

## Terms of Reference: Students Committee

1. Name of Committee

Students Committee.

2. Purpose

The RCN Students Committee represents the RCN members included in the student category of membership as defined under Standing Order 5.2.

The remit of the Committee is to provide a voice for the student members of the RCN and report through the three ex-officio members to RCN Council, the RCN Trade Union Committee and the RCN Professional Nursing Committee.

3. Delegated responsibilities

3.1 The role of the Committee is as follows:

- a) To advise and be consulted on the development of RCN policy relating to students who are on courses leading to initial registration
- b) To advise and be consulted on activity relating to students, including recruitment of new members into the RCN through the RCN boards.
- c) To liaise and communicate with students, by linking with RCN boards, and put forward their views, ideas and concerns
- d) To work in partnership with external stakeholders in line with the decisions of RCN Council and its committees where relevant to students
- e) To advise and be consulted on RCN strategy and planning where it pertains to students
- f) Through the three ex-officio members on the Committee, ensure that issues specific to students that may have UK-wide implications are raised with RCN Council, the RCN Trade Union Committee and the RCN Professional Nursing Committee
- g) To encourage, promote, facilitate and support the advancement of nursing in relation to students in line with RCN strategy and policy.
- h) To ensure that students are embedded in the activities of the RCN at all levels: local, regional, national, and international

#### 4. Reporting and accountability

4.1 The Students Committee is responsible and accountable to RCN Council.

4.2 Council will provide a report to the Committee of each of its meetings. The report will outline actions for the Committee. The Committee will report back to Council via its Council member.

4.3 Formal minutes of meetings will be kept and approved at subsequent meetings of the Student Committee.

4.4 The deliberations of the Student Committee shall be reported to RCN Council and any resolution passed or decision taken shall be reported to RCN Council.

#### 5. Meetings and quorum

5.1 The Student Committee will meet at least three times a year.

5.2 Special ad hoc meetings may also be called if the business of the Student Committee is of such urgency that it cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting.

5.3 The quorum for each meeting shall be five members of the committee.

5.4 The rules and procedures in the *RCN Meetings policy and process* apply to the Students Committee.

#### 6. Membership

6.1 Members of the Students Committee must be a member of the student constituency as defined under Standing Order 5.2 and within the Definitions of RCN Membership document.

6.2 There shall be no more than 18 members of the Committee constituted as follows:

- The student member of Council will be an ex-officio member of the Committee
- The student member of the Trade Union Committee will be an ex-officio member of the Committee
- The student member of the Professional Nursing Committee will be an ex-officio member of the Committee
- Two members to be elected by student members in each of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. These elections shall occur in order that one member from each country is elected each year.

- Nine members elected by student members in England, one representing each of the English regions as constituted by Council on a rolling programme.
- 6.3 Those eligible for nomination to the RCN Students Committee, must be on an education programme leading to initial registration and must be at least six months from qualification at the commencement of their term of office.
7. Observers
- 7.1 Observers may attend meetings at the discretion of the Chair and the agreement of the Student Committee. Observers can speak and/or participate in the meeting only with the permission of, or at the request of, the Chair.
- 7.2 Individuals attending in observer status will receive those papers relating to the areas relevant to their observer role.
- 7.3 Observers will not usually attend private or confidential sessions of the Student Committee.
8. Election/appointment to the committee
- 8.1 Elections/appointments to the committee will be conducted in accordance with the RCN's Elections and Appointments policies and with the specific procedure for each election/appointment.
- 8.2 Half the Committee will be elected every two years.
9. Terms of office
- 9.1 The terms of office of elected members of the RCN Students Committee shall be two years. Members are eligible for re-election for one further term of office provided they still meet the eligibility criteria.
- 9.2 The terms of office of ex-officio members of this Committee will follow the individual member's elected term of office.
- 9.3 The *RCN Regulation on Terms of Office* shall apply in respect of serving more than one term.
10. Mid-Term (casual) vacancies
- 10.1 A casual vacancy on the Student Committee shall be filled in accordance with the *RCN's Process for filling casual vacancies*.

11. Chair and vice chair
  - 11.1 In accordance with Rule 2.2 in the *Royal Charter* the Student Committee shall have a Chair. A Vice Chair shall also be elected.
  - 11.2 The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected every year by the members of the Committee from amongst the members of the Committee.
  - 11.3 The terms of office for the Chair and Vice Chair shall each be for 1 year.
  - 11.4 The *RCN Regulation on Terms of Office* shall apply in respect of serving more than one term.
  - 11.5 The Chair and Vice Chair must relinquish these roles at the end of the term of office for the role or if, for whatever reason, they cease to be a member of the Student Committee including reaching the end of their term of office on the Student Committee.
  - 11.6 The process for the election of Chair and Vice Chair will be conducted in accordance with the *RCN's Election policy*.
12. Staff support, advice and guidance
  - 12.1 The lead staff member will be the Deputy Director of Nursing. Student senior leadership will be provided through the Institute senior team which will support and advise the Student Committee as appropriate.
  - 12.2 Committee members and staff will work together positively and constructively, in line with the RCN's Respect Charter, to deliver the purposes of the Committee and within the Operating Framework\*\*.
  - 12.3 In the unlikely situation where key professional advice presented by staff is not accepted by the Students Committee, the advice and reasons for not accepting the professional advice will be fully documented in the minutes of the meeting. Should the responsible lead staff member conclude this position poses a risk to the organisation and its members, the circumstances will be brought to the attention of the General Secretary/Chief Executive who will assess the seriousness of the position and advise the Chair of Council accordingly. Should a resolved position not be reached the matter will be escalated to Council for a determination on the way forward.
  - 12.4 The Secretariat to the Committee shall be provided by the RCN Governance Department.

### 13. Removal from the Students Committee

13.1 A Student Committee member may be removed before the end of their term of office on the grounds if they:

- a) have exceeded their powers in a way that is detrimental to the RCN
- b) have failed to discharge their duties
- c) have acted in breach of the RCN's Code of Conduct and/or Respect Charter
- d) have acted in a manner likely to bring the RCN into disrepute
- e) they have failed to attend three consecutive meetings (excluding special ad hoc meetings)
- f) have any active cautions from the NMC, or other regulator, against their name, are currently subject to any NMC, or other regulator's, sanction, and/or they are subject to any ongoing disciplinary proceedings with any of their employers, university or professional disciplinary proceedings before the NMC or another regulator.
- g) are subject to ongoing disciplinary proceedings in respect of any role they hold at the RCN and/or currently subject to any RCN disciplinary sanction.

13.2 The processes for such removal will be in accordance with the Member Resolution policy

These Terms of reference will be reviewed annually and were approved by the RCN Council on 26 October 2023.

They will be reviewed at the first meeting of the Student Committee in 2024. Any recommended changes will be subsequently approved by RCN Council.

They should be read in conjunction with the *Operating Framework for RCN Committees*\*\* and other documents referred to above.

*Note – these terms of reference are subject to ongoing change in line with the implementation of the recommendations of the Council-led governance review (2022). \*Scheme of delegation under revision. \*\* Operating Framework for Committees in development [July 2022]*