



RCN Elections and Appointments policy and processes

(Incorporating the process for filling casual vacancies to roles on Council, Boards and Committees)

Who does this policy apply to?

All election candidates for RCN Council, Boards and Committees.

All applicants for Boards, and Committees

All External Advisers applicants for Committees

This policy does not apply to Branch Committee elections. The process for Branch Committee elections is set out in the Branch Elections Policy and Processes.

Purpose and description of the document

This document supplements the election provisions in the Royal Charter, Standing Orders, and Regulations. It applies to all RCN elections and appointments, including casual vacancies, with the exception of Branch Committee elections, and describes the overarching principles that should be applied.

The aim of this document is to achieve equal access and exposure for all candidates to ensure the RCN facilitates fair election and appointment processes.

Document name

RCN elections and appointments policy and process

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Regulation: RCN Council, board and committee members – fit and proper persons criteria, RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations from 1 Jan 2026 (Regulation on Terms of Office until 1 Jan 2026).

RCN Royal Charter

RCN Standing Orders

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 This document supplements the election and appointment provisions in the Royal Charter, Standing Orders, and Regulations. It applies to all RCN elections and appointments, with the exception of Branch Committee elections, and describes the overarching principles that should be applied.
- 1.2 In addition, each election and appointments process has a separate procedural document setting out the timeline, terms of office, arrangements, and any specific rules pertaining to that election or appointment process. These specific procedures are agreed by RCN Council in advance of each round of elections and appointments and any subsequent casual vacancies will adopt the same procedure, tailored to the vacancy/vacancies. The process for filling casual vacancies is attached below (Appendix A).
- 1.3 The aim of this document is to achieve equal access and exposure for all candidates and applicants ensuring that the RCN facilitates fair and well delivered election and appointment processes that encourage wider participation.

2. **Definitions**

- 2.1 In this policy and process document the following terms shall be defined as follows.

TERM	MEANING
Applicant	An individual who has applied for a vacancy to be chosen by appointment interview
Day	This means working days and excludes Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays.

Independent Scrutineer	The person or company appointed to carry out independent scrutineer services in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Those organisations qualified to act as Independent Scrutineers, are set out in the Trade Union Ballots and Elections (Independent Scrutineer Qualifications) (Amendment) Order 2017.
Nominator	A person who has nominated a candidate.
Notified address	The postal address of an RCN member on the RCN membership database, or such other address the member has provided to the RCN.
Panel Member.	A member of an appointment Panel. Either an RCN member, a staff member or an independent participant (IP). Panels carry out interviews in appointment process
RCN member	A person whose name and address are on the RCN membership database, as an active member.
Returning Officer	The Returning Officer is responsible for managing the conduct of elections. The RCN will determine if this is an RCN staff member or the independent scrutineer, see S6.3 below
Signature	Either a hand-written signature or an electronic signature.
Unique Identification Number	A number issued to a voter which is exclusive to them, that does not identify them but enables the member to vote in an election.
Voter	A member of the RCN who is eligible to vote in a specific election.
Voting record	The record of a member's vote in an election conducted other than by postal vote or poll. A voting record may be in printed or electronic form.

3. Core principles for RCN elections and appointments

3.1 This document applies to member elections, member appointments and the appointment of non-member External Advisers. The core principles to be followed in all RCN election and appointment processes are as follows:

Elections Processes (Members)

- Election processes are democratic, and each vote carries equal weight. (unless specified otherwise in the individual election procedure).
- All members are encouraged to participate in elections (both as candidates and voters).
- Steps will be taken to ensure that elections are accessible to all eligible members.
- Candidate eligibility and nomination criteria are not arbitrary or excessively restrictive or discriminatory.
- In elections, all candidates will have a fair and equitable opportunity to promote their candidacy.
- The systems for voting will be secure and accurate.
- The administration of elections is transparent.
- The results of elections will be announced promptly and be made available to all members. All members have the right to vote in secret and without undue interference.

Appointment Processes (Members)

- All members who meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for positions on those committees which have appointment processes.
- Applications will be treated confidentially and applicants will be treated impartially.
- Appointments criteria are not arbitrary or excessively restrictive or discriminatory.

Appointment Processes (External Advisers)

- Appointment of external advisors to the RCN Committees will incorporate the points above. This process is managed with the assistance of a specialist recruitment consultancy who shortlist applications based on Committee role profiles as well as any skills gaps identified by Lead Director and Chair of the Committee (eg: if Finance and Investment Committee has external advisors with significant pension experience already, and requires candidates with strength in investment portfolios).

4. **Trade Union law and when it applies (elections only)**

4.1 The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 applies to elections for members of Trade Union Executives. The RCN Trade Union Executive comprises the following elected and voting positions:

- Members of RCN Council
- Chair of Congress (not a voting position on RCN Council but elected under Trade Union law)
- RCN President
- RCN Deputy President
- Student Member of RCN Council
- Nursing Support Worker Member of RCN Council

4.2 The statutory requirements of the 1992 Act include:

- No member shall be unreasonably excluded from standing as a candidate in an election.
- No candidate shall be required to be a member of a political party.
- All candidates will be afforded the opportunity to prepare an election statement and the RCN will distribute that to all members entitled to vote in any such election. The RCN may set a word limit for election statements and will use its discretion as regards any non-written material such as photographs to be included with the address.
- The RCN will secure that no modification is made to the election statement except at the request of the candidate or where the modification is incidental. Candidates are therefore responsible for (e.g.) typographical accuracy and compliance with word count requirements. This also applies to RCN's non-statutory elections.
- The same production method will be applied to copies of all candidates' election statement
- The RCN will so far as reasonably practicable secure the same facilities and restrictions with respect to the preparation, submission, length, or modification of an election statement, and with respect to the incorporation of photographs or other matters not in words, are provided or equally applied to each of the candidates.
- The candidates will bear none of the expense of producing their election statement.
- The RCN will not be responsible for any civil or criminal liability arising from publishing, copying, or distributing individual election statements. This liability will rest with the individual candidate.
- Before the election is held the RCN will appoint a qualified Independent Scrutineer to supervise the production of the voting papers and/or their distribution and return. The Independent Scrutineer will also report to the RCN as soon as reasonably practicable after the date for return of the voting papers.

- Entitlement to vote will be accorded equally to all members of the RCN but the RCN may restrict the right to vote by reference to a particular group or locality.
- Every member entitled to vote in a particular election must be allowed to vote without interference or undue constraint imposed by the RCN.
- The vote must be secret, postal at no cost to the membership and members must be given sufficient opportunity to return their votes.
- The RCN will ensure that an independent person counts the votes in any election, and this will ordinarily fall to the Independent Scrutineer.

5. Equal opportunities

5.1 All members must be able to participate equally in elections and appointments. RCN elections and appointments should reflect the diversity that exists within the membership. Care must be taken to ensure that:

- All election/appointment materials are inclusive and available in accessible formats on request.
- Eligibility criteria are not discriminatory.
- Where requested, reasonable adjustments will be accommodated.
- Where possible, panels are diverse in their composition.
- Panels are apprised of skills, experience and EDI gaps to take into consideration when making appointments.

6. Elections process and management

6.1 Independent Scrutineer and Returning Officer In addition to the elections covered by trade union legislation (See Section 4.1) the RCN will also appoint an independent scrutineer for elections to the following:

Trade Union Committee
 Professional Nursing Committee
 UK Stewards Committee
 UK Learning Reps Committee
 UK Health & Safety Reps Committee
 Nursing Support Workers Committee
 Students Committee
 Country and regional boards
 Agenda Committee
 National Pensioners Convention

6.2 The Returning Officer is responsible for managing the conduct of elections.

6.3 In respect of all elections governed by trade union law (see Section 4) and those listed above (Section 6.1), the RCN will ask the Independent Scrutineer to also act as Returning Officer.

6.4 For other elections, an internal (i.e. RCN staff member) Returning Officer may be appointed. It is a requirement of the RCN Standing Orders that the Returning Officer must not be a member of the RCN.

7. **Election timetables**

7.1 Elections are organised on strict timetables to ensure sufficient time for elections to progress. The following is an indicative timetable but may be subject to change for each individual election.

Election Activity	Time Frames
Appoint Independent Scrutineer	Prior to the election, according to the timetable for the specific election.
Specify the voting method	Prior to the election, according to the timetable for the specific election.
Call for 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.
Publish the notice of election	Notice of the election will be sent by email and published on the RCN website.
Closing date for nominations	At least 1 month after the day the notice of election was published and no later than 2 months after the day it was published.
Publish the list of candidates	On the RCN website between 2 and 30 days after the closing date for nominations. – depending on the number of elections taking place at any given time
Closing date for withdrawals	No later than 4 days after the date of publication of the candidate details. NB: it is not possible to withdraw from an election after 4 days.

Despatch of voting papers and candidate election addresses	As soon as reasonably practicable prior to the opening of voting.
Voting opens	An individual date in each election.
Voting closes	Not less than 20 days after the day voting opens.
Votes counted	As soon as reasonably practicable after voting closes.
Candidates notified of outcome	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.
Results published	Results will be published on the RCN website no later than 2 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.
Archive documentation	To be archived for 12 months and then destroyed.

8. Notice of elections

8.1 Adequate notice must be given of all elections and all those members entitled to stand or vote in the election must be sent the relevant notice. Election notices will be published on the RCN website and sent by email.

8.2 The notice of an election will include:

- Details of the vacancy.
- The number of vacancies to be filled.
- How to obtain a nomination form.
- Candidate eligibility.
- The procedure, and deadline for submitting nominations.
- The date voting will open, in the event of a contested election.
- The closing date for voting, in the event of a contested election.

9. Elections - Candidate eligibility

9.1 Eligibility criteria is outlined in the RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations. Any additional criteria specific to the election will be outlined in the procedure for that election.

Nominations for elections

10.1 Some elections may require candidates to be nominated. The requirements for who can nominate will be set out in the specific election procedures. In the case of RCN Council nomination procedures are set out in the Standing Orders.

10.2 By nominating a candidate, the nominator is confirming the candidate is known to them and that they are not aware of any reason why the member should not stand for election. Nominators can nominate more than one candidate for an election. All nominators will be contacted following the submission of the nomination to confirm that they have nominated the candidate.

10.3 Where nominators are nominating on behalf of an entity, they must consult with the rest of their entity before making the nomination.

10.4 Nominations cannot be submitted from a member already elected to the board, or committee on which the vacancy arises.

10.5 Nominations cannot be submitted from a member already elected to the Council in any circumstances.

10.6 Nominations cannot be submitted by an immediate family member (spouse, children, grandchildren, siblings, and spouses of any of these) of the candidate.

10.7 Nominations must include the following information:

- Candidate's name and address.
- RCN membership number and NMC PIN of candidates who are in the Nurse category of membership.
- Candidate's confirmation that they are willing, able, and eligible to stand for election. Confirmation can be a written or electronic signature.
- Names and RCN membership numbers of persons nominating
- Declarations of interest (aligned with the Conflicts of Interest policy)

10.8 A nomination will be invalid if:

- It is not received by the closing date for nominations.
- The name of a person nominating the candidate is missing.
- The candidate eligibility requirements set out in section 9 are not met.
- In the Returning Officer's view there are material inaccuracies or untruthfulness in the particulars of the candidate or the person(s) nominating the candidate.

- 10.9 If a nomination is invalid the candidate will be informed in writing by the Governance Team and the candidate's nomination will be immediately withdrawn from the election.
- 10.10 The verification process includes robust checks to ensure that candidates meet the eligibility criteria set out in the individual election procedure. If a candidate fails to disclose any matter that could impact on their eligibility, that will be treated as a deliberate non-disclosure and will result in their becoming ineligible to continue with the election process and/or take up their appointment.
- 10.11 The Governance Team will verify all nominations by checking the candidate meets all the eligibility criteria and confirming the nominators support the nomination. Candidates may be required to provide evidence during the verification process.
- 10.12 A nominator can withdraw their nomination at any time before the closing date for nominations by submitting a notice of withdrawal, but not after that date.

11. Elections - Candidate withdrawal and death of candidates

- 11.1 A candidate can withdraw from an election by submitting a notice of withdrawal. This must be delivered to the Governance Team no later than 4 days after the publication of the candidates' details. It is not possible to withdraw from an election after this date.
- 11.2 If a candidate is outside the UK, it is acceptable for their nominator to submit a notice of withdrawal on their behalf. However, the nominator must also submit a written declaration to the effect that the candidate is outside the UK.
- 11.3 If a candidate withdraws, the election proceeds with the remaining candidates.
- 11.4 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 before the results have been announced. The election will be restarted, and those candidates already deemed eligible will not be required to submit fresh nominations.
- 11.5 If an elected candidate decides not to take up office within 4 weeks of being elected and provided the election is not governed by trade union legislation, the runner up in the election may be elected in their place. If neither the elected candidate, nor the runner up, takes up office within 4 weeks of the results of the election, then the election will be re-run.

12. Uncontested elections

12.1 If an election is uncontested (i.e. the number of candidates is equal to or fewer than the number of vacancies) the candidates' election statements will be posted on the website. The candidates shall be declared elected unopposed no more than seven days later.

13. Voting at elections

13.1 The primary voting system used in RCN in elections is first-past-the-post unless otherwise specified in the election procedure – for example, the country and regional Boards have the option to use a system where constraint is applied after votes are cast, and the Agenda Committee uses single transferable votes (STV).

13.2 As stated above all elections governed by trade union law will be conducted by secret postal vote, but electronic voting will be the default mechanism for all other elections, with the exception of the Agenda Committee.

13.3 When an election is conducted by postal vote a ballot paper will be sent to each member eligible to vote. That ballot paper will include:

- The name of the Independent Scrutineer and Returning Officer
- A unique consecutive serial number
- Details of the names of those nominating the candidates.
- The election address 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 instructions on how to vote if an alternative voting method is being used.
- A freepost return envelope.

13.4 When an election is conducted by electronic vote an email containing a link to a voting website, or in some elections a downloadable ballot paper, will be sent to all those eligible to vote along with the relevant candidate election addresses. Elections which occur by postal vote are only for those governed by trade union law (see paragraph 4.1).

13.5 If a voter has lost, not received, or spoilt their ballot paper in such a way that it can no longer be used as a ballot paper, or they have not received the email with the voting link, they can apply to the Returning Officer for a replacement paper or email as appropriate. The Returning Officer will only supply a replacement paper or email if it can be shown, to the satisfaction of the Returning Officer, that the paper was lost, not received, or spoilt unintentionally, or the email was not

received, 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.

13.6 To be eligible to vote, a voter must:

- Be an RCN member.
- Have their workplace, or other notified address, (or, in the case of retired and student members, their branch) in the relevant area for the election, if it is a geographical constituency. If a member has no permanent workplace address e.g. they are agency staff, their home address will apply.
- Meet any further eligibility criteria for the specific election.

13.7 If a person applies for a ballot paper, or other means of voting, and a member declares to the Returning Officer that they have reasonable cause to believe that the person is not entitled to vote, the Returning Officer may, at their discretion take such action as to disqualify that person from voting as they may deem necessary.

13.8 Where an election is being voted on by representative members on behalf of an entity (such as in the Agenda Committee elections), then the selected voting members must, as far as is reasonably practicable, canvas the opinion of the members of that entity, including fellow committee members, before deciding how to cast their vote.

14. Elections - Counting and validity of votes

14.1 The Returning Officer is responsible for collecting all 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. See S6.3 & 6.4 for more information on returning officers for RCN elections.

14.2 Counting should take place as soon as possible after the close of the voting. The Returning Officer shall then be responsible for opening each envelope (if used); verifying each ballot paper or voting record; and counting all ballot papers or voting records.

14.3 Ballot papers or voting records should be verified before being counted. Verification will involve checking:

- The ballot paper is original and not a copy.
- The unique identification number (if used).
- The declaration of identity form (if used).
- The appropriate verification procedures for voting by methods other than postal voting.

- The total number of ballot papers or voting records received. This must be recorded and compared with the numbers issued and numbers eligible to vote.

14.4 The Returning Officer shall record the verification process and shall make a statement as to the results, and all candidates shall be entitled to a copy of that statement. Candidates will also be entitled to receive a copy of the Independent Scrutineer's report if a scrutineer's services were used in the election.

14.5 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.

14.6 Only the Returning Officer has a right to be present at the counting of the votes unless the Returning Officer has granted permission for someone 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.

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

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

- It is not received by the 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 e.g. the voter has voted for more than one candidate, the mark or marks are not clearly placed by a candidate's name or the voting paper is blank.

14.9 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.

14.10 A ballot 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 the member has not used all their votes.

15. Elections - Results and tied votes

15.1 If there is a tie between candidates the election will be re-run with the candidates who achieved the same votes). If a tie is still the outcome, the Returning Officer will facilitate the drawing of lots to decide the election

15.2 The Returning Officer is responsible for ensuring the results of an election are announced. If an election is uncontested (i.e. the number of candidates is equal to or fewer than the number of vacancies) a statement of the candidates will be posted on the RCN 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.

15.3 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.

15.4 Members will be notified of the results on the RCN website following the election. In addition, the results shall be available to all members, on request.

15.5 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.

16. Elections during organisational change

16.1 Where there is a transition during a period of organisational change (for example, if dates or timings of elections have been altered by RCN Council, or if geographical boundaries are changing) terms of office may be extended or reduced accordingly.

16.2 Where a constituency is merged with another, a member who has served on a committee shall have their previous terms of office included should they put themselves forward as a candidate in the new constituency.

17. Election complaints

17.1 There may be occasions when voters, candidates and their supporters believe they have grounds to complain about the conduct of candidates (or their

supporters) or the management of the electoral process if these appear to be inappropriate, unacceptable or undermining the fair democratic process. The following procedure should be used for making formal complaints about these matters.

Definition of a complaint

17.2 A legitimate complaint can be made:

- if it appears that any of the provisions of this policy and or the specific election procedures for an individual election have been contravened
- In relation to the conduct and behaviour of candidates (and/or their supporters/campaign teams)
- In relation to the content of campaign materials/statements etc
- about the actual election process itself and how it has been conducted if it has led to a compromise of democratic procedure or unfair advantage/disadvantage.

17.3 Informal queries about the election process can be addressed to elections@rcn.org.uk.

17.4 A complaint made in good faith, but which is judged as outside the remit of the complaints process may be referred to another internal RCN Group process such as the staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or the Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy. This may also be the outcome if the complaint relates to matters pre-dating the election process.

Complaints Process

17.5 Formal complaints may only be submitted using the Elections Complaint Form ([see Appendix B](#)), stating clearly the reasons for the complaint as in paragraph 17.2 Complaints submitted by other means (such as email) and/or anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

17.6 Supporting evidence should be submitted with the Complaints Form; it will be requested if not already provided. Note that there may be requests for additional evidence if this is deemed necessary, depending on the nature of the complaint. Evidence can include (but is not limited to) details of any witness(es) and/or witness statements, video recordings, photographs, computer screen shots, email copies. Relevant details of dates and times are vital – where screenshots are used as evidence, date and time stamps should be included to show the screen shot was taken at the pertinent time. If a complaint is submitted without supporting evidence, it is likely to be dismissed.

17.7 The completed form and supporting evidence must be formally submitted to the Returning Officer during the election or no later than five working days of the declaration of the election result.

17.8 The Returning Officer will investigate any material (those that are more than minor or vexatious) complaints raised against candidates during elections and will adopt the following procedure.

- Inform the candidate in writing that a complaint has been raised against them within 2 working days of receipt of a complaint.
- Obtain evidence from the complainant and any other sources in relation to the complaint within 5 working days.
- Arrange a meeting with the candidate to discuss the complaint within 7 working days.
- The Returning Officer will decide to reject or uphold the complaint and will inform the candidate in person and confirm the decision in writing.

Complaints outcome

17.9 The following possible outcomes may result from the investigation:

- There has been no breach of the Election Policy and therefore no further action will be taken. (Any aspects of the complaint unrelated to the election process and which require further investigation may be referred on to other RCN internal processes).
- There is insufficient evidence of breach of policy and therefore no further action will be taken.
- There is evidence that the election policy has been breached, and the complaint is upheld.

Actions following outcome of complaints

17.10 Following the outcome of the complaint investigation, where evidence of breach of policy is found, and depending on whether the complaint and investigation take place during the election, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

- A first warning and or a final warning issued to one or more candidates
- Disqualification of a candidate or candidates. Disqualification should only be used in the most serious of cases that involve a clear breach of election rules.
- If the outcome of the election has been declared, it may be declared void and a fresh ballot held
- Such other remedial measures as are considered appropriate by the Returning Officer or their designated alternate

Appeals

17.11 If the Returning Officer decides the sanction of disqualification will apply, and if the candidate wishes to appeal that decision, the following procedure will be adopted.

- The Returning Officer will compile an investigation report outlining the detail of the complaint and including all the evidence.
- The candidate will be provided with the report and invited to a disqualification appeal hearing at which they are entitled to be represented by a colleague or Trade Union official.
- The hearing will be heard by an external independent panel appointed by the RCN within 14 working days of the date of disqualification.
- At the hearing, the Returning Officer and candidate will present their evidence to the panel and the panel will confirm whether the disqualification is upheld, and the outcome will be confirmed in writing.
- There will be no further right of appeal against this decision.
- If the disqualification is overturned, the election will be re-run.

Vexatious complaints

17.14 If an investigation concludes that malicious, vexatious, or deliberately false complaints/allegations have been made, RCN formal disciplinary processes may be invoked. A proven malicious, vexatious, or false complaint from a candidate (or their support/campaign team) will be treated as a breach of election conduct.

18. Elections - Campaigning guidance and rules

18.1 For the purposes of an election campaign, candidates and their supporters will not have access to RCN resources. However, the RCN will provide equal support for candidates as outlined in the campaign guidance and rules as set out below.

18.2 Candidates will be provided with a campaign pack which will provide help and advice on campaigning. During the campaigning period, all candidates must adhere to this guidance set out in the campaign pack.

18.3 If candidates are unsure whether they can or can't do something, they should email elections@rcn.org.uk.

19. Conduct and behaviour while campaigning

19.1 Candidates will be held responsible for the tone and conduct of their campaigns. Candidates must treat other candidates, and voting members, with respect. Campaigns must not include negative references to other candidates and should focus positively on promoting their own candidacy. Beyond permitted campaign activity there should be no pressure exerted on members to vote, nor any attempt made to record votes or check who members are voting for.

19.2 All campaigning must align with the fair and democratic running of the election. Candidates must not act in any way to gain an unfair advantage.

19.3 RCN elections are conducted in line with the provisions of the RCN Code of Conduct and the Respect Charter and candidates must ensure their campaign reflects the values encapsulated within them.

20. Appointments process and management

20.1 Responsibility for the appointments process

The Executive Director of Governance is the responsible officer for all appointments, working with colleagues across the organisation as appropriate. It is their role to apply and interpret these procedures, and all other applicable procedures.

The Executive Director of Governance is accountable:

- a) to the Forum Coordinating Committee (FCC) for the appointment of forum steering committee members.
- b) to Council for the appointment of external advisers. The RCN engage recruitment agencies to manage these appointments.
- c) to the Board for the appointment of country and regional board members where less than half the term of office remains.
- d) to Council for the appointment of members to the RCN International Committee and the RCN Group Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee.
- e) to the substantive committee for the appointment of any other positions on committees where less than half the term of office remains.

20.2 Administration of the appointment process

Staff in the Governance team will organise appointments collaboratively with Chairs of committees and colleagues in other RCN departments as appropriate. Below is a list (not an exhaustive list) of the support offered.

- **Forums/committees:** the Governance team will work with colleagues in the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence.
- **Country and regional boards:** the Governance team will work with the Country/Regional Directors and Board Administrators.
- **External advisers:** the Governance team will work with the staff leads in the relevant RCN departments.

20.3 Key stages of the appointment process

Each appointment process will comprise of the following stages described below with recommended timelines. However, circumstances may vary, and an exact timeline should be agreed by the Executive Director of Governance or a designated member of their team, and key stakeholders in advance.

Key responsibilities are also outlined.

Stage	Timeline	Responsibility
Planning the appointment process	≥ 1 month in advance of any activity	The Executive Director of Governance delegates as appropriate and assigns a lead staff member in the Governance team. The Lead liaises with colleagues in the relevant department/board to agree specific roles and responsibilities.
Appointment advertised in relevant media (internal and/or external) including the interview date.	All appointments advertised for a period of two weeks as standard. It can be extended but no longer than five weeks.	Member Engagement Officer (Governance team) liaises with lead staff member as appropriate
Convening the appointment panel (including agreeing who will chair the panel)	The composition of the appointment panel should be agreed at least two weeks before the closing date for applications.	Member Engagement Officer (Governance team) liaises with the Executive Director of Governance and the lead staff member as appropriate
Shortlisting (Appendix D).	Shortlisting will be completed by the appointment panel chair and at least one other member of the panel within 2 weeks after the closing date for applications.	Lead staff member will ensure this is done and the template (Appendix C) completed.
Interview dates	Interview dates will take place within six weeks of the closing date for applications.	Lead staff member and/or Governance team will ensure interview dates are set liaising with the appointment panel. If a candidate cannot make an interview date, a subsequent date within the next week can be offered if feasible. There is no obligation to offer an alternative date, and the appointment should not be held up because of

		<p>a candidate being unable to make the publicised date.</p> <p>If the RCN panel is unable to hold an interview on an agreed date, a subsequent date will be offered. This is the responsibility of the Executive Director of Governance who will delegate as appropriate.</p>
Notification of outcome of interview	Candidates will be notified within 2 working days of the outcome of their interview.	Chair of the Panel to call successful and unsuccessful candidates. Lead staff member or a Governance team member will ensure all candidates receive acceptance or rejection letters of confirmation.

20.4 Assessing candidates for appointments

Eligibility criteria for those applying for vacancies will be set out in the procedures for each appointment process.

Candidates will be assessed against criteria developed from the role descriptor. These criteria will be agreed in advance by the lead staff member, colleagues in relevant departments, and signed off by the accountable members (e.g. Chair of Council, Chair of Board, Forums Coordinating Committee). The criteria will be used for assessing candidates at the shortlisting and interview stages. The regulation for RCN Council, Board and Committee Members - Fit and Proper Persons Criteria and RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations must also be considered.

All candidates are required to complete an application form or provide a statement of how they meet the requirements of the role in the form of an expression of interest. Where an application form (Appendix C) is used, the questions are designed to encourage candidates to demonstrate how they meet the assessment criteria.

Completed forms will be used to shortlist interview candidates. All shortlisted candidates will be interviewed, even if only one person is shortlisted.

Interview questions will also be based on the assessment criteria. At interview, all candidates should be asked the same core questions. However, different supplementary questions may be asked to probe for further detail and clarification. Appointment panel members should hand in their Assessment Score Sheet (Appendix E) to the Governance team member following the interviews to safeguard confidentiality.

20.5 Appointment panel

The appointment panel will consist of a minimum of three people and a maximum of five including:

- a) at least one person (excluding staff) who is a member of the RCN - ideally the chair or other member of the committee/board, or other member with relevant expertise or interest.
- b) one person independent of the appointing committee or board
- c) a staff member with relevant expertise or interest – e.g. professional lead, executive team member or country or regional director.

Responsibilities of the appointment panel members during the interview.

Note: all members of the panel can ask questions of the candidate.

Panel chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lead the interview process and ensure timing and focus.• introduce the panellists and explain their different roles in the process.• explain the role of the committee/board and how it works.• explain the interview process – questions from each of the members of the panel followed by an opportunity for the candidate to ask any questions.• start the interview.• sum up and let the candidate know when they will hear the outcome of the interview.• inform the candidates verbally of the outcome.
Member and lead staff panel members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• support the panel chair.• provide relevant expertise.• suggest and ask relevant interview questions, make judgements of the responses based on criteria.
Independent participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide an independent, objective assessment.• investigate any complaints –satisfy themselves candidates are treated fairly and in accordance with the RCN respect charter.
Governance team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• answer any questions on governance or interview process• ensure the administration of the interviews are carried out effectively, including drafting letters to inform the candidates of the outcome of the interview.• ensure any reasonable adjustments are accommodated.• support interview panel on day(s) of interviews.• provide the administration and support to the independent complaints investigator.• ensure follow-up work is completed (recording of terms of office, amending records on the case management system (CRM)

20.6 Notification of the outcome of the interview

For RCN member appointments, the Appointment panel chair should contact each candidate to inform them of the outcome.

For external adviser appointments to an RCN committee, the governance lead will inform the recruitment agency. The agency will inform the candidates of the outcome.

These will be supported by a letter, sent within two working days of the interview, produced by the Governance team member that will include:

- a) Whether the candidate was successful or unsuccessful
- b) When the successful candidate's term of office starts and concludes
- c) Details of forthcoming meetings and staff contacts for successful candidates as well as information about the induction process
- d) Details about other relevant opportunities, if appropriate, for unsuccessful candidates
- e) A thank you for taking the time to attend and be interviewed

20.7 Post Interviews

For external adviser appointments Council is notified that appointment has been made.

The Governance team member will be responsible for updating relevant membership records and committee information on the RCN CRM). Also, liaising with and informing colleagues as appropriate.

They will also work with colleagues to ensure that induction material and meetings are provided to the successful candidates.

Process for filling casual vacancies to roles on RCN Council, boards and committees.

21.1 Introduction

Casual vacancies arise when a member leaves an elected or appointed role before the end of their term of office. This document specifies the process for filling casual vacancies on RCN Council, boards, and committees.

The definition of whether a role on RCN Council becomes vacant is set out in Rule 1 in the Schedule of Rules which is appended to the RCN's Royal Charter. The principles in this Rule will also be applied to determine whether a vacancy has arisen on a committee or board.

All casual vacancies will be filled for the duration of the scheduled term of office and will not extend beyond that.

21.2 Reasons for casual vacancies occurring.

A casual vacancy occurs when a Council, board or committee member:

- a) as set out in Rule 1 of the RCN's royal Charter (Council members)
- b) resigns
- c) dies
- d) becomes disqualified (see 2.2 below)
- e) fails to make a declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time.
- f) fails to attend three consecutive meetings (excluding special ad hoc meetings) - does not include Council members.

21.3 Disqualification

Disqualification occurs from not meeting any of the eligibility criteria in the election or appointment procedures. Below is an indication of when disqualification may occur as a guide.

- a) a member being subject to conflict of interest issues (e.g. if a declaration of such leads to a formal finding that prevents membership of the relevant body).
- b) sanctions arising from disciplinary or other process such as the Member Resolution policy and process or as set out on the Terms of Reference for committees and groups.
- c) a member being found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices.
- d) A member of Council who fails to attend four consecutive meetings of the Council in any period in which six consecutive meetings are held. In the case of illness, the Council may in its discretion allow that Council Member to continue in office.
- e) A member of a board or committee who fails to attend three consecutive meetings (excluding special ad hoc meetings)

21.4 Process for filling a casual vacancy on Council.

Filling a vacant role on RCN Council is provided for in the RCN's Standing Orders. In line with trade union legislation (s.46 Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), all vacancies on Council are filled by election irrespective of when the term of office concludes.

The election process is set out in the RCN's Elections policy and process which forms part of the regulations. The election will follow the timeline and stages in that guide.

The vacancy will be taken as effective from the date of receipt of the relevant member's resignation, or confirmation of the member's disqualification. If it is determined that the vacancy occurs at such a time to make the election and subsequent term of office impractical then a decision may be made to defer that election until the next scheduled elections for that office. This decision will be made by the Chair of Council in consultation with the Executive Director of Governance.

As a guide, however, where the election timeline enables an elected office to take up the role for six months or more, an election will be held.

21.5 Process for filling a casual vacancy on boards and committees.

The process for filling casual vacancies on RCN boards and all other committees is as follows:

For an elected role, where the full term of office is four years:

- an election will be held if the duration of the remaining term of office is more than two years. The election will be held following the timeline and processes set out in the RCN Elections policy and process. (link to be added)
- If the duration of the term of office is less than two years, the role may be filled by appointment in line with the RCN policy and process for appointments.

As a guide, however, where the appointment timeline enables the role to be taken up for six months or more, an appointments process will be held. The decision will be taken by the Chair of the board or committee in consultation with the Executive Director of Governance.

21.6 Exception

If it is determined that the vacancy occurs at such a time to make the election or appointment and subsequent term of office impractical, then a decision may be made to defer that election or appointment until the next schedule of elections and/or appointments.

The decision will be made by the chair of the board or committee (including forums) in consultation with the Executive Director of Governance and, in the case of country and regional boards, the Country or Regional Director.

Appendix A

Election Complaint Form

This form should be used to make a formal complaint regarding the process of an election and/or the conduct of candidates, the content of election campaigns or the conduct any other person(s) associated with the election process.

NOTE: By completing and submitting this form you are stating your belief that the actions described are in breach of the RCN Election Policy and Process and therefore compromise the fair democratic process of the relevant election.

SECTION 1: General details

WHICH ELECTION IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS COMPLAINT?		
YOUR DETAILS	Name:	
	Telephone:	
	Email:	
ARE YOU A CANDIDATE? Click in appropriate box	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

SECTION 2: Complaint details

DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT	
SPECIFIC LOCATION	
CATEGORY (click on all that apply)	

- Conduct of person(s)**
- Conduct of election process/count**
- Other (please state)**

DESCRIPTION: Please state below as much detail of the incident as possible including the name(s) and title(s) of person(s) against whom this complaint is being made, and anyone else directly involved, and also known witnesses. If the latter are not known please describe in general terms – e.g. approximate number of bystanders, any other potentially helpful details/circumstances.

For complaints about election process, give as much detail as possible about what specifically happened to indicate procedural irregularities.

You must specify which part of the RCN Elections Policy and Process you believe to have been contravened.

SECTION 3: Description of supporting evidence

Describe below the evidence you are presenting in support of your complaint

Click the appropriate box below to confirm whether the evidence described above is attached/uploaded with this completed form

Yes the above evidence is submitted with this form

No, not all the above evidence is submitted with this form (*If this is the case you must explain below why and indicate when any outstanding evidence will be provided*)

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information I have provided above is true and accurate

Signed:

Date:

Appendix C

Information on appointments and application form

1. Introduction

Applications are being accepted to **[insert name of committee/board]**

Please read the information below and complete the application form by **[insert closing date for applications]**

2. Who can apply?

Candidates have to **[insert criteria for membership of the committee/board]:**

3. Term of office

Unless otherwise stated, the term of office is **[insert number of years]**.

4. How does the appointments process work?

The appointments process has been designed in consultation with members to be professional, fair and supportive – the focus is on the skills and qualities that you can bring to the **[insert name of committee/board]** and the RCN.

The appointments process has five stages:

- 1) Applications – **[insert dates]**
- 2) Short-listing – **[insert dates]**
- 3) Interviews – **[insert dates]**
- 4) Notification of outcome to candidates. **[insert dates]**
- 5) Candidate takes up office and induction commence. **[insert dates]**

5. Further information

For more information on the **[insert name of committee/board]** please **[insert web address or contact details]**

6. Equal opportunities

The RCN is committed to supporting equality and inclusion. If you need help with completing this form or would prefer it in a different format, please email governance.support@rcn.org.uk or telephone 020 7647 3553

7. Submitting your application

Please return your application form by **[insert closing date]** to **[insert name/address/email address]**

Receipt of forms will be acknowledged within seven days - if you do not receive an acknowledgement after that time, please telephone **[insert number]**

Application form

RCN [insert name of committee/board]

Part One - your details

Title _____

First name(s) _____

Last name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

RCN membership number _____

Year of joining the RCN _____

Home phone no _____

Mobile phone no _____

Email address _____

Part two - interview date

Please confirm you can attend the interview date for this committee [insert interview date]

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

Part three: candidate statement

Please write a statement of **no more than 250 words** that demonstrates how your qualities and experience will help you fulfil your role as a member of [insert name of committee/board].

Please note that your statement should not be longer than 250 words.

--

Part four: tell us more about yourself.

Please summarise your education or career history, any involvement you have had with the RCN and any other relevant experience or achievements – please expand the tables below if necessary.

Professional career

Dates (years)	Position	Main achievements

RCN involvement

Dates (years)	Position	Main achievements

Other relevant experience

--

You may also send your CV with this application form.

Part five: where did you hear about this opportunity?

Please mark all those relevant:

Activate magazine		RCN email	
Bulletin magazine		RCN website	
RCN event or conference		RCN member	
Facebook		RCN staff member	
Twitter			
Other (please explain):			

Acceptance and declaration

In signing this form, I declare that I am **[insert eligibility criteria as specified in section 3]**:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To submit your application please save the form and email it to **[insert email address]**

Alternatively, you can post it to **[insert postal address]**:

You can also complete the form online by visiting www.rcn.org.uk/applications

We will acknowledge all applications by email within seven days. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact us at governance.support@rcn.org.uk

All forms must be received no later than **[insert closing date]**

Appendix D

Appointments Short-listing template [insert name of committee/board]

Candidate name - [insert]

***Criteria for selection should include whether they meet the criteria for membership of the committee as well as relevant experience, skills, knowledge and competencies**

Appendix E

Appointments Assessment Score Sheet [insert name of committee/board]

Applicant: _____ Interview
Date: [insert date]

Panel Member: _____

Procedure

- Chair to welcome the applicant and introduce the panel members. Ensure the candidate is comfortable and ready to begin.
- Chair to explain that the panel will spend approximately [insert expected duration length] with the candidate and that the interview format will be the same for each candidate.
- Chair to explain that at the end of the interview, candidate will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
- If the panel deviate from the written questions below, they should document any additional points or questions they raise.

	Question	Looking for [insert criteria]	Candidate's response / Notes
1	e.g. Could you start by spending around five minutes telling us what made you decide to put your name forward?		1 2 3 4 5

5 = Outstanding 4 = Good 3 = Fair 2 = Poor 1 = Very Poor

	Question	Looking for [insert criteria]	Candidate's response / Notes
1		•	

			1	2	3	4	5
1		•					

5 = Outstanding

4 = Good

3 = Fair

2 = Poor

1 = Very Poor

	Question	Looking for	Candidate's response / Notes				
4		•					
5		•					

5 = Outstanding

4 = Good

3 = Fair

2 = Poor

1 = Very Poor

	Question	Looking for	Candidate's response / Notes				
6		•					
	Are there any questions the candidate would like to ask?						

5 = Outstanding

4 = Good

3 = Fair

2 = Poor

1 = Very Poor

Additional questions / comments

Does the candidate wish to report any conflicts of interest? (please circle)

Yes No



Candidate to be recommended for appointment? (please circle)

Yes No

Total score given to candidate _____ / 30.

Feedback agreed to be included in letter to unsuccessful candidate.