

# The RCN Award of Merit

## 1. Introduction

The Award of Merit is the highest honour bestowed for voluntary service to the Royal College of Nursing.

## 2. Who can be nominated

All RCN members are eligible for the Award of Merit, including those in the following categories:

- Registered Nurses (and Midwives)
- Nursing Support Workers (including Health Care Assistants, Nursing Practitioners, Nursing Associates and Trainee Nursing Associates)
- Nursing Students (and Midwives)
- Retired Members

RCN Council members or staff can only be nominated for an RCN Award once they ceased to be a Council member or employed by the RCN.

## 3. Criteria

The criteria for the RCN Award of Merit are:

1. **Impact:** Consistently exceed expectations; performing at a level above and beyond normal benchmarks.
  - to clearly demonstrate the candidate's extensive knowledge and competence within the submission
  - to clearly demonstrate that the candidate has performed above and beyond normal requirements and expectations
  - that clearly identifies the candidate's effective communications skills, use of initiative and timely delivery on a quality agenda on behalf of, or for, RCN members.
2. **Contribution:** Has made important and significant contribution(s) in their role; and demonstrates their sustained commitment to the RCN and its core values.
  - that clearly demonstrates that the candidate has made important and significant contribution(s) be it locally, regionally, country and/or national levels
  - that the candidate has demonstrated their clear and sustained commitment to the RCN and its core values
  - within the submission, which supports the candidates conducting themselves in a manner that represents the RCN positively
3. **Professionalism:** Consistently demonstrates a high degree of professionalism by their commitment to work positively, respectfully and effectively to contribute to the aims and objectives of the RCN as enshrined in the RCN Charter.
  - that the candidate clearly demonstrates a high degree of commitment and professionalism within the submission

- that the candidate has a positive attitude, which enables both them and others to positively influence and contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the RCN.
4. Knowledge: Uses knowledge and expertise at every opportunity that adds distinction to the RCN and its core values.
    - that the candidate has used their knowledge and expertise to demonstrate policy and practice and be a role model for the RCN
    - that the candidate has demonstrated effective communications and use of initiative locally, regionally, country and/or UK wide
    - within the submission that the candidate's work on behalf of the RCN is underpinned by its core values.
  5. Equity, diversity and inclusion: How has the individual demonstrated an active commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

#### 4. How to nominate

Nominations can be submitted by RCN members, from all RCN membership categories, for the Award of Merit at any point during the year.

RCN members can support one or more RCN members for the award. Country or regional boards, branches and forums can submit group nominations.

RCN Council members and RCN staff can also submit or be one supporter of award nominations. Nominations can be submitted using the nomination form which is available on this webpage: [RCN Award of Merit | Awards | Royal College of Nursing](#).

You will need three other people to support your nomination. They may be RCN members or others who fully support the nomination. The recommendations should ideally come from a range of colleagues from different backgrounds to show the reach of the nominee's work. The Country or Regional Board will also provide a resume of the nominee to the Awards Committee.

Each supporting statement should show how the nominee has given exceptional service to the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), making an impact on their RCN branch, network, forum, workplace, or the RCN as a whole.

The nominator must provide their contact details as they are the main point of contact for the Awards Committee. The nominator will receive acknowledgement of receipt of the nomination, and will be advised if the nomination has been successful or not, following the decision of Council.

The whole process of RCN awards is confidential. Nominees should not be made aware that they are being put forward for an RCN Award to avoid the risk of disappointment should the nomination be unsuccessful. Nominators will need to get the nominee's CV without alerting them to the nomination. Successful nominees will be informed of the award after Council has made their decision.

#### 5. The process

The nominations process for RCN Awards is as follows:

- Awards Open - A call for nominations is made each year in the nursing press and in the internal RCN publications and on the RCN website
- Awards Close - A closing date for receipt of nominations is included in the publicity, and it is vital that nominators get the fully completed form submitted in time as late entries will not be considered by the Awards Committee.
- Verification – an internal process to determine that an individual is eligible for an Award (against the eligibility criteria mentioned in section 2).
- Judging - All eligible nominations will be submitted to the RCN Awards Committee, which will make recommendations for Awardees to the RCN Council.
- Awarding - RCN awardees, conferred by RCN Council, are presented with their award at the next awards ceremony.

The dates for opening and closing of nominations as well as any Awards ceremony will be found on the RCN website [www.rcn.org.uk/awards](http://www.rcn.org.uk/awards)

#### 6. The Judging Panel

The Awards Committee comprises of the President, Deputy President, Chair of Council, Vice-Chair of Council, the Fellows Convenor, the Chief Executive & General Secretary, the RCN Chief Nurse, Representatives from the Professional Nursing and Trade Union Committees.

#### 7. The prize

The prize for the award winners is the physical medal, the 'Award of Merit'

Winners will also be included on a roll of honour published on the RCN website, and included in RCN communications publicising RCN Award winners.