



# RCP fellowship proposal

## General guidance

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### Background and eligibility summary

Successful election to RCP fellowship (FRCP) requires eligible candidates to have demonstrated the values expected of a fellow. The application process is through proposal by an existing fellow, or by self-proposal sponsored by an existing fellow.

Successful candidates need to demonstrate that they are doing more than standard contractual obligations in the pursuit of supporting clinical excellence; that is to say, they will be going over and above what is expected for someone in their role.

Fellows of the RCP are established clinicians within their health systems and will usually have been in substantive employment for several years. Typically, this is expected to be at least 12 years from primary medical qualification and/or 8 years from MRCP(UK), but this will vary depending on factors including candidates' choice of specialty and work patterns.

Fellows will be clinical leaders within their teams and will demonstrate excellence in a range of professional domains. Examples of criteria for these domains are set out in the [Supporting information guidance](#), but the list is not comprehensive and is for the purposes of illustration.

The number of physicians working flexibly or less than full time (LTFT) has been increasing steadily over recent years. We welcome proposals for fellowship from physicians working flexibly or LTFT.

Physicians in SAS roles are under-represented in fellowship proposals. We welcome proposals for fellowship from physicians working in autonomous SAS roles. MRCP(UK) is desirable, but not essential as long as the other eligibility criteria are met.

Candidates must:

- be licensed to practise
- be practising autonomously
- be participating in annual appraisal and revalidation
- make a declaration of good standing.

Candidates must also voluntarily declare any formal investigations or disciplinary action by their employer or professional regulator, along with any outcomes. If investigations are ongoing, we would recommend delaying proposal until their conclusion.

## Key changes to the fellowship process

- Eligibility for FRCP is not dependent on length of time served.
- The process is no longer done without candidates' knowledge.
- The criteria against which proposals are graded are more explicitly defined.
- The grading process is anonymised.
- More recognition and weighting are given to those training by alternative routes to independent practice, in different countries or healthcare systems and in less-than-full-time roles, ensuring that the process is equitable and increasing transparency.

## What has not changed

- Fellowship remains a reward of excellence and an accolade awarded by peers.
- RCP Council remains the final arbiter of election.
- The process is held and overseen by the office of the registrar, with the registrar accountable to RCP Council for its good governance.

## The proposal process

Any eligible candidate can either be proposed or self-propose through the RCP website during the three annual fellowship cycles taking place in March, July and November. A call for proposals will be made through email, the RCP website and social media channels, with cycles taking up to 4 months to complete from start to finish. Those proposals missing the cycle cut-off date will be transferred across to the next cycle. The process is shared between a sponsor, an existing fellow and the candidate, and candidates will need to contribute to the early stages of the proposal.

### **The proposal process for fellowship can be initiated by:**

1. Current fellows who wish to propose an eligible physician colleague.
2. Eligible physicians who can self-propose along with the support of a fellow to act as a sponsor for their proposal. Sponsorship must be provided by a fellow of this college. Fellows from other colleges are not eligible to sponsor applications.

The same information will be required from candidate and sponsor, regardless of the route of entry into the process, and all grading will be anonymised in the interests of fairness and equality. Grading will be performed by established fellowship panels made up of a diverse group of RCP representatives, all of whom are fellows of the RCP.

## Step 1: Proposal webform

Proposal webforms are accessed through the [fellowship portal](#) and can be completed by either the candidate or a proposing fellow. The form contains basic eligibility and contact information, which initiates the process of fellowship proposal.

Candidates who are self-proposing will be asked for the details of a fellow to act as their sponsor. This should be a colleague in a senior position who knows the candidate professionally and can confirm and support the detail in the candidate's statement. They are the equivalent of the proposing fellow if a candidate has been proposed.

## Step 2: Supporting information domains

There are two domains that demonstrate a candidate's professional activities:

1. Scope of professional practice.
2. One chosen area of special interest or expertise.

These two domains will be completed by either the candidate or the sponsoring fellow. Examples of activities that indicate that candidates meet the criteria for fellowship are given in the [Supporting information guidance](#) document. This short guidance should be reviewed before completing the form. It has been designed to give candidates the best chance of success. Information provided should be concise, with entries limited to 250 words per domain.

## Step 3: Additional information

Once the form has been completed, the initiating candidate or proposing sponsor should submit it and will receive an acknowledgment from the RCP.

## Step 4: Anonymised grading

The submitted proposals will be anonymised and distributed to panels made up of current RCP regional representatives, fellows and committee members for grading. Between 15–20 proposals will be allocated to a panel and graded using a simple scoring matrix.

A minimum of four fellowship graders will need to score the proposal for the median score to be calculated. This is part of the procedure's quality assurance, and the expectation is that most eligible candidates will achieve the required score. Borderline candidates and candidates who do not achieve the required score will be reviewed by the panel chair to ensure that the process is fair and consistent, and discussed at a meeting of all panel chairs (second-stage quality assurance).

## Step 5: RCP Council approval

Scoring panels will have a nominated chair. Following the meeting of panel chairs, they will make recommendations to RCP Council for election. These will be reviewed by the registrar, deputy registrar and global vice president and presented to Council for final ratification. Council has the right to increase or decrease the number of cycles per year, as it sees fit.

## Step 6: Offer of fellowship – the Green List

RCP bye-laws state that the list of elected fellows, approved by Council, will be made available to the wider RCP fellowship to review for a short period before candidates are invited to accept an offer of fellowship.

This is known as the Green List. The Green List will be circulated digitally for a maximum of 2 weeks. If no objections are received, fellowship offers will then be made to successful candidates. Once a fellowship offer has been made to a candidate, it is valid for 12 months only and will be withdrawn following this period.

Unsuccessful candidates and their sponsors will receive feedback from the administrative team. Exceptionally, if candidates or sponsors require more direct feedback, this can be provided through the office of the deputy registrar on request. Unsuccessful candidates and their sponsors who feel that the process was not adhered to may appeal their decision.

The office of the deputy registrar will work to ensure that the correct process has been followed. In the event of there being no failure of the process, the previous decision will stand. If there has been a failure of the process, then a further anonymised regrading by a minimum of six fellows will take place, and this will be confirmed by a specially arranged panel with an appropriate chair.

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