

Role Descriptor: Chair of Congress

Title: Chair of Congress

Reporting To: Council

Basis: In accordance with RCN Standing Orders, the Chair of Congress is elected for a term of office covering the next two annual meetings of Congress from amongst the voting entities of RCN Congress. Depending on the dates of Congress, this is a term of c2 years. The Regulation on Terms of Office will apply in the case of re-appointment thereafter.

Time commitment (including meetings):

The Chair of Congress is the Chair of the Agenda Committee and is a non-voting member of RCN Council for the time that they are in post as Chair of Congress, therefore they are expected to attend all Council and Agenda Committee meetings as well as the annual meeting of Congress.

- The RCN Council meets at least 5 times per year, normally at HQ (20 Cavendish Square, London) or online/hybrid but may meet at another UK site on occasion (in particular the AGM).
- The annual meeting of Congress usually takes place in a UK location outside of London. The duration of Congress is around 6 days for the Agenda Committee including twice daily meetings during Congress week.
- Outside of Congress, the Agenda Committee also meets at least 5 times per year either at HQ or online/hybrid, including an annual 2 day meeting in January.

Ad hoc meetings of Council and the Agenda Committee may be required between planned meetings for timely discussion and/or decision making.

Eligibility: The Chair of Congress must have registered for and attended Congress in at least two of the last four years it has been held and must be a fully paid-up member in the Nurse membership category. They must also adhere to any other relevant eligibility requirements set out in the RCN Elections Policy and Processes document.

Purpose of the role

The Chair of Congress plays a pivotal role in delivering the business of the annual meeting of RCN Congress, and chairs both Congress itself and the Agenda Committee. The Agenda Committee is accountable to Council, and recommends to Council the agenda items for debate during Congress, as well as receiving and considering emergency agenda items during Congress week.

The purpose of the role is to ensure that:

- The business of the annual meeting of RCN Congress is well managed and run.

- The Agenda Committee fulfils its role and responsibilities in line with established policy and procedure.

Key responsibilities include:

- Working in collaboration with the Chair of Council, General Secretary & Chief Executive and other key members of RCN Council and staff to oversee and successfully deliver the annual meeting of RCN Congress.
- Chairing the annual meeting of RCN Congress and overseeing the formal processes that enable its smooth running and facilitating healthy and productive debate.
- Working in collaboration with the other members of the Agenda Committee and Governance Team to ensure that rules and procedures for managing the meeting of Congress are observed and that business is managed effectively.
- Chairing the Agenda Committee, ensuring that it functions effectively and meets its objectives in a collaborative and timely manner including ensuring that it meets its obligations in respect of the annual planning cycle of RCN Congress.
- Ensuring that the Agenda Committee acts in accordance with its Terms of Reference at all times.
- Ensuring that the skills and experience of individual Agenda Committee members are used appropriately and constructively.
- As an ex-officio RCN Council member, acting as a governor of the organisation and in accordance with the Council member role descriptor.
- Being accountable to Council for the effective delivery of the annual meeting of RCN Congress including reporting to Council on the activities of the Agenda Committee and updating Council on all Congress matters.
- Ensuring the meaningful, effective and respectful participation by RCN members in Congress, ensuring that their views and opinions are fairly heard and considered.
- Controlling and facilitating full and balanced discussions and managing matters raised from the floor with due care and consideration.
- Working in partnership with the Vice Chair of Congress delegating specific responsibilities as appropriate.
- Demonstrating a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and leading by example.
- Acting in the best interests of the RCN to enhance its reputation as a respected trade union and professional body for nursing staff.
- Upholding the values, decisions and policies of the RCN and acting as a role model to members and to nursing more widely.

The Chair of Congress should not involve themselves in the day-to-day administration and operations of the RCN, but may, from time to time, work with RCN staff members to achieve results. When representing the RCN in a public space in their capacity as Chair of Congress and an ex-officio Council member, they should ensure that their actions do not bring the RCN and profession into

disrepute, and they should take care not to take public positions contrary to those of the RCN.

Person specification:

In addition to the requirements for a Council member, the Chair of Congress should be able to demonstrate:

1. A sound understanding of RCN Congress, including the needs of RCN members and the meeting rules and procedures.
2. The resilience and ability to take accountability for decisions and to chair the annual meeting of Congress which is attended by 2000+ delegates and attracts significant media and public attention.
3. The ability and skills to communicate confidently, facilitate effective debate with diplomacy and tact and to demonstrate sound cultural and political sensitivity.
4. Awareness of how the world is changing politically, economically and socially.
5. Commitment to the role of Chair of Congress.
6. Demonstrate active commitment to the RCN Respect Charter, promoting EDI and Nolan Principles and fostering inclusivity at Congress.