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RCP constitutional review – membership survey on elections and voting

This survey is to gather feedback on potential constitutional review relating to RCP elections and voting. The consultation is open to all RCP fellows and members.

The key constitutional area we are consulting on is whether the election voting rights for the president and other senior college roles should be extended to the wider membership. Currently only fellows have the right to vote.

Please note that this survey is consultative. However, your feedback will guide RCP Council in making any recommendations for change to be considered by fellows at the AGM in September 2025 and beyond.

Election of the RCP president

Part 1

The royal charter, Medical Act 1860 and bye-laws stipulate that the RCP must hold an annual presidential election on a set day, and that only fellows are eligible to vote for the president.

RCP Council is exploring widening voting rights across the membership (currently restricted to fellows).

Please note that changing arrangements for the presidential election is likely to require a change in the parliamentary legislation (Medical Act) and royal charter. Council would like to highlight the potential challenges and resource implications of such change. Any move to amend the relevant act of parliament/charter would require ongoing consideration by the Board of Trustees and Council.

Council is seeking the views of fellows and members on the following question to inform ongoing constitutional review.

Question 1: Do you support widening the vote for the president beyond the fellowship?

Yes No Unsure

Comment

Question 1a: If you do support widening the vote, which membership groups would you want this to be extended to? (tick all that apply). Subscribing members are those who pay a membership fee.

Collegiate members – (these are subscribing members who have passed the MRCP(UK) exam OR are working in an NHS substantive consultant post OR are resident doctors enrolled in JRCPTB higher specialty training programmes (ST3+))

Associate members – (these are subscribing members who have not passed the MRCP(UK) exam: resident doctors undertaking internal medicine training, locally employed doctors, SAS doctors)

Foundation doctor members – (these are subscribing members who are in foundation training programme)

Medical student members – (these are non-subscribing members undertaking an undergraduate medical degree)

Comment

Part 2

We have a Council-recommended 4-year term of office for the president; however, the Medical Act 1860 and our royal charter require us to hold a presidential election annually on a specific day.

RCP Council is exploring removing the requirement of the annual presidential election. Any change in this area would be coupled with robust safeguards and performance management processes to allow Council and the membership to manage any instance of under-performance.

Council is seeking the views of fellows and members on the following question to inform ongoing constitutional review.

Question 2: Would you support removing the requirement of the annual presidential election?

Yes No Unsure

Comment

Question 3: How long should a president be in office for?

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

Comment

Election of RCP vice presidents and councillors

Part 3

The bye-laws state that only fellows are eligible vote in the elections of the vice-presidents (academic, clinical, education and training, and Wales) and councillors.

RCP Council is exploring widening voting rights across the membership.

Council is seeking the views of fellows and members on the following question to inform ongoing constitutional review.

Question 4: Do you support widening the voting for RCP vice presidents and councillors beyond the fellowship?

Yes No Unsure

Comment

Question 4a: If you do support widening the vote, which membership groups would you want this to be extended to? (tick all that applies).

Collegiate members – (these are subscribing members who have passed the MRCP(UK) exam OR are working in an NHS substantive consultant post OR are resident doctors enrolled in JRCPTB higher specialty training programmes (ST3+))

Associate members – (these are subscribing members who have not passed the MRCP(UK) exam: resident doctors undertaking internal medicine training, locally employed doctors, SAS doctors)

Foundation doctor members – (these are subscribing members who are in foundation training programme)

Medical student members – (these are non-subscribing members undertaking an undergraduate medical degree)

Comment

RCP Council recommendation**Part 4**

Bye-law 5.3 states that Council shall consider the nominations received for elected vice president roles together with the candidates' curriculum vitae to ensure that the candidates have the necessary experience and knowledge as required by the role description.

It is proposed to remove this responsibility from Council to avoid any bias and allow the electorate to determine the suitability of candidates. All candidates for election will continue to be subject to checks to ensure good standing.

Question 5: Do you agree with this change?

Yes No Unsure

Comment