer.

Notice of Election	Included in the next available publication after the election called.
Closing Date for Nominations	No earlier than one month after the day the notice of election was published and no later than two months after the day it was published
Publication of Candidates Details	On website between 2 and 10 days after the closing date for nominations. In the next available RCN publication (if applicable).
Deadline for Delivery of Notices of Withdrawals by Candidates	No later than 4 days after the date of the publication of the candidates' details.
Deadline for Delivery of Objections to Candidates	No later than 4 days after the date of the publication of the candidates' details.
Close of Voting	Not less than 20 days after the day voting opens.
Notification of Results to Candidates	No later than 2 days after the conclusion of the count for contested elections. No later than 7 days after the date of the publication of the candidates' details if the election is uncontested.
Publication of Results to Members	On website no later than two days after the conclusion of the count for contested elections. No later than 7 days after the closing date for nominations if the election is uncontested. Also in the next issue of relevant RCN publication.

7.Voting Systems

7.1 Plurality voting system

The voting system used by the RCN in elections is the plurality voting system (first past the post).

8.Methods of Election

All elections that are governed by Trade Union law will be conducted by postal vote. Postal voting will also be the default mechanism used for all other elections, and these procedures are drafted with particular reference to postal voting. However, alternative voting methods can be used, where applicable, and where there are adequate safeguards regarding security and privacy.

8.1 Postal Voting

When an election is conducted by postal vote a ballot paper will be sent to each member eligible to vote. The ballot paper may be in such form as the Returning Officer shall determine (see section 20), and this may include being printed within a publication that is being circulated to voters.

In a postal vote members will be instructed that nothing should be placed inside the envelope other than the ballot form, and a declaration of identity form if used. In addition, the envelope should be marked “Ballot Paper”, and, if necessary, with the name of the election.

Envelopes containing ballot papers will be kept in a secure location.

9. Voting Privacy

The Returning Officer will make such additional arrangements as s/he thinks appropriate to ensure that the election is conducted as a secret ballot for all voters.

10. Notice of Elections

Adequate notice must be given of all elections. This will normally mean publication in the RCN Bulletin, or any other all-member publication. However, where an election has a smaller constituency, it may be acceptable for publication to be via a publication that goes to all of the members in that constituency, or for the notice to be posted directly to the members. The key factor is that all those members entitled to be candidates, and to vote in the election, must receive notice of the election.

All notices must also be published on the RCN website.

The notice of an election must include

- what the election is for.
- the number of vacancies to be filled.
- how to obtain nomination papers.
- who is eligible to be a candidate.
- the procedure, and deadline for submitting nominations.
- the date voting will open, in the event of a contest.
- the closing date for voting, in the event of a contest.
- any other information considered by the Returning Officer to be necessary to facilitate the election.

11. Eligibility to be a Candidate

To be eligible as a candidate a person must

- be a member of the RCN,

- not be a salaried member of staff,
- meet any further criteria applying to the specific election.

A person is a salaried member of staff if they receive payment of any kind, and not necessarily financial, in return for service to the RCN. This includes secondees whose employers may receive payment from the RCN to compensate them for loss of the secondee's services, and any person paid as a consultant on a self employed basis, either full or part time.

12. Process for Nominations

All candidates must be nominated in accordance with the criteria for specific elections.

The Returning Officer shall decide the required form for any nominations, but it must include

- name and address of candidate.
- RCN membership number and NMC PIN number of candidate where appropriate
- any other information considered necessary by the Returning Officer as a brief description of the candidate (e.g. current role; branch; field of practice group)
- candidate's signature indicating that they are willing, and eligible, to stand for election
- names of persons nominating
- RCN membership and NMC PIN number of persons nominating where appropriate
- signature of persons nominating.

13. Delivery of Nominations

The Returning Officer will include in the notice details of the return address and the deadline for the receipt of nominations.

In exceptional circumstances the Returning Officer may agree to receive nominations in facsimile or electronic formats, provided appropriate security precautions are taken.

14. Publication of Nominations and Objections

Prior to the closing date for nominations, any nominations received by the Returning Officer shall be confidential. The names and details of any candidates, or potential candidates shall not be disclosed by the Returning Officer, or his/her agents.

At the closing date for nominations, the names and details of candidates can be made public. The Returning Officer will publish on the RCN website a statement showing the names and descriptions of candidates, together with the names of persons nominating each candidate.

The Returning Officer may also publish the statement by whatever other means s/he considers appropriate, provided it would enable any objections raised to be made by the deadline set out above.

A complete list of the candidates will also be given to all candidates in the election within ten days after the closing date for nominations.

The candidates will be listed alphabetically on the statement, by surname (if two candidates have the same surname, then they will be listed in the order of their other names).

If any nomination is found to be invalid, the details will not be published, or if already published, will be removed.

If any voter objects to a candidate's nomination, s/he must notify the Returning Officer within four days after the date of the publication of the candidates' details, explaining the reason for his/ her objection. The Returning Officer must deal with any objections as soon as practicable and reply to the voter, preferably before voting opens, and within seven days at most. The Returning Officer's decision on whether to uphold any objection is final.

15. What Invalidates a Nomination

A nomination will be invalid if

- it is neither postmarked in time to arrive in the normal course of post nor received at the specified address by the closing date for nominations.
- the signature of a person nominating the candidate is missing.
- the requirements set out in section 12 are not met.
- in the Returning Officer's view there are material inaccuracies or untruthfulness in the particulars of the candidate or the person nominating the candidate.
- a voter has made a valid objection to a nomination which has been upheld by the Returning Officer.
- It is received in a facsimile or electronic format, and this has not been agreed by the Returning Officer.

When a Returning Officer decides that a nomination is invalid s/he shall write the reason for the decision on the nomination paper, and sign the nomination paper.

If a nomination is thought to be invalid this will be referred back to the RCN Returning Officer whose decision is final.

When the Returning Officer holds that a nomination is invalid, the candidate's nomination will be immediately withdrawn from the election.

16. Process for Withdrawal of Candidates and Death of Candidates

A candidate can withdraw from an election by submitting a notice of withdrawal. This must be signed by the candidate, and delivered to the Returning Officer at the same address as for the delivery of nomination papers. Any withdrawals must be received no later than four days after the publication of the candidates' details.

If a candidate is outside the UK it is acceptable for their proposer to submit a notice of withdrawal on their behalf. However, the proposer must also submit a written declaration (signed by the proposer) to the effect that the candidate is outside the UK.

A proposer, seconder or other nominator can withdraw his/her nominations at any time before the closing date for nominations, by submitting a notice of withdrawal. A proposer, seconder or other nominator cannot withdraw his/her nominations following the close of nominations.

If a candidate withdraws, the election proceeds with the remaining candidates.

If a candidate dies at any time between the closing date for nominations, and the announcement of the election result, the election will be abandoned, provided proof of the death is received by the Returning Officer before the results have been announced. The election will then start again, with notice of the election being given by the Returning Officer 28 days after the date on which proof of the death is received by the Returning Officer. This will be a new election, with the exception that it will not be necessary for all those candidates already deemed eligible to submit fresh nominations. The nomination of the deceased candidates will be deemed withdrawn.

17. Uncontested Elections

If an election is uncontested (i.e. the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of vacancies) the candidates' details will be posted on the website no later than ten days after the publication of the candidates' details. Details of the candidates will also appear in the next available RCN publication, if applicable. The candidates shall be declared elected unopposed seven days later (provided no objections have been lodged and upheld by the Returning Officer).

18. Campaign guidance and regulations

All candidates will be entitled to submit a statement of support showing how they meet the criteria set out in the relevant role description. The statement of support should be submitted with the nomination papers.

The Returning Officer will publish a statement showing the details contained within a nomination for all candidates (see section 19). The statement will also include the names of those nominating the candidates. This statement will be provided to all members eligible to vote, along with ballot papers, or instructions on voting if an alternative method of voting is being used.

Statements of support are published at the Returning Officer's discretion, and the Returning Officer will not publish any statement, or part of a statement, which s/he knows to contain inaccurate or untruthful information, which s/he believes to be potentially libellous or which s/he believes could subject the RCN to any form of legal action.

In the statement published by the Returning Officer the candidates will be listed alphabetically – in order of their surnames, and if there are two or more candidates with the same surname, in order of their other names.

If a candidate has more nominations than are required, only sufficient names will be published. Where possible the Returning Officer will give the candidates the opportunity to select the names, but if not these will be determined by the Returning Officer (normally the first received).

For the purposes of an election campaign candidates and their supporters will not have access to RCN resources.

The RCN will provide support for candidates in terms of coverage in key RCN membership communications including both online and offline communication channels.

The Returning Officer may make further regulations in respect of any election to govern campaigning by candidates. The current guidance and regulations are attached at Appendix C in this document.

18. Despatch of Voting Papers

No later than seven days after the date of the publication of the candidates' details, the Returning Officer will despatch to all members entitled to vote

- the statement showing the details contained within the nominations, including the names of those nominating the candidates.
- the election manifesto for all candidates.
- details of the voting procedure, including the date for the close of voting, and the address to which votes should be sent.
- A ballot form, or if an alternative voting method is being used, instructions on how to vote.
- a freepost envelope, if being used.

Voting will normally commence from the day voting papers are despatched, but in some circumstances the Returning Officer may choose to open the voting at a date after the papers have been despatched.

It shall be at the discretion of the Returning Officer how the information is provided to members, but the inclusion of voting papers with, or within, an RCN publication will meet the requirements of this section.

19. Ballot Papers

Whatever form a ballot paper takes, it must

- contain the names of the candidates as shown in the statement of persons nominated and in the order used in that statement.
- contain clear instructions on how to vote
- contain the names of the independent scrutineers (in elections governed by Trade Union law).

If an alternative method of voting is used, this information must also be provided to the voters in the appropriate format e.g. on the website, or in the instructions for telephone voting.

Ballot papers must only be sent to members' notified addresses, or distributed to members personally. If the ballot paper is included in an RCN publication, the publication must be posted to members' notified addresses, addressed to the member and sealed.

In addition all ballot forms must be capable of being folded up, to ensure privacy.

One, or more of the following mechanisms must be used to ensure that ballot papers cannot be duplicated, and that they are used only by those persons who are entitled to vote.

- The ballot paper has a unique identification number on it.
- There is space on the ballot paper for a unique identification number to be written on it by the voter, a unique identification number having been issued to each member.
- The ballot paper will be accompanied by a separate declaration of identity form to be completed by the voter, and submitted with the ballot paper.
- Such other security mechanism as the Returning Officer may approve.

Any un-issued ballot papers, or publications containing ballot papers, must be returned to the Returning Officer to be destroyed.

20. Replacement Papers

If a voter has spoilt his/her ballot paper in such a way that it can no longer be used as a ballot paper, or delivered to the Returning Officer, s/he can apply to the Returning Officer for a replacement paper. The Returning Officer will only supply a replacement paper if it can be shown, to the satisfaction of the Returning Officer, that the paper was spoilt unintentionally, and that there is no possibility of a duplication of voting. The decision of the Returning Officer on whether to issue a replacement ballot paper is final.

21. Eligibility to Vote

To be eligible to vote a person must

- be an RCN member.
- have a notified address in the relevant area for the election.
- meet any further eligibility criteria for the specific election.

If a person applies for a ballot paper, or other means of voting, and a member

- a) declares to the Returning Officer that s/he has reasonable cause to believe that the person is not entitled to vote, and undertakes to substantiate this in a court of law

the Returning Officer may, at his/her discretion take such action as to disqualify that person from voting as s/he may deem necessary.

22. Counting of Votes

The Returning Officer, or agents appointed by him/her, is responsible for collecting all envelopes containing ballot papers, or voting records (electronic or telephone), as soon as possible after the close of voting. No other person will have access to the ballot papers, or voting records.

Counting should take place as soon as possible after the close of the voting, and continue, with reasonable breaks, until all votes are counted.

The Returning Officer, or agents shall then be responsible for opening each envelope (if used); verifying each ballot paper, or voting record; and counting all ballot paper or voting records.

Ballot papers, or voting records should be verified before being counted. Verification will involve

- checking that the ballot paper is original and not a copy.
- checking that it has a unique identification number (if used).
- if a ballot paper should be accompanied by a declaration of identity form, this must be checked before each ballot paper is unfolded and counted.
- the appropriate verification procedures for voting by methods other than postal voting must be used.
- the total number of ballot papers or voting records received must be recorded, and compared with the numbers issued and numbers eligible to vote.

The Returning Officer shall record the verification process and make a statement as to the results, and all candidates shall be entitled to a copy of that statement.

The Returning Officer must ensure that if counting is suspended for any reason (for a reasonable break, or overnight) proper precautions are taken for the security of the ballot papers, voting records and other documents.

23. Attendance at Counts

Only the Returning Officer, and his/her agents have a right to be present at the counting of the votes, unless the Returning Officer has granted permission to anyone else to attend. Permission to attend the count will be withheld if it is the view of the Returning Officer that such attendance may impede the efficient counting of the vote.

24. Validity of Votes

The decision of the Returning Officer on the validity of a vote, or any question arising in respect to a vote, will be final.

A ballot paper, or voting record, will be invalid if

- it is not received by Returning Officer before the deadline for the close of voting.
- It is not on an original ballot paper (in a postal vote) or in the required format for any other form of voting.
- the person who voted was not entitled to vote, or there is uncertainty as to whether the person was entitled to vote (for example if a declaration of identity form is required, but did not accompany the ballot paper).
- a number is required on the ballot paper and this number is missing.
- anything is written or recorded on the ballot paper which identifies the voter (other than the use of a unique identification number).
- there is no clear indication of voting intention.

Situations in which there would be no clear indication of a voter's intention include those where

- the voter has voted for more than one candidate (and it is not a STV election) or has not indicated a preference.
- the mark, or marks, on the paper is/are not clearly placed by a candidate's name.
- the paper, or voting record, has been left blank.

A paper will not be invalid if

- the vote is marked in the wrong place, but with a clear indication of which candidate or candidates are preferred.
- the vote is marked otherwise than with a cross or number.
- there is more than one mark but with a clear indication of which candidate, or candidates, is preferred.
- the member has not used all of his/her votes.

Only the Returning Officer can determine whether a ballot paper, or voting record, is invalid. All invalid papers or voting records should be marked "invalid", and must be kept with all other ballot papers / voting records.

In announcing the results the Returning Officer shall also announce the number of invalid votes.

25. Tied Votes

If there is a tie between candidates the election will be re-run between the candidates with the same votes.

26. Announcement of Results

The Returning Officer is responsible for announcing the results of an election.

If an election is uncontested (i.e. the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of vacancies) a statement of the candidates will be posted on the website as soon as practicable after the close of nominations, and the candidates shall be declared elected unopposed seven days after the close of nominations (provided no objections have been lodged and upheld by the Returning Officer).

If the election is contested, the candidate, or candidates, with the highest number of votes following the count will be declared elected.

All candidates will be notified of the results as soon as possible after the count has concluded, and no later than two days after that time. Members will be notified of the results in the first appropriate publication following the election. In addition, the results of all elections will be placed on the RCN website, as soon as practicable after the count has concluded, and the results shall be available to all members, on request.

27. Papers and Voting Records Retention of Ballot

All ballot papers, and any other voting records must be retained for a period of at least 12 months, after which they may be destroyed. Only the Returning Officer, other independent scrutineer, or person acting on the explicit authority of the RCN Council will have access to the ballot papers and voting records.

Appendix A - Role of the Returning Officer

The UK Returning Officer is the person who has the overall responsibility for the conduct of elections. The UK Returning Officer is an officer of the Royal College of Nursing who is appointed by Council. Council has agreed this responsibility should be held by the Director of Governance Support

The Returning Officer for the RCN may appoint someone else to act as Returning Officer on his/her behalf, for a specific election. The Returning Officer may also appoint agents for the purposes of assisting with an election.

Returning Officers, or their agents, must not be members of the RCN.

The Returning Officer has specific responsibility for:

- publication of the notice of the election
- the nomination process for candidates
- the preparation of the election paperwork
- the appointment of an Independent Scrutineer to oversee and distribute the ballot papers and to receive and count the ballot papers and declare the results
- working with the RCN's Governance Support Committee to ensure the election process is as efficient and effective as possible and complies with the RCN's statutory obligations and its charter, standing orders and regulations
- log all complaints received and ensure that they are managed in a clear, transparent and timely way

Appendix B - Role of the Independent Scrutineer

Appointment of the Independent Scrutineer is a requirement under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation Act) 1992 (Provision 49).

The Act says that an Independent Scrutineer must be appointed for a minimum number of tasks which are described below. In addition, the trade union may ask the independent scrutineer to take on additional tasks if it so wishes.

The minimum requirements to be undertaken include:

- being the person who supervises the production and distribution of the voting papers
- inspect the register of names and addresses of the members of the trade union to make sure it is all in order
- make a report of the results
- keep all the voting papers for at least a year after the election

A trade union can also ask the independent scrutineer to take on additional responsibilities if required.

Appendix C - Campaigning guidance and regulations

The following guidance and regulation supports paragraph 18 in the RCN's Guide to Election Procedures specifically in respect of the following:

1. For the purposes of an election campaign candidates and their supporters do not have access to RCN resources.
2. Using RCN resources may lead to disqualification from the election.
3. The Returning Officer may make further regulations to govern campaigning by candidates in elections.

1. Guidance and regulations

1.1 Please note that this guidance and these regulations apply to the period of the election which is defined as the period between the close of nominations and the close of voting.

2. What can you do?

2.1 Election candidates are encouraged to promote their campaign through a wide variety of channels to encourage as many members as possible to engage in the elections and vote for you.

2.2 You should use your campaign to demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the role and also to put across manifesto commitments – what you intend to do or change once elected.

2.3 Below are some campaigning ideas for candidates to consider:

Networking – face to face communication is the most effective way to get across your message. Talk to people in the workplace and events such as conferences, seminars and workshops.

Offline channels – traditional forms of communications such as posters, flyers, and letters are also excellent ways of selling yourself and getting across your message.

Online channels – today's online media and social networking offers instant access to spread the word and extend your reach. Unlike traditional forms of communication, you can open up a world of instant and direct communication with people. Use sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube as well as viral email campaigns, or even set up your own website.

3. What the RCN will do for you

3.1 Every candidate is invited to provide a 250 word supporting statement demonstrating how you meet the requirements of the role. It is not a manifesto but is designed to show that you have the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to play

a key leadership role (though you can, and should, put forward manifesto commitments as part of your campaign more generally).

3.2 The RCN will send a copy of the supporting statement to every member eligible to vote along with their ballot paper. The supporting statements will also be included on the RCN website.

3.3 As part of its commitment to equality and diversity the RCN will review each submitted election statement for obvious errors (spelling mistakes etc) and you will be given the opportunity to make one set of changes. Please ensure you are readily contactable in the five days after the close of nominations.

3.4 You can also ask to submit your statement in a format suitable for any disability you may have – for example, recorded, dictated or in Braille.

3.5 The RCN will use its membership communication and engagement channels to promote the election and candidates ensuring, as far as possible, equal coverage and opportunity for candidates. This may involve being interviewed or being asked to provide your thoughts on particular issues – so make sure you are readily contactable at short notice throughout the election period so this can be arranged. If the RCN cannot contact you then you will forfeit the opportunity to be included and the RCN will publish a statement along the following lines: “XXXXXXXX was invited to take part in this xxxxxx but could not be contacted”.

3.6 The RCN will also encourage non-RCN publications or those with editorial independence to exercise balance in relation to candidates – though please note that such publications are not within the RCN’s control.

4. What you cannot do

4.1 You cannot use the RCN’s resources yourself to promote your campaign, even if you wish to disseminate information not directly linked to standing for election. Putting across your views on a particular issue in an RCN publication, for example, could be interpreted as electioneering and be open to challenge.

4.2 Below is a guide to what are considered RCN resources – however, the list is not exhaustive and if you are unsure please seek advice from the Returning Officer.

- The RCN membership and staff database
- RCN external and internal circulation lists
- The RCN website including any interactive facility (such as a discussion zone, private message facility, online community or comment field) unless areas are specifically designated as being available for candidates during an election period
- RCN publications – electronic or printed
- RCN branding, crest or logo
- RCN official social networking sites such as the RCN Facebook page or YouTube channel
- Funding from branches, national forums or other official RCN groups

- RCN events – by all means network at events and tell people you are standing for election but you cannot set up “a stall” or speak from the platform about your campaign
- RCN staff – you must not ask RCN staff to help you with your campaign for example, asking them to forward on emails or help write your statement.

4.3 In addition, you may not claim expenses from the RCN for any part of your campaign.

4.4 There are a few things to be aware of if you already hold a role within the RCN:

- If you are attending an event for which you would normally claim expenses then you can still do that but you must be able to demonstrate that your presence is linked to your current role.
- If appropriate the RCN will continue to publicise activities you undertake in your current role - for example, if you are the President and you are standing for re-election as President for a further term of office – but will not refer to the fact that you are standing for election.
- If you have an RCN email address you should not use it to access RCN internal email distribution addresses as this gives you an unfair advantage over other candidates. However, you can email individuals at the RCN using the standard email format firstname.surname@rcn.org.uk as described in the RCN members’ handbook.

5. Disqualification

Any candidate not observing these regulations will be disqualified.

Guidance and regulations updated by the Returning Officer and agreed by RCN Council at its meeting on 10 March 2011