



Trainees' Committee (TC)

Terms of Reference

Background

The Royal College of Physicians of London (RCP) plays a leading role in the professional lives of physicians from the beginning of their training through to and beyond appointments as consultants or non-consultant grade doctors. The RCP's core mission is to drive improvements in health and healthcare through advocacy, education and research as an independent patient centred and clinically led organisation. The RCP raises healthcare standards by setting training curricula and exams for physicians and working closely with the regional Health Education boards to help with the implementation of physician training schemes. The RCP also develops NICE-accredited guidelines for high-quality care and has a wider duty to reduce preventable illness and to promote evidence-based policies to government to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Statement of purpose

The RCP believes that it is important to provide means for members and fellows in similar occupational circumstances to contribute to RCP work. The Trainees' Committee (TC) is a standing committee of the RCP established to represent the needs, interests, and views of RCP members who are trainees. The committee is advisory in nature and reports to Council through the Education Board, which routinely receives TC minutes.

The committee's remit is to:

- Represent the views of medical trainees on all major RCP committees and working groups.
- Send delegates to the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Trainees Group and the BMA Junior Doctors Committee.
- Represent the RCP TC at other national health related bodies as the need arises.
- Disseminate information to trainees and other trainee representatives (e.g. specialist society, regional trainee bodies, Associate College Tutors) following important discussions and meetings.
- Respond to documents published by other stakeholders in training e.g. Department of Health, the JRCPTB, and the Deans.
- Identify and act on any other areas that may affect the high standard of medical education and training set by the RCP.

The TC meets three times a year at the RCP offices in either London or Liverpool. Between meetings email and WhatsApp is used to discuss relevant issues and allows rapid response to problems as they arise.

Constitution

The Trainees' Committee (TC) consists of:

- **Medical trainees** – two elected from each of the 17 regions covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- **Committee chair/co-chairs and deputy-chair(s)** – elected from within the TC and voted on by elected TC members. Once elected they do not represent a specific region. Up to three and a minimum of two appointed between the roles of chair/co-chair/deputy-chair at any one time.
- **Secretary** – is elected from within the TC and continues to represent their specific region.
- **Communication and publicity officers x 2** – elected from within the TC and continues to represent their specific region.
- **Core Medical Trainees (CMT)/Internal Medicine (IM) Stage 1 Trainees** – If the trainee representatives from the 17 regions do not include a minimum of three trainees from either CMT or IM stage 1, the shortfall can be made up by national recruitment of trainees at that level voted on by TC members. On conclusion of term (on exiting CMT/IM stage 1) vacancies will be put out to competitive recruitment.
- **Ex-officio members** – Non-voting. RCP senior officers including the president, vice-presidents, registrar, as well as the medical director of the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board (JRCPTB).
- **Co-opted members** – Non-voting. Non-elected, often trainees working at the RCP/JRCPTB/Regional Health Education boards, or chair of SFDN can attend without agreement from the chair(s). Clinical fellows at RCP are expected to attend each TC meeting to feedback regarding their project work and to garner trainee input to it.
- **Observers** – Non-voting. With agreement from the chair, observers may attend.

The TC is a sub-committee of the Membership Support and Global Engagement Board and to which it reports. The vice-president for education and training (VPET) is the senior officer with responsibility for leadership and delivery of strategic theme 2 - we will develop physicians throughout their careers. The chair of the TC will be supported and appraised by the VPET.

Role description and responsibilities for chair, deputy-chair, secretary, communication and publicity officers can be found at **Appendix A and B**. Process for elections can be found at **Appendix C**.

For any vote called to be valid a quorum of 15 voting members or 50% of the total voting TC membership at that time, whichever is lower, is required. In the event of a tied vote the chair has a deciding vote.

Members' terms of office

Members are expected to fulfil the following terms of office:

- All members of the TC should be subscribing members of the RCP.
- All members of the TC should be in postgraduate medical training.
- Members of the TC serve for four years after first election. This may be extended by a further year to enable smooth handover of duties. Members must indicate their willingness to continue at least 6 months before the end of their four year term.
- Members who fail to attend three meetings in succession, do not contribute meaningfully to the work of the committee, or maintain contact with the regional office will be automatically requested to resign from the committee.
- Members who wish to resign from the TC must allow sufficient time for handover of their duties to their successor. Prior to election of their replacement, members are encouraged to continue attending the TC.

Members' responsibilities

Generic guidance for chairs and members can be found at **Appendix B**. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- All TC members are expected to sit on at least one other RCP committee, working group or external body.
- TC members are expected to circulate a written summary of any meetings they attend on behalf of the TC by email to the group.
- TC members may be asked to form and run working parties to explore relevant issues as needed.
- TC members are expected to regularly communicate with the regional office and manager, and trainees from their region to inform them of the views of trainees and to allow feedback of information to trainees.
- TC members are expected to give notice of their intention not to attend a committee meeting at least one week before the scheduled date of the meeting.
- TC members are expected to maintain a reliable (non-hospital specific) e-mail address.
- TC members are expected to complete the annual TC audit of activities that they have been involved with, including meetings attended, how they have raised the profile of the RCP and TC locally and nationally and any other TC related activities. This is to be submitted to the secretary.

Security

TC members are privy to information that may not be in the public domain. It is imperative that confidentiality of information is maintained and information not disseminated outside of the TC until this has been approved. Once approved, the TC members are encouraged to disseminate information as much as possible.

Respectful behaviour

- All committee members must conduct themselves in a courteous, orderly and respectful manner.
- The authority of the chair should be respected and members should speak through the chair at all times. Members wishing to intervene may do so by raising their hand and will be subject to the invitation of the chair.
- The chair may limit the time available for a particular item, or for a particular member as part of a meeting and may ask a member to stop speaking if they have exceeded their allotted time, departed from the subject or there is repetition.

Expenses

The RCP reimburses expenses associated with members of the committee attending its TC meetings or other meetings within the RCP (via each particular meetings budget via their administrator), and provides administrative support for committee activities. Meetings at the JRCPTB and outside the RCP (to AoRMC and BMA), as well as travel to the TC meetings are covered from the TC budget with prior agreement. Expenses are claimed via the RCP online claims system and should be accompanied by receipts. Travel should be booked as early as possible via the RCP linked travel agent. Expenses and travel claims must be in line with the current RCP expenses and travel policy.

Support

Executive support for TC activity is via the VPET at RCP. Administrative support is via the committee manager within the Membership Support and Global Engagement department.

Review

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed on at least a biennial basis by the committee and agreement must be voted upon.

Last review: August 2018

Next review: August 2020

Positions within the Trainees Committee

Chair/co-chairs and deputy-chair(s)

The chair/co-chairs and deputy-chair are elected for a four year term with the expectation that they will be able to serve at least two years of that term. They should give six months' notice of their intention to stand down. Their term as chair or deputy-chair overrides that of their regional seat, and their regional seat should be made available for elections at the next scheduled round.

When the chair gives notice of their intention to demit, elections will be held within three months to identify a chair-elect from amongst the TC members. If a chair-elect is not identified before the chair plans to stand down then, unless the chair is willing and able to continue, the deputy-chair must assume the role of chair and further elections be held within six months. If the chair is unable to fulfil their role temporarily (one year's duration or less), then the deputy-chair shall be appointed as interim chair until the chair returns. If the deputy-chair is unable to fulfil their role temporarily (one year's duration or less), then the chair shall fulfil both roles on a temporary basis. The secretary or another senior TC member may be asked, if willing to take on additional responsibilities during any interim period.

The chair/co-chairs and deputy-chair are responsible for overall coordination of the work of the TC. The deputy-chair will support the chair with their duties as required so that responsibilities can be shared e.g. agenda preparation. During meetings of the TC the chair will chair the meeting ensuring smooth running of the meeting.

Secretary

The secretary is assumed and expected to accept the same terms of office as the chair and their deputy, with the exception that they retain their regional seat during their term. The secretary is responsible for the allocation of representatives from the TC at all the relevant RCP committees and tracking attendance. They will also assist the communications officers in the creation of the newsletter. The secretary will work closely with the chair, deputy-chair and the rest of the committee to ensure good communication between the team.

Communication and Publicity Officers (2)

The communication and publicity officer and their deputy are assumed and expected to accept the same terms of office as the chair and their deputy, although as with the secretary, they do not give up their regional seats following election to the post. The publicity officer and their deputy are responsible for raising the profile of the TC amongst medical trainees (through Twitter, Facebook and the trainees' section of the RCP website) and compiling and disseminating the TC e-newsletter three times a year in association with the secretary.

Generic guidance on chair and member responsibilities

Chairs' responsibilities

The chair has overall responsibility for the committee's business. In particular, the chair should:

- Understand the committee's remit and know the limits of its business and powers.
- Proactively take forward the committee's business.
- Manage the committee's business to ensure that it is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible, both during and between meetings.
- Consider cancellation of any meeting, in liaison with the president and registrar, when there is insufficient business or other pertinent reasons.
- Keep the usefulness, fitness for purpose, membership and attendance of the committee under review in consultation as necessary with senior officers, parent bodies and committee manager.
- Ensure their own and members declarations of interest are raised and managed appropriately through the RCP Declaration of Interests policy.
- Chair meetings fairly and impartially, introducing agenda items but not dominating discussion or allowing individual members to dominate. Where appropriate, to introduce speakers and invite relevant members to comment on agenda items, whilst ensuring that debate is not unnecessarily long. To draw discussions to a clear and timely conclusion on each item.
- Report to committee members on developments and decisions that affect the work of the committee.
- Approve minutes and reports of committee meetings before their distribution.
- Approve urgent and non-controversial matters on the committee's behalf between meetings.
- Ensure the membership of the committee has a balanced representation on a regional, specialty and training level.
- Attend RCP Council as a full member (with voting rights) and to take part in all discussions.
- If requested to occasionally attend other meetings if the TC representative is unavailable or if it is felt to be relevant to the TC.

Characteristics of a good chair

These include:

- Good listening and communication skills, including a willingness to listen to ways in which meetings can be improved.
- Impartiality together with a firm yet flexible and facilitating focus upon achieving the aims of the meeting.
- Ability to summarise discussions fairly and succinctly to ensure that all present accept and are clear about what has been decided.
- Ability to avoid unproductive dispute.
- Willingness to exert authority when necessary but in an appropriate manner.
- Tenacity in ensuring follow-through.

Members' responsibilities

Members of a committee should:

- Understand the committee's remit and know the limits of its business and powers.
- Be willing and able to attend the committee's meetings. Members have a responsibility to attend. If for any reason members are unable to attend a meeting of the committee, they should ensure that they notify their apologies to the committee manager in advance of the meeting. Committee membership is considered to be a non-transferable status. It is not normal practice for committee members to nominate a delegate to represent them at a committee meeting in the event that they are unable to attend. However, where agreed, it is not uncommon for the constitution of a committee to specifically provide an alternative for some roles.
- Ensure that they prepare themselves properly for meetings by reading the committee papers in advance, giving them due thought and consulting others where appropriate.
- Ensure that they observe any markings of confidentiality that are applied to committee documents and do not disclose beyond the committee any confidential business or other information that is considered by the committee.
- Ensure that they act, and are perceived to act, impartially in the best interests of the RCP and are not influenced by any personal business or social relationship. If members have any pecuniary, personal or family interest in any matter being discussed by the committee, they should declare this conflict of interest normally at the start of the meeting and subject to the chair's decision take no part in the committee's discussion or decision-making on that subject.

Elections

Ordinary members:

Elections are to be held whenever a seat is vacated with the following conditions:

- Notice of an election is given via the RCP email database and via the RCP newsletter.
- Members are elected on a regional basis and should work within a postgraduate medical deanery covering the RCP region they represent.
- Candidates need not be collegiate or associate members of the RCP, but must become one if elected and before taking up office.
- Candidates must be proposed and seconded by collegiate or associate members of the RCP. They may propose or second themselves. They should supply a supporting statement and details of their present appointment (grade, principal work location and postgraduate medical deanery). They should also provide their up to date curriculum vitae.
- Collegiate or associate members of the RCP each have one vote and may only choose candidates standing for an RCP region covered by their current postgraduate medical deanery.

Election of chair and deputy-chair

A returning officer will be appointed by the Membership Support and Global Engagement department and the following process will be followed:

- Expressions of interest sought from all elected members of the TC.
- Self-nominations accepted by a supporting statement of 250 words (two week deadline). For the chair role a job share can be considered.
- Nominations sent to all elected members by email in the name of the vice-president for education and training.
- Two week deadline to vote by email. The applicant with the most votes will be considered to be the successful candidate.
- Refer to RCP Nominations Committee for sign-off or to deal with any issues, such as a tie.
- Announce result.