

Canvassing Code of Practice

This Code of Practice sets out the high standards of conduct expected from all candidates for elected Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) roles. It complements the RCGP Code of Conduct and Behavioural Framework, which support every member in contributing positively to the College community. Candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the RCGP values and the [Social Media Policy](#) for Office Holders and Volunteers.

To support a fair and transparent election process, all candidates are required to follow this Code in full.

Individuals may begin canvassing once they have been formally notified that they meet the requirements to stand as a candidate.

From that point, candidates are welcome to engage in campaigning that highlights their qualifications, competencies and vision for the role, provided they do so in line with this Code of Practice and the spirit of the RCGP's Behavioural Framework, Members' Code of Conduct and Social Media Policy.

The RCGP reserves the right to amend its terms and conditions as it sees fit.

Use of social media

Canvassing using personal, non-RCGP affiliated or branded social media channels is allowed, subject to adherence to the [RCGP's Behavioural Framework](#), Members' Code of Conduct and [Social Media Policy](#).

Candidates are welcome to share their views and personal profiles and are encouraged to do so in a constructive and positive way. They should avoid making negative remarks about any other candidate or member of College staff. When using social media to share information about the election, candidates are encouraged to use the College's official election weblinks. Candidates must not refer to other candidates or their campaigns in any way.

Use of Email

Canvassing by email is welcomed, provided it follows General Data Protection Regulations. Candidates are encouraged to use personal data responsibly by keeping information secure and ensuring it is only shared with recorded consent. While email canvassing is permitted, candidates should avoid sending unsolicited messages to large groups or contacting individuals excessively; in most cases, two emails will be sufficient, unless responding to specific questions.

Candidates standing for Nationally elected roles (President and Nationally Elected Council Member) will not access or use any Collegeheld member databases for

canvassing. They may, however, use their own personal databases or those of another organisation to which they have access, provided they follow standard data- protection- requirements.

Candidates for Council Officer roles will receive a current Council mailing list. All serving Council members' names and email addresses will be shared with candidates under GDPR Legitimate Interests (Article 6(1)(f)) and/or Contractual/role necessity (Article 6(1)(b)).

Funding

The RCGP does not provide funding or expenses for candidates' campaigns.

Role of College and Council Officers

The President and the Council Officers (Chair of Council and the Vice Chairs, should remain impartial during the nomination and election period for all College elections. They are not permitted to act as proposers or seconders for candidates or participate in canvassing, directly or indirectly, by expressing support or disapproval of a particular candidate.

Role of Devolved Council Officers

Devolved Nation Council Officers should, in the same way as College and Council Officers, remain impartial during the nomination and election period for all College elections. The Devolved Nation Chairs are not permitted to act as proposers or seconders for candidates or participate in canvassing, directly or indirectly, by expressing support or disapproval of a particular candidate.

Role of Faculty Board Chairs

Faculty Board Chairs, like College and Council Officers, are expected to remain impartial throughout the nomination and election period for all College elections. To support a fair and balanced process, Faculty Board Chairs may not act as proposers or seconders for candidates, nor take part in canvassing—directly or indirectly—by expressing support for, or disapproval of, any candidate.

Candidates currently holding Officer or other RCGP roles

Candidates who already hold officer or other RCGP roles are encouraged to continue fulfilling their responsibilities, while taking care not to use their position to advance their campaign. In practice, this means avoiding any mention of their candidacy at events where they are representing the RCGP, not canvassing during time allocated to their RCGP duties, and not using RCGP resources, support or information for campaign purposes.

Restrictions

Candidates must not:

- a. Use any RCGP email address, social media account, branding, stationery or other RCGP resources, including faculty and Devolved Council accounts or publications, for canvassing.
- b. Use any RCGP databases or mailing lists gained through their work or involvement with the College for any election related purpose. This includes historic groups or databases from previous roles. Candidates for Council Officer roles will receive the current Council mailing list of members who have consented to its use; this is the only permitted- database.
- c. Canvass through national media or press. Candidates should not make comments to journalists or respond publicly, including via social media. Any media enquiries about their candidacy or the elections must be referred immediately to the media team.
- d. Employ agents or private third parties to canvass on their behalf.
- e. Make adverse comments about another candidate's statement, video, social media activity or any other aspect of their campaign.
- f. Approach the President, Chair, Vice Chairs of Council, Devolved Nation Council Officers of Faculty Board Chairs for endorsement.
- g. Approach any RCGP Trustee Board member for endorsement.
- h. Ask any RCGP Member or Fellow to undertake activity on their behalf that would breach this Code. Any Member or Fellow who does so will be subject to investigation by the Returning Officer.
- i. i. Ask any member of staff for access to RCGP media channels, information or support for canvassing. Candidates seeking information should contact council@rcgp.org.uk.

Candidates must:

- a. Ensure that any statements or claims they make or endorse are accurate, fair, reasonable and not misleading.

- b. Maintain the confidentiality, integrity and good standing of the RCGP and its elections at all times, and avoid any action that could bring them into disrepute.

Breaches of the Code

The RCGP Returning Officer has the responsibility for ensuring that all candidates follow this Code and may take any steps necessary to support that aim.

The Returning Officer will look into all reported concerns and, where appropriate, issue informal warnings, formal written warnings or cease-and-desist requests.

If a candidate is found to have breached the Code, the Returning Officer may disqualify them from the election. The Returning Officer's decisions on all matters relating to the Code are final and binding for all candidates.