

RCN branch committee – Terms of Reference

1. Role and purpose of the committee. The branch committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the priorities and activities determined by RCN Council through its country or regional boards are carried out through the branch.
- Liaising with and communicating with members in the branch, through branch meetings and other methods, to find out their views, ideas and concerns and ensuring they are raised with the country or regional board through agreed consultation and reporting processes.
- Working with the country or regional board to ensure the RCN works in partnership with employers, educational institutions, and other local stakeholders.
- Recruiting and retaining members.
- Promoting the role of accredited representatives and accrediting and disaccrediting them in line with the process agreed by Council.
- Ensuring the branch is represented and votes at RCN Congress.
- Ensuring that branch members attend and participate in the RCN's general meetings.
- Championing the RCN and promoting the advancement of nursing itself.
- Holding events, meetings and other activities to promote learning and development as well as communicating and networking.
- Co-ordinating collective branch action on any matter affecting the interests of nurses and the nursing profession in line with RCN policy and the regulation for RCN Members on Industrial Action.
- Signposting members to RCN benefits and services.
- Members are to be active in promoting and participating in the RCN elections and appointments process. This may include nominating themselves for RCN roles and/or supporting nominees.
- To submit proposed agenda items for Congress ensuring that branch members have an opportunity to contribute to and develop proposed agenda items.

2 Membership and officers of the committee

The branch committee will be made up of between three and six members. The branch should elect a chair, secretary and treasurer and up to three other members. The other three committee members could be elected as a committee member or into a specific role such as public relations officer, marketing and recruitment officer, Honorary President, or workplace “link” officer/s – it is up to the branch to decide what works best for them.

All members of the committee may sign documentation on behalf of the branch, for example, to support election nominations or Congress agenda submissions.

Members of the committee must be in current membership of the RCN. They can be in any membership category paying full or discounted payment plans.

There is no qualifying RCN membership period.

If the committee is unable to elect a chair, secretary or treasurer then, as a last resort, the branch may wish to consider one of the following arrangements for an agreed temporary period:

- Committee members may wish to take on the vacant role for short periods of time in rotation.
- Members may wish to take on more than one role (e.g. Chair and Secretary) – noting that where there is a requirement for two or more committee members to sign on behalf of the branch, they must ensure that requirement is still followed.

3 Elections to the committee

The committee is elected annually at the AGM under the guidance of a returning officer. The procedure for the elections is set out in the [Election policy and process for branch committee members](#).

4 Terms of office

Branch committee members are elected annually. However, there is a maximum term of office of eight consecutive years in total on the committee. Following which there must be a two year break before a member can rejoin up to a maximum of another four years. No more than 12 years can be served in total.

In exceptional circumstances the Board to which the Branch Committee is accountable to, may allow an additional time, up to one year for a committee member to remain in post. The Board's decision will be made on a simple majority.

5 Mid-term (casual) vacancies

If a vacancy occurs mid-term expressions of interest should be sought from amongst the branch membership. If more than one member is interested in putting themselves forward then an election can be held at either the next branch meeting or by email ballot - for more information, access [the Election policy and process for branch committee members](#)

6 Meetings of the branch committee, making decisions and ways of working

Meetings of the branch committee shall take place a minimum of twice a year and can be held in person or virtual or a combination of both (hybrid).

Meetings should be planned in advance of a calendar year. However, ad hoc meetings can also be called if all the committee members agree about when and where the meeting should be held.

The committee may also make decisions on behalf of the branch electronically by email or through an online platform or other ways of working as agreed between committee members.

The quorum for each meeting shall be half the branch committee or, if an odd number, rounded up (i.e. if there are only three people on the committee then you need two to be quorate). If the committee makes decisions in the ways described in the paragraph above, they must ensure a quorum is also achieved.

All decisions require a majority of those voting to be passed. The Chair has the casting vote in instances where there is an equality of votes.

Another member of the committee may chair a meeting in the absence of the chair.

Example: - a branch committee of six starts an email communication between themselves to discuss and agree plans for a forthcoming branch professional development event. Two of the committee are on holiday so cannot take part in the discussion. However, the remaining four form a “quorum” and so can make the decisions required as long as at least three of them agree to any proposal.

7 Removal from the branch committee

A branch committee member may be removed before the end of their term of office on the grounds that such a member of the branch has:

- a) exceeded their powers in a way that is detrimental to the RCN.
- b) failed to discharge their duties.
- c) acted in breach of the [RCN's Respect Charter](#).
- d) acted in a manner likely to bring the RCN into disrepute.

The policies and processes laid down by RCN Council in relation to disciplinary and competence matters will be followed in such circumstances. They are available [here](#). (Advice must be sought from the RCN country or regional office before action is taken).

8. Branch unable to elect a committee

If a branch is unable to elect a committee, then the relevant Board should make temporary arrangements with their country/regional officers to maintain the branch for up to six months. Following that steps will be taken to close the branch in line with the provisions in the Regulation for branches.

9. Reporting to Country / Regional Board

Branch committees are required to submit reports to their Board, including financial spend reporting.

Approved by RCN Council Date: 3 December 2015.

Amended June 2021.

Light-touch review to update factual inaccuracies, August 2024.

Full review of this document will commence Autumn 2024.

Linked documents [RCN governance documents](#) |
[Royal College of Nursing](#)

1. Regulation on Branches
2. RCN code of conduct
3. RCN Respect charter
4. Election policy and processes for branch committee members
5. Branch meetings guidance