



Document name Appointments policy and process (Board / Committee members, and external advisers)
Who does this policy apply to? Members who may be appointed to a role in any of the RCN boards and committees/groups or as external advisers to Council and its sub-committees.
Purpose To describe the process for appointing someone to an RCN role and to outline the procedures to be followed in ensuring that the process is fair, equitable, and inclusive.
Description of the policy This policy sets out the process and procedures to be followed in appointing members to an RCN role when there is a vacancy that can be filled by appointment.
Author/s Governance Policy and Projects Officer
Cross Reference Regulation for fit and proper persons Regulation for Terms of Office RCN Royal Charter RCN elections – policy and processes
Status: Reviewed in August 2024 – Light touch to keep in date, remedy ambiguity and incorporate the casual filling of appointments process as an appendix.
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VERSION CONTROL

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Appointments policy and process (Board / Committee members, and external advisers)	Remedy ambiguity in the content and incorporating the process for filling casual vacancies as an appendix.	October 2024 – V3

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1. Introduction

This document describes the procedures for the following appointments to a board, committee or for external advisers.

- a. Forum steering committee members.
- b. External advisers to committees.
- c. Casual vacancies to committees and country and regional boards where they are to be filled by appointment. (Appendix A below, describes the process).
- d. Members of Council sub-committees.

2. Core principles for RCN appointments.

RCN appointments will follow a fair, equitable, and inclusive process. Candidates will be treated impartially, and procedures and processes will be applied consistently and transparently. The RCN will treat all applications in confidence.

For each vacancy, further information relating to the requirements of the role will be provided on the following:

- a) the role descriptor for each role
- b) the terms of reference for each committee or board
- c) the application form for each role

3. Responsibility for the appointments process

The Executive Director of Governance is the responsible officer for all appointments, working with colleagues across the organisation as appropriate. It is their role to apply and interpret these procedures, and all other applicable procedures.

The Executive Director of Governance is accountable as stated below.

- a) to the Forum Governance Group (FGG) for the appointment of forum steering committee members
- b) to the Chair of Council for the appointment of external advisers, and for members of Council sub-committees and task and finish groups.
- c) to Board chairs and secretaries for the appointment of country and regional board members.
- d) to the RCN International Committee for the appointment of its members.
- e) to the RCN Group Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee for the appointment of its members.

4. Administration of the appointment process

Staff in the Governance team will organise appointments collaboratively with Chairs of committees and colleagues in other RCN departments as appropriate.

Below is a list (not an exhaustive list) of the support offered.

Forums/committees: the Governance team will work with colleagues in the Nursing Department.

Country and regional boards: the Governance team will work with the Country/Regional Directors and Board Administrators.

External advisers: the Governance team will work with colleagues in the relevant RCN departments.

5. Key stages of the appointment process

Each appointment process will comprise of the following stages described below with recommended timelines. However, circumstances may vary, and an exact timeline should be agreed by the Executive Director of Governance or a designated member of their team, and key stakeholders in advance.

Key responsibilities are also outlined.

Stage	Timeline	Responsibility
Planning the appointment process	≥ 1 month in advance of any activity	The Executive Director of Governance delegates as appropriate and assigns a lead staff member in the Governance team. The Lead liaises with colleagues in the relevant department/board to agree specific roles and responsibilities.
Appointment advertised in relevant media (internal and/or external) including the interview date.	All appointments advertised for a period of two weeks as standard. It can be extended but no longer than five weeks.	Member Engagement Officer (Governance team) liaises with lead staff member as appropriate
Convening the appointment panel (including agreeing who will chair the panel)	The composition of the appointment panel should be agreed at least two weeks before the closing date for applications.	Member Engagement Officer (Governance team) liaises with the Executive Director of Governance and the lead staff member as appropriate
Shortlisting	Shortlisting will be completed by the appointment panel chair and at least one other member of the panel within	Lead staff member will ensure this is done and the template (Appendix C) completed.

	2 weeks after the closing date for applications.	
Interview dates	Interview dates will take place within six weeks of the closing date for applications.	Lead staff member and/or Governance team will ensure interview dates are set liaising with the appointment panel. If a candidate cannot make an interview date, a subsequent date within the next week can be offered if feasible. There is no obligation to offer an alternative date, and the appointment should not be held up because of a candidate being unable to make the publicised date.
Notification of outcome of interview	Candidates will be notified within 2 working days of the outcome of their interview.	Chair of the Panel to call successful and unsuccessful candidates. Lead staff member or a Governance team member will ensure all candidates receive acceptance or rejection letters of confirmation.

6. Assessing candidates

Candidates will be assessed against criteria developed from the role descriptor. These criteria will be agreed in advance by the lead staff member, colleagues in relevant departments, and signed off by the accountable members (e.g. Chair of Council, Chair of Board, Forums Governance Group). The criteria will be used for assessing candidates at the shortlisting and interview stages. The regulation for RCN Council, Board and Committee Members - Fit and Proper Persons Criteria must also be considered.

All candidates are required to complete an application form or provide a statement of how they meet the requirements of the role in the form of an expression of interest. Where an application form is used, the questions will be designed to encourage candidates to demonstrate how they meet the assessment criteria. Form attached (Appendix D). A template application form is attached (Appendix B).

Completed forms will be used to shortlist interview candidates. All shortlisted candidates will be interviewed, even if only one person is shortlisted.

Interview questions will also be based on the assessment criteria. At interview, all candidates should be asked the same core questions. However, different supplementary questions may be asked to probe for further detail and information. Appointment panel members should hand in their notes to the Governance team member following the interviews to safeguard confidentiality.

7. Appointment panel

The appointment panel will consist of a minimum of three people and a maximum of five including:

- a. at least one person (excluding staff) who is a member of the RCN - ideally the chair or other member of the committee/board, or other member with relevant expertise or interest.
- b. one person independent of the appointing committee or board
- c. a staff member with relevant expertise or interest – e.g. professional lead, executive team member or country or regional director.
- d. a member of the Governance team (apart from the Forum appointment panels) or, in the case of country and regional boards, the board administrator.

Responsibilities of the appointment panel members during the interview.

Note: all members of the panel can ask questions of the candidate.

Panel chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead the interview process and ensure timing and focus. • introduce the panellists and explain their different roles in the process. • explain the role of the committee/board and how it works. • explain the interview process – questions from each of the members of the panel followed by an opportunity for the candidate to ask any questions. • start the interview. • sum up and let the candidate know when they will hear the outcome of the interview. • inform the candidates verbally of the outcome.
Member and lead staff panel members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the panel chair. • provide relevant expertise. • suggest and ask relevant interview questions, make judgements of the responses based on criteria.
Independent participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide an independent, objective assessment. • investigate any complaints –satisfy themselves candidates are treated fairly and in accordance with the RCN respect charter.
Governance team representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer any questions on governance or process at the interview. • ensure the administration of the interviews are carried out effectively, including drafting letters to inform the candidates of the outcome of the interview. • provide the administration and support to the independent complaints investigator. • ensure follow-up work is completed (recording of terms of office, amending records on the case management system (CRM))

8. Notification of the outcome of the interview

The Appointment panel chair should telephone each candidate personally to inform them of the outcome. This will be supported by a letter, sent within two working days of the interview, produced by the Governance team member that will include:

- Whether the candidate was successful or unsuccessful
- When the successful candidate's term of office starts and concludes
- Details of forthcoming meetings and staff contacts for successful candidates as well as information about the induction process
- Details about other relevant opportunities, if appropriate, for unsuccessful candidates
- A thank you for taking the time to attend and be interviewed.

9. Post interviews

The Governance team member will be responsible for updating relevant membership records and committee information on the RCN case management system (CRM). Also, liaising with and informing colleagues as appropriate.

They will also work with colleagues to ensure that induction material and meetings are provided to the successful candidates.

Appendix A

Process for filling casual vacancies to roles on RCN Council, boards and committees.

1 Introduction

Casual vacancies arise when a member leaves an elected or appointed role before the end of their term of office. This document specifies the process for filling casual vacancies on RCN Council, boards, and committees.

The definition of whether a role on RCN Council becomes vacant is set out in Rule 1 in the Schedule of Rules which is appended to the RCN's Royal Charter. The principles in this Rule will also be applied to determine whether a vacancy has arisen on a committee or board.

All casual vacancies will be filled for the duration of the scheduled term of office and will not extend beyond that.

2 Reasons for casual vacancies occurring.

2.1 A casual vacancy occurs when a Council, board or committee member:

- a) as set out in Rule 1 of the RCN's royal Charter (Council members)
- b) resigns
- c) dies
- d) becomes disqualified (see 2.2 below)
- e) fails to make a declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time.
- f) fails to attend three consecutive meetings (excluding special ad hoc meetings) - does not include Council members.

2.2 Disqualification

Disqualification occurs from not meeting any of the eligibility criteria in the election or appointment procedures. Below is an indication of when disqualification may occur as a guide.

- a) a member being subject to conflict of interest issues (e.g. if a declaration of such leads to a formal finding that prevents membership of the relevant body).
- b) sanctions arising from disciplinary or other process such as the Member Resolution policy and process or as set out on the Terms of Reference for committees and groups.
- c) a member being found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices.
- d) A member of Council who fails to attend four consecutive meetings of the Council in any period in which six consecutive meetings are held. In the case of illness, the Council may in its discretion allow that Council Member to continue in office.
- e) A member of a board or committee who fails to attend three consecutive meetings (excluding special ad hoc meetings)

3 Process for filling a casual vacancy on Council.

- 3.1 Filling a vacant role on RCN Council is provided for in the RCN's Standing Orders. In line with trade union legislation (s.46 Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), all vacancies on Council are filled by election irrespective of when the term of office concludes.
- 3.2 The election process is set out in the RCN's Elections policy and process which forms part of the regulations. The election will follow the timeline and stages in that guide.
- 3.3 The vacancy will be taken as effective from the date of receipt of the relevant member's resignation, or confirmation of the member's disqualification. If it is determined that the vacancy occurs at such a time to make the election and subsequent term of office impractical then a decision may be made to defer that election until the next scheduled elections for that office. This decision will be made by the Chair of Council in consultation with the Executive Director of Governance.
- 3.4 As a guide, however, where the election timeline enables an elected office to take up the role for six months or more, an election will be held.

4 Process for filling a casual vacancy on boards and committees.

The process for filling casual vacancies on RCN boards and all other committees is as follows:

- 4.1 For an elected role, where the full term of office is four years:
 - an election will be held if the duration of the remaining term of office is more than two years. The election will be held following the timeline and processes set out in the RCN Elections policy and process. (link to be added)
 - If the duration of the term of office is less than two years, the role may be filled by appointment in line with the RCN policy and process for appointments.
- 4.2 As a guide, however, where the appointment timeline enables the role to be taken up for six months or more, an appointments process will be held. The decision will be taken by the Chair of the board or committee in consultation with the Executive Director of Governance.

5 Exception

- 5.1 If it is determined that the vacancy occurs at such a time to make the election or appointment and subsequent term of office impractical, then a decision may be made to defer that election or appointment until the next schedule of elections and/or appointments.
- 5.2 The decision will be made by the chair of the board or committee (including forums) in consultation with the Executive Director of Governance and, in the case of country and regional boards, the Country or Regional Director.

Appendix B

RCN [insert name of committee/board]

Application Form

1. Introduction

Applications are being accepted to [insert name of committee/board]

Please read the information below and complete the application form by [insert closing date for applications]

2. Who can apply?

Candidates have to [insert criteria for membership of the committee/board]:

3. Term of office

Unless otherwise stated, the term of office is [insert number of years].

4. How does the appointments process work?

The appointments process has been designed in consultation with members to be professional, fair and supportive – the focus is on the skills and qualities that you can bring to the [insert name of committee/board] and the RCN.

The appointments process has five stages:

1. Applications – [insert dates]
2. Short-listing – [insert dates]
3. Interviews – [insert dates]
4. Notification of outcome to candidates. [insert dates]
5. Candidate takes up office and induction commence. [insert dates]

5. For more information

For more information on the [insert name of committee/board] please [insert web address or contact details]

6. Equal opportunities

The RCN is committed to supporting equality and inclusion. If you need help with completing this form or would prefer it in a different format, please email governance.support@rcn.org.uk or telephone 020 7647 3553

7. Submitting your application

Please return your application form by **[insert closing date]** to **[insert name/address/email address]**

Receipt of forms will be acknowledged within seven days - if you do not receive an acknowledgement after that time, please telephone **[insert number]**

Application form

[insert name of committee/board]

Part One - your details

Title _____

First name(s) _____

Last name _____

Address _____

Post code _____

RCN membership number _____

Year of joining the RCN _____

Home phone no _____

Mobile phone no _____

Email address _____

Part two - interview date

Please confirm you can attend the interview date for this committee [**insert interview date**]

Yes

No

Unknown

Part three: candidate statement

Please write a statement of **no more than 250 words** that demonstrates how your qualities and experience will help you fulfil your role as a member of [**insert name of committee/board**].

Please note that your statement should not be longer than 250 words.

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Part four: tell us more about yourself.

Please summarise your education or career history, any involvement you have had with the RCN and any other relevant experience or achievements – please expand the tables below if necessary.

Professional career

Dates (years)	Position	Main achievements

RCN involvement

Dates (years)	Position	Main achievements

Other relevant experience

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You may also send your CV with this application form.

Part five: where did you hear about this opportunity?

Please mark all those relevant:

Activate magazine		RCN email	
Bulletin magazine		RCN website	
RCN event or conference		RCN member	
Facebook		RCN staff member	
Twitter			
Other (please explain):			

Acceptance and declaration

In signing this form, I declare that I am **[insert eligibility criteria as specified in section 3]**:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To submit your application please save the form and email it to **[insert email address]**

Alternatively, you can post it to **[insert postal address]**:

You can also complete the form online by visiting www.rcn.org.uk/applications

We will acknowledge all applications by email within seven days. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact us at governance.support@rcn.org.uk

All forms must be received no later than **[insert closing date]**

Appendix D

[insert name of committee/board] Appointments Assessment Sheet

Applicant: _____ Interview Date: [insert date]

Panel Member: _____

Procedure

- Chair to welcome the applicant and introduce the panel members. Ensure the candidate is comfortable and ready to begin.
- Chair to explain that the panel will spend approximately [insert expected duration length] with the candidate and that the interview format will be the same for each candidate.
- Chair to explain that at the end of the interview, candidate will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
- If the panel deviate from the written questions below, they should document any additional points or questions they raise.

	Question	Looking for [insert criteria]	Candidate's response / Notes
1.	e.g. Could you start by spending around five minutes telling us what made you decide to put your name forward?		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> 1 2 3 4 5 </div>

5 = Outstanding 4 = Good 3 = Fair 2 = Poor 1 = Very Poor

	Question	Looking for [insert criteria]	Candidate's response / Notes					
2.		•						
3.		•	1	2	3	4	5	

5 = Outstanding

4 = Good

3 = Fair 2 = Poor

1 = Very Poor

	Question	Looking for	Candidate's response / Notes
4.		•	1 2 3 4 5
5.		•	1 2 3 4 5

5 = Outstanding

4 = Good

3 = Fair 2 = Poor

1 = Very Poor

Total score given to candidate _____ / 30.

Feedback agreed to be included in letter to unsuccessful candidate.