Role Descriptor: RCN Committee Chair

Title: Committee Chair

Reporting To: As per the Committee terms of reference.

Basis: The Chair is elected for a two-year[1] term of office from amongst the members of the Committee. Any individual occupying the role of Chair shall be eligible for re-election in accordance with the RCN Elections and Appointments Policy and Processes and the RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations.

Time commitment (including meetings): The estimated time commitment for the Chair will vary depending on the number of times the Committee meets in a calendar year, as set out in its terms of reference. For example, based on an average of four meetings per annum, the estimated time commitment for the Chair is three days per month, in addition to time spent fulfilling general Committee member duties. This includes formal planned and ad hoc meetings.

NB: Chairs of both the Professional Nursing and Trade Union Committees will also be required to attend RCN Council meetings, Congress and the AGM. The RCN Council meets at least 5 times per year in person, hybrid or online. The majority of these meetings are at RCN HQ Cavendish Square, London, but Council also meets once a year at Congress and the AGM meeting is sometimes held outside of London.

NB: Chairs of other committees may be required to attend other meetings relevant to the work of that committee.

Ad hoc meetings of the Committee may be required between planned meetings for timely discussion and/or decision making.

Expenses: Committee members, including the Chair, may reclaim all travel and similar expenses in line with the RCN Expenses Policy.

Eligibility: The Chair must adhere to the relevant eligibility requirements set out in the RCN Elections and Appointments Policy and Processes document and in the RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations.

Purpose of the role:
The Chair of an RCN Committee fulfils a vital role in leading the committee to ensure it achieves its objectives, as set out in its terms of reference.

The Chair has a governance leadership role in upholding the vision and purpose of the RCN. The purpose of this role is to:

[1] Exceptions to this are the Chair of the Students Committee (one-year), Chair of the Forums Co-ordinating Committee (four-years) and Chair of the Fellows Co-ordinating Committee (the Convenor of RCN Fellows, which is a four-year term in line with the term of office of that role).

- Effectively chair the committee, ensuring that it is acting within its terms of reference and fulfilling its governance responsibilities,
- Be responsible for the areas set out in the committee's terms of reference and ensure that the work of the committee is consistent with its agreed remit and decisions taken within its authorised powers.
- Contribute to strategic thinking and policy development.
- Act as an advocate and representative of members in the area of activity covered by the committee.
- Act as the main channel of communication between the committee and its parent reporting body as defined within the terms of reference.
- Act as the main channel of communication between the committee and the designated committee Governance Adviser (and the Executive Director of Governance as necessary) and designated committee staff lead.
- Set the agenda for committee meetings in conjunction with the Vice-Chair, the Governance Adviser and staff lead for the committee.
- Be responsible to members for the decisions the committee makes and the actions it takes, ensuring that the decisions taken are properly informed by members' views and being a stabilising influence at moments of difficulty.
- Ensure that committee decisions are implemented.
- Lead on the development of the committee and its effectiveness; evaluate the effectiveness of individual committee members and ensure they meet their responsibilities.
- Ensure the effective reporting of the committee's activities to its parent body including making, where appropriate, recommendations for action and to ensure that the parent body is informed of any issues/concerns.
- Work closely with the Governance Adviser to ensure that the committee's decisions and activities are communicated to the membership in a timely and effective way.

RCN Committee Chairs should not involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of the RCN, but may, from time to time, work with RCN staff members to achieve results. When representing the RCN in a public space in their capacity as an RCN Committee Chair, members should ensure that their actions do not bring the RCN and profession into disrepute, and they should take care not to take public positions contrary to those of the RCN.

Key responsibilities of the role include:

- Providing leadership for the committee based on a sound understanding of the committee's role and responsibilities and acting in the best interests of the committee and RCN.

- Chairing all the meetings of the committee, ensuring they are run in a timely manner, are effective and achieve a balance between timekeeping and space for discussions, and that key decisions are made in line with RCN procedures.
- Ensuring that decisions represent the collective views of the committee or in exceptional circumstances when consensus cannot be reached, a majority view.
- Ensuring the implementation of decisions and activity delegated to the committee by the parent body, and in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, and ensuring that key committee decisions, activity and information is communicated effectively back to the parent body.
- Supporting committee members to understand and carry out their responsibilities in liaising and connecting with members on boards, branches, forums, networks and other membership entities.
- Working closely with the Executive Director of Governance/their representatives to ensure that decisions taken by the committee are implemented and that the strategic and operational objectives of the RCN as a whole are delivered.
- Ensuring that the committee members are supported in terms of their individual development and that the committee is developed as a whole to ensure it fulfils its role effectively and that individual members meet their responsibilities.
- Championing and promoting the role of committee member to aid succession planning.
- Working with the Governance Adviser to plan agendas for meetings, ensure that actions are followed through and checking all minutes and other outputs from the committee to ensure they are an accurate reflection of the discussions, actions and decisions taken.
- Having a second or casting vote in the event of an equality of voting.
- Undertaking ad hoc work as the Chair of the committee such as attendance at other relevant meetings and events.
- Working with and involving the Vice-Chair in all the activities listed above, delegating activity to them as appropriate.
- Overseeing regular reviews of the effectiveness of the Committee.
- Contributing to the creation and maintenance of an inclusive and open culture, ensuring that every Committee member is given an opportunity to contribute and that Committee discussions are fair and balanced.
- Upholding the values, decisions and policies of the RCN and, acting as a role model to members and to nursing more widely.

- Acting in the best interests of the RCN to enhance its reputation as a respected trade union and professional body for nursing.

- Demonstrating a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and leading by example.

Person specification:

In addition to the requirements for a committee member, the Chair should be able to demonstrate:

1. An understanding of and commitment to ensuring effective governance of the RCN.
2. Strong leadership and the ability to command respect.
3. An ability to chair meetings and to support the committee to make effective decisions.
4. A commitment to ensuring effective member engagement.
5. Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to influence.
6. The ability to drive through change.
7. Commitment to the role of Chair of the committee.
8. An active commitment to:
    - the RCN Respect Charter, and
    - promoting EDI and the Nolan Principles.

Reviewed and updated in January 2026 in light of changes arising from the RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations, which came into effect on 1 January 2026.