

<p>Document name Temporary period of absence requested by elected and appointed unpaid office holders</p>
<p>Who does this policy apply to? All accredited representatives or elected and appointed members to Council, Board or Committees who wish to request temporary period of absence.</p>
<p>Purpose This policy supports members by describing when a temporary period of absence may be requested and it sets out the process for making the request.</p>
<p>Description of the policy This policy and process sets out the process to be followed to be compliant with the RCN regulation that relates to an accredited representative or member elected or appointed to Council, or Board committee who wants to stand down for a temporary period.</p>
<p>Author/s Governance Policy and Projects Officer</p>
<p>Cross Reference Regulation for when an accredited representative or member elected or appointed to RCN Council, Board or a committee requests to take a temporary period of absence Regulation for Terms of Office RCN Royal Charter RCN Standing Orders RCN elections policy and processes RCN appointments policy and process</p>
<p>Status: Light touch review to clarify under what circumstances a request can be made and further clarification on the processes - completed August 2024.</p> <p>Circulated for comment and/or amendments to: Governance Engagement and Projects Manager – Matt Beavan Member Engagement and Projects Officer – Luke Dixon Performance, Risk and Assurance manager – Maxine Nunn Governance Secretariat manager – Jenny Nicholas Executive Director of Governance – Natalie Zara</p>
<p>Policy owner: RCN Governance Team</p>
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Policy and process for accredited, elected and appointed members requesting temporary period of absence.	Light touch review - clarification on under what circumstances a request can be made and further clarification on the processes.	October 2024 – V3

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Temporary period of absence requested by elected and appointed unpaid office holders

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the process to be followed to be compliant with the RCN regulation that relates to an accredited representative or member elected or appointed to Council, or Board or committee, requests to take a temporary period of absence.

This policy and process must be read in conjunction with the Regulation ([temporary period of absence](#)).

It applies when an accredited representative or a member of Council, a board, or a committee:

- 1.1 asks to stand down temporarily from an RCN role in a situation where, they are not able to work in their regular employment.
- 1.2 is not able to work in their regular employment, but it is both appropriate and important for them to continue to carry out their RCN role(s). In these circumstances, please refer to [S5.2](#).

2. Standing down for a temporary period

- 2.1 A member who is not able to work in their regular employment or would like to stand down temporarily from an RCN role, should contact the staff lead as listed in the table below.

MEMBER	Member and Staff Lead
Accredited Representative or Country/Regional Board member	Board Chair and Country/Regional Director
Branch committee member	Board Chair and Country/Regional Director
Forum Steering Committee Chair or Member	Chair of Forum and Wendy Preston – Head of Nursing Practice
Council	Chair of Council and Executive Director of Governance
Other committees	Committee Chair and Governance Adviser to that committee

- 2.2 A member who holds an office and applies for an RCN fixed term staff role, should declare any member roles they hold on their application form. If successful, that member should notify the Chair and Secretary immediately in writing by email about their intention to stand down temporarily.
- 2.3 On receipt of a notification from a member intending to stand down temporarily, the responsible person will liaise with the rest of the membership and act in accordance with the RCN Regulation (section 2 and 3). If the length of the period of absence cannot be determined at the outset, a date for a review discussion should be agreed.
- 2.4 The member standing down temporarily will receive a letter from the Chair or Secretary to Council, Committee or Board confirming the length of the period of absence agreed. Relevant staff members listed on the table above should be included in the email.

3. Cover for the absence.

- 3.1 In the case of a Council Member it is not possible to arrange for someone else to cover the role as Council members need to be elected. However, the Chair of Council could invite another member from that constituency's Board (country/regional seats) or representative committee (student, nursing support worker) to attend Council in their absence in a non-voting capacity. The member invited should be either the Board Chair or Vice Chair (country/regional seats) or Chair or Vice Chair (representative committees).
- 3.2 In the case of country and regional boards and other committees a member may be appointed temporarily to the role. The process for such an appointment would follow the RCN's policy and process on appointments for board and committee roles.

4. Extension of the agreed temporary period of absence

- 4.1 Should a member wish to ask for their absence to be extended for any reason, the request should be made in writing by email, no later than a month before the extended period expire.
- 4.2 The Chair should initiate a discussion with the member and the temporary officer within a week to determine and agree the length of the extension in accordance with the RCN Regulation (section 3 LINK), and to establish if the temporary officer is willing to continue in office.
- 4.3 Should the temporary officer not be willing to continue in office or the outcome of the meeting requires someone else to take up the temporary role, the process as stated in section 3 above, should be followed to cover for the extended absence.
- 4.4 The Chair or Secretary or appointed member by the Chair, will notify all parties involved about the outcome and next steps in writing, by email.

5. Continuing in your RCN role while off work.

- 5.1 Members who are signed-off from work are asked to notify the RCN through the relevant responsible people listed in the [table above](#) by email, as soon as that happens to make sure they do not jeopardise their employment situation.
- 5.2 If they wish to continue in their RCN role during this time, they should provide their employer with a letter from their GP or other relevant health professional confirming that it is appropriate for them to continue in their RCN role. Their employer in turn, should write to the RCN through the relevant responsible people listed above, confirming that they are happy for the member to do so.

Approved by Governance Committee 05 September 2024

Approved by RCN Council 31 October 2024

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