



RCN Fellowship

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Royal College recognises outstanding Registered Nurses as practitioners, researchers, educationalists and leaders who share our commitment to advancing the art and science of nursing and the improvement of health care.
- 1.2 Fellowship is the Royal College of Nursing's highest award. It is a mark of achievement to which all nurse members can aspire. College Fellowship is an acknowledgement by their peers of a member's experience, accomplishments and commitment to the profession.
- 1.3 Life Fellowships are awarded to nurse members of the College in good standing, with a history of membership of the College and who have demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the profession and practice of nursing.
- 1.4 The award of Fellowship is held in very high esteem. It is awarded to nurse members in:
 - clinical practice
 - nursing research
 - nursing education
 - management of nursing and patient/healthcare who have demonstrated exceptional evidence of:
 - excellence and/or innovation in nursing
 - significant impact on nursing practice and the improvement of health and patient care.
- 1.5 Honorary Fellowships are awarded to nurses who are not members of the Royal College of Nursing and individuals who are not eligible for College membership but have demonstrated significant evidence of an extraordinary contribution to the profession of nursing.

2. Process of Nomination

- 2.1 A call for nominations is made each year in the nursing press and in the internal RCN publications and on the RCN website. 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.
- 2.2 Nominations can be submitted by any member of the RCN, except employees of the RCN, or current members of RCN Council, using the nomination form which is available on this webpage: rcn.org.uk/get-involved/rcn-awards/rcn-fellowship-and-honorary-fellowship-awards. Receipt of a nomination will be acknowledged.



- 2.3 Current members of RCN Council and RCN staff are not eligible for consideration for the RCN Fellowship or Honorary Fellowship.
- 2.4 All eligible nominations will be submitted to the RCN Awards Committee, which exercises responsibility delegated by Council to recommend individuals to Council for election to Fellowship or Honorary Fellowship. The Panel comprises of the President, Deputy President, Chair of Council, Vice Chair of Council, the Convenor of Fellows and the Chief Executive & General Secretary. The Panel makes its recommendations no later than the April meeting of Council.
- 2.5 Fellows (and Honorary Fellows) elected by Council are presented with their award at RCN Congress.

3. Completing the nomination form

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the nominator to present the case for nomination in light of these guidelines. It is vital that the form is correctly completed and the case carefully argued, including all the detailed information about the nominee, and that it is signed by the nominator (electronic signature accepted) and returned by the deadline. The Awards Committee welcome receiving the nominee's CV, but recognise that it is not always possible to obtain it. However a CV alone will not suffice.
- 3.2 The nominator must recruit three additional supporters and obtain their testimonials to enclose with the nomination form. The nominator should send the supporters a copy of this guidance and ask them to address the criteria outlined in paragraph 3.7 in their testimonials.
- 3.3 A person can only nominate or support one nomination per year.
- 3.4 The RCN Awards Committee will consider the completed nomination form and testimonials.
- 3.5 A nominee for Fellowship must have been a member of the RCN for at least five continuous years before the date of nomination and, in the judgement of the Awards Committee, meet the criteria set out in this guidance.
- 3.6 A nominee for an Honorary Fellowship must not be eligible for RCN membership i.e. they are not a nurse, or they are a nurse registered outside of the UK but recognised as having had a significant impact on nursing or health care and, in the opinion of the Awards Committee, meet the criteria set out in this guidance.



- 3.7 The nominator should clearly set out the work of the nominee within their particular field of nursing, and within the broader scope of the nursing profession, and not rely on the nominee's CV to 'speak for itself'. The six criteria are:

Innovation/unique contribution: What has the nominee contributed that is new in terms of new nursing knowledge, new nursing practices or techniques, or new ways of working (whether as a clinical practitioner, teacher, manager or researcher)? The innovation/unique contribution may also take the form of using established practices in a new context or applied in a new way. The value of innovations and unique contributions in nursing may sometimes be immediately apparent, but it is recognised that there may also be a time lapse between the innovation/unique contribution and its acceptance by the profession as a whole or its impact in any measurable sense on nursing.

Originality: To what extent is the innovation/unique contribution totally original in context/application or derived from the work of others?

Evaluation: Has the innovation/unique contribution (new knowledge, new practice, new way of working) been rigorously tested? (e.g. peer reviewed, published etc.)

Dissemination: How has the new knowledge/practice/way of working been shared with the rest of the profession, not only in the academic press, but in the national nursing press, conferences, workshops, seminars, radio/TV interviews, personal networking, national/international media outside of nursing?

Transferability: To what extent has the innovation/unique contribution been incorporated more widely into nursing or used as a model in other fields of nursing? Sustainability of the innovation/unique contribution could also be considered as an element of this criteria.

Recognition: To what extent is the work recognised by others working in the same field?

- 3.8 Nominators should note that advanced studies in nursing and the possession of a higher university degree are neither sufficient in themselves for the award of a Fellowship, nor a prerequisite for a Fellowship. Fellowships are not designed to recognise long and faithful service by nurses in the practice of their profession – it is not a lifetime achievement award. Neither are Fellowships designed for outstanding service to the RCN - the RCN Award of Merit is given for this.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 The whole process of the award of Fellowships is confidential. Nominees should not be made aware that they are being put forward for a Fellowship 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, and invited to receive the award at RCN Congress.



4. Rights and Privileges

- 4.1 Fellowship of the RCN shall not of itself confer any rights and privileges over and above those which derive from membership of the RCN as laid down in the Charter and Bye-Laws. Fellows are expected to possess and to maintain a positive commitment to the aims and ideals of the RCN as a criterion for the retention of their award.
- 4.2 A person admitted as a Fellow shall have the right to be styled “a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing” and such style may be indicated by the use of the letters “FRCN” after the Fellow’s name and statutory qualifications.
- 4.3 Fellows of the RCN may, following retirement from the practice of the profession, and on notifying Membership Records, continue to enjoy the rights and privileges of membership of the RCN on the payment of the retired subscription.
- 4.4 Honorary Fellows shall not acquire any of the rights and privileges of membership of the RCN.
- 4.5 Fellows and Honorary Fellows may be called upon to advise RCN Council or national forums with the RCN on matters pertaining to the advancement of nursing.
- 4.6 The Fellows and Honorary Fellows will from time to time meet together for the purpose of considering matters relating to issues in nursing. Any recommendations arising from such meetings will be submitted to RCN Council.
- 4.7 Fellows and Honorary Fellows will receive a distinctive insignia which may be worn at functions of the RCN when badges of office are worn, and at such other nursing functions and on such other occasions as shall be deemed appropriate by the Fellow or Honorary Fellow. In addition they will receive a scroll which shall indicate whether they have been awarded a Fellowship or Honorary Fellowship, and their names will be inscribed in the Register of Fellows which, together with a volume of citations, will be held in the RCN Library.

5. Removal of Fellowship

- 5.1 The criteria for removal of an RCN Fellowship should primarily be that an award holder has acted in a way which brings the nursing profession or the honour of RCN Fellowship into disrepute. Although not an exhaustive list, illustrative examples of such action could be:
 - professional misconduct
 - a declaration of a qualification which they do not hold
 - plagiarism
 - promoting a competitor organisation that represents nurses and nursing



5.2 The process for removal of an RCN Fellowship is as follows:

- a) If a complaint is received from any source, or the Chief Executive & General Secretary becomes aware of information about conduct that they believe is serious enough for a possible removal of award, they will discuss with the Awards Committee.
- b) If both agree that there is a case to answer, the Chair of Council shall be asked to write to Council members (without informing them of the name of the person) with a view to convening an investigation sub- committee, made up of three members of Council.
- c) The award holder shall be advised of the complaint that has been made, or the information which forms the basis of the case, and invited to respond within a month.
- d) If the investigation sub-committee on reviewing the information and the award holder's response decides that a formal hearing is necessary, arrangements shall be made for that hearing to be held within three months. The award holder shall be invited to that hearing and have the right to be accompanied by a friend, colleague or professional adviser and can present any further evidence they wish at the hearing.
- e) The decision of the investigation sub-committee shall be reported to Council and if the decision is to remove the award, the award holder shall be informed at that stage.
- f) There shall be no appeal.