

## Election policy and process for branch committee members

This process must be used to recruit your committee members. The steps described below may be equally applied to face-to-face as well as virtual and/or hybrid (online and face-to-face) meetings. Online voting and electronic communications are acceptable. You cannot “co-opt” members on the committee.

1. First steps
  - 1.1 The [Branch Committee’s terms of reference](#) set out that the committee should be elected annually at the branch AGM.
  - 1.2 In the run-up to your branch AGM, you should contact your country or regional office to confirm who your Returning Officer will be. It would normally be a member of staff from the office, for example the Officer linked to the branch. They will be responsible for overseeing the election process as set out in this procedure.
  - 1.3 In the run-up to your branch AGM you should advertise your committee vacancies (including the specific committee roles, e.g. chair, secretary, treasurer) when you advertise the AGM itself. Role descriptors are available [here](#).
  - 1.4 Candidates who wish to put themselves forward should let the country/regional office know in advance of the AGM.
  - 1.5 In advance of the AGM the country/regional office will check with the candidates whether they have any potential conflicts of interest to declare. You can access the RCN’s Conflicts of Interests / Gifts and Hospitality policy for RCN role holders [here](#).

Conflicts of interest might include:

- holding another role in the RCN – for example, if they are a member of Council or the Board.
- holding a role in another organisation, for example another trade union.
- was recently a member of RCN staff.

In most cases such a conflict can be dealt with by a declaration of that interest. So, for example, if a Council member is also a branch committee member and Council is consulting with branches on a particular matter, then the member should be clear about what “hat” they are wearing, or it might be appropriate for them not to participate in the branch discussion on the consultation. Related RCN policies are available [here](#).

- 2 The importance of succession planning
  - 2.1 It is also important to keep an eye out for those who would be a good committee member and encourage them to put themselves forward. Face to face conversation is often the best way to encourage members to become involved.
  - 2.2 At the same time, though, be careful not to exclude others. The RCN is a very diverse organisation and seeks to be inclusive in its approach to everything.
- 3 At the AGM itself
  - 3.1 You should ensure that the AGM agenda has an item called “Committee Election”. When that item is reached the names of the successful candidates, if there is only one candidate for each role, should be read out, or an announcement made about the arrangements for the vote.
  - 3.2 If there is a vote each candidate will be invited to make a short statement of why they think they are the right person to fulfil the role. The vote will then take place by secret ballot. A ballot paper will be distributed, see [Appendix A](#). Members will place their completed paper in a ballot box. The candidates with the highest numbers of votes would be elected. Rather than hold up the meeting the votes could be counted whilst the meeting carries on as announced at the end.
  - 3.3 Note - all branch members taking part in the AGM are eligible to vote.
4. What if no-one stands?
  - 4.1 It is sometimes difficult to encourage people to put themselves forward. If no-one has put themselves forward before the AGM, then you could invite them to do so at the AGM itself.
  - 4.2 If fewer than three people are willing to stand the country or regional office agree interim arrangements, usually for a period not exceeding six months, until a full committee can be elected, or a decision is made to wind up the branch.
- 5 What if someone steps down mid-term?
  - 5.1 If someone steps down from the committee mid-term you should advertise the vacancy and invite expressions of interest, giving a closing date.
  - 5.2 If only one person puts themselves forward, they can be appointed to the role for the duration of the term of office. If more than one person puts themselves forward, there will need to be an election. This can be done at the next branch meeting (in the manner described in paragraph [3.2 above](#)) or by email ballot if that is easier.
  - 5.3 However, if the term of office for the vacancy is due to come to an end very soon, for example in less than three months, it is more practical to wait until your next AGM.

- 6 After the election or appointment
  - 6.1 Set aside some time to induct your new committee member/officer. The induction should include information about forthcoming meetings and branch activity.
  - 6.2 You must also let your country or regional office know so that they can update the RCN database with the details. You should also confirm in writing to your new committee member when their term of office concludes.

Approved by RCN Council 3 December 2015

Light-touch review to update factual inaccuracies, August 2024

Full review of this policy 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

Appendix A – Template for ballot paper for branch committee election



**ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING**  
**Election of [insert name] Branch Committee**  
**BALLOT PAPER**

Please read the candidates' election statements before casting your vote.

Vote by marking a cross 'X' in the box next to your chosen candidate.

<b>Chair – you can vote for one candidate</b>	<b>Tick here</b>
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
<b>Secretary – you can vote for one candidate</b>	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
<b>Treasurer – you can vote for one candidate</b>	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
<b>Committee member – you can vote for 3 candidates</b>	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	
[insert name]	

Please complete the voting grid above and return your ballot paper to the returning officer appointed by the branch.