

# Role description

## President of the RCP (PRCP)

<b>Tenure</b>	The president is elected for a recommended 4-year-term – commencing as soon as possible after 14 April 2025. RCP Council will decide whether to support the incumbent president in each annual election. However, annual challenge remains a possibility.
<b>Hours</b>	A substantial time commitment to the role is expected, with active clinical practice throughout the term of the presidency strongly encouraged. Flexibility is essential to meet the demands of the position.
<b>Location</b>	UK based, with office locations available in London and/or Liverpool. There will be a mix of onsite and remote working, plus regular UK and international travel.
<b>Department</b>	Chief executive's office

### About the RCP

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is a professional membership body with 40,000 members in the UK and around the world working to improve patient care and reduce illness. Our activities focus on educating, improving and influencing for better health and care.

We champion an inclusive culture and welcome applications from all sections of society. We value taking care, learning and being collaborative. These values underpin everything we do.

Join us to help achieve our vision of a world in which everyone has the best possible health and healthcare.

The RCP employs over 350 staff and has an operating budget of around £40 million per annum. Our activities and services are provided from two main bases in London and Liverpool, in addition to smaller regional offices. The original charter and bye-laws established the college in 1518 and it was granted charitable status as a professional membership organisation in the 1960s. This means that we have specific responsibilities to our members and fellows and an obligation to fulfil our charitable objectives for wider public benefit.

The RCP is governed by a Board of Trustees, which is responsible for ensuring effective modern corporate governance and management. The RCP Council has delegated authority to lead on all matters of professional policy and practice, advising the trustees accordingly. The president is chair of the Council and a member of the Board of Trustees. Under the bye-laws the president is a member of all RCP committees and boards but in practice may delegate attendance on occasion.

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Registered charity no 210508

## RCP strategy

The president is guided by the RCP strategy, as set with the executive team by the Board of Trustees. The newly elected president will be expected to work within the framework of the 2022–24 strategy and take a full part in the review and development of the next strategic plan. We are committed to the eliminating health inequalities agenda and implementing the recommendations of the Summerskill report on equality, diversity and inclusion at the RCP.

The RCP strategy has three key strands:

- > educating physicians and supporting them to fulfil their potential
- > improving health and care and leading the prevention of ill health across communities
- > influencing the way that healthcare is designed and delivered.

Our values are taking care, learning and being collaborative.

## The role of the president

The president of the RCP is a high-profile, authoritative representative of the professional physician community. The RCP has always been fortunate that physicians of national distinction have been willing to put themselves forward for this role, and the prestige and influence of the RCP have been reinforced by the president's personal standing.

### Commitments

The role of president is a substantial time commitment, working virtually and from the two RCP offices in both London and Liverpool. A future president will need to be prepared to make arrangements for their academic and clinical commitments to be largely handed over to others for the period of office. However, an active clinical practice throughout the term of the presidency is strongly encouraged to ensure that the RCP is fully relevant to practising clinicians. In addition, the president would be expected to step down from other wider roles that might affect their ability to perform the role.

### Members and fellows

The RCP is a membership and charitable organisation. The president needs to be personally accessible to members and fellows in the UK and internationally, and able to represent their views. The president needs to engage closely with and understand the views of the membership and fellowship, Council and its subgroupings, the officers and others. This enables the president to understand and reflect the views of individual fellows and members as well as collectively so that they can retain the full confidence of the members and fellows and of Council. The RCP's relationship with the specialist societies also requires the personal involvement of the president, supported by the registrar. All of this entails a demanding programme of visits, speaking engagements, media appearances, other communications and social occasions.

### Engagement with internal and external stakeholders

Developing effective relationships with ministers and senior government officials while maintaining the RCP's independence is essential to ensuring that the RCP's recognised national

influence is sustained and increased. Stakeholder management, developing partnerships and relationships with a wide cross-section of organisations important in healthcare, is a key part of the president's role. Examples of such relationships include with other royal colleges, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC), other medical bodies, medical coalitions and alliances, political think tanks and foundations, and patient and carer groups.

## Public engagement

The president will need to be able to represent RCP views pertinent to public interest and be willing to engage with the media. Training and support will be provided by the media and engagement team, but clear communication and public speaking skills are a key necessary skill.

## The process

RCP Council is confident that, through a transparent, open and well-advertised process, we will elect a fellow of outstanding calibre to lead the RCP with distinction.

Certain specific requirements and details of the election procedures are set out in the RCP bye-laws. The [bye-laws](#) can be downloaded from the RCP website – the index on page 51 references those that are specific to the role of president.

Over 16,000 fellows are eligible to vote in the presidential election and the individual statements and other election material for all candidates will be made available in line with the election arrangements approved by RCP Council.

## Person specification

- > Candidates for the role of president must have been a fellow of the RCP for at least 10 years by the close of nominations and be in good standing with their employer, the GMC and the RCP. Candidature requires three fellows of the RCP to support the nomination.
- > The president is required to observe the statutes, bye-laws, regulations and Code of Conduct of the RCP.
- > It is expected that the president will demonstrate behaviours in office in line with the RCP's values, its policies and guidance. The use of social media is governed by RCP guidance.
- > As a RCP trustee and public figure, the president is also expected to demonstrate characteristics consistent with the Nolan Principles of public life.
- > All officers of the RCP are encouraged to be practising medical doctors and actively connected with, and credible to, the clinical community.
- > All senior officers of the RCP are expected to be practising clinicians and to have experience of leadership roles in healthcare or health science.
- > Proven influencing and communication skills.
- > Intellectual acumen.
- > A deep understanding of the UK health and policy landscape.

Against this background, the president will be required to work towards a set of specific objectives, derived from the strategic goals of the organisation. These objectives will be set by RCP Council in line with the strategy and assessed by a process of appraisal, which forms part of the annual recommendation to fellows, as part of the annual presidential nomination process. This performance process is under review but will include 360 feedback by a small number of councillors.

### Council recommendations for candidates

Council recommends that candidates, and those supporting candidates for nomination, should also consider the abilities of an individual:

- > to deliver sustained, constructive relationships with the government of the day, the Department of Health and Social Care, and arm's-length bodies. This is critical to the successful contribution of the RCP in the present healthcare environment
- > to represent the RCP's fellows, members and medical specialties with fairness and lack of bias, working through both the London and Liverpool offices of the RCP
- > to influence the external healthcare landscape: the RCP has to be considered as part of the commercial, political and social environment of the day
- > to understand the RCP as a professional membership charity and deliver on its charitable objectives
- > to be able to give advice on financial planning and strategic matters to the Board of Trustees.

### Accountability and performance

The president of the Royal College of Physicians will be held to the highest standards of professional integrity, and though no formal statutory mechanism exists for removal (beyond annual election challenge), it is expected that they remain open to constructive criticism from both Council and the broader membership. The president should actively seek and take advice where appropriate, fostering a culture of transparency and accountability. In instances where concerns are raised about their performance or decision-making, the president will be expected to engage in a process of reflection and dialogue with Council to ensure that their actions align with the mission and values of the college. This informal accountability relies on the president's commitment to collaborative leadership and their adherence to the ethical leadership expectations of the role.

## Reporting and relationships

The president is the most senior officer of the RCP: the registrar, senior censor (also the vice president for education and training), treasurer, clinical, academic, global and Wales vice presidents all report directly to the president and, through them, so do the rest of the officers of the RCP. The CEO works directly with the president on the executive running of the RCP.

The Board of Trustees is chaired by an independent lay trustee and is responsible for the good organisational and financial governance of the charity. The president sits on the board as the senior medical trustee, ensuring that Council and the professional membership of the RCP are represented in the governing body of the charity.

The president works together with the treasurer and the presidents of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE) and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow

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(RCPSG) as part of the Federation Board. The chair of the Federation Board rotates: this will sit with the RCPSG from December 2024 and will sit with the RCP again from December 2026.

## Practical arrangements with the candidate's employing authority

Being president is a major commitment in terms of both time and energy. Candidates should also be aware that it is the duty of a candidate for office to obtain advance agreement from their employing authority that they will be given adequate time to perform RCP duties, in the context of activities recognised by the Department of Health and Social Care, before standing for election.

The RCP appreciates the cost pressures on NHS employers and therefore offers a clinician release supplement to the employer. This is set at £60,000 for the role of president. RCP officers can also claim reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their roles.

## Election timetable

7 November 2024	Nominations open
16 December 2024	Nominations close
29 January 2025	RCP Council to review nominations received
Early February 2025	Deadline for submission of election material to the RCP by candidates
Early February 2025	Public announcement of candidates. Candidates may begin campaigning in line with guidance
February/March 2025 (date TBC)	Hustings for president to take place (format to be agreed)
17 March 2025	Voting opens, Civica Election Services to send voting invitation emails to all eligible voters
14 April 2025 (College Day)	Online voting closes at midday. An option exists for in-person votes for president to be cast as part of the special general meeting. The PRCP election result will then be announced (successful candidate to take up post as soon as possible thereafter)

## Our values

We are committed to **taking care, learning, and being collaborative**. These values drive the way we behave, how we interact with each other, and how we work together to achieve our vision and improve patient care.

### **We value taking care**

This means we behave respectfully towards people, whatever their role, position, gender, or background. It means we act as representatives of the RCP and take decisions in the interests of the organisation as a whole.

### **We value learning**

This means we continuously improve through active learning and honest reflection, so that we grow personally and as an organisation, while striving for excellence. We support learning and development opportunities.

### **We value being collaborative**

This means we work together towards the RCP's vision in a collaborative and professional way, understanding that individuals bring different strengths and approaches to our work. We value diversity and each other's contributions.

*The RCP positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender status, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy and maternity.*

*The RCP is all about our people – our members, staff, volunteers and leaders. We educate, influence and collaborate to improve health and healthcare for everyone and know we can only do this by being inclusive, encouraging and celebrating diverse perspectives. Welcoming into our community people who represent the 21st-century medical workforce and the diverse population of patients we serve is a priority for us.*

As a volunteer you are expected to comply with all RCP data protection and security policies and procedures.

**Last reviewed:** October 2024

**Next review:** Summer 2028