



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Why should I apply to become a representative on the RCPATH Trainees' Advisory Committee (TAC)?

The TAC is comprised of trainees from all pathology specialities. We meet to discuss issues or projects related to training within the different specialities, and pathology as a whole. Topics for discussion include examinations, assessments, curricula, trainee wellbeing and support, engagement work, amongst many others. The committee meets twice a year and in advance of the meeting, a questions portal is opened on the website which allows the trainee network to submit questions that they would like the committee to address.

The committee is highly valued by the College and works very closely with the College Officers; the President, Vice-President for Learning, Director of Learning, Clinical Director of Examinations, and Clinical Director of Training and Assessment attend part of the meeting to support the work of the committee and seek trainee views on other College workstreams.

The committee comprises a fantastic team of trainees from different backgrounds and stages of training. The work of the committee is interesting, enjoyable and very rewarding – you could be a part of this too!

Equality, diversity and inclusion

As a representative, you are a valued member of the team. The committee prioritises equality, diversity, and inclusion and ANYONE, no matter their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or other protected characteristic would be welcomed as part of the committee. Diversity is a strength of our pathology workforce, and we want our committee to reflect that diversity. Prejudice and discrimination of any sort will not be tolerated.

Do I need to be a senior trainee in order to apply?

No! It is a myth that only senior trainees can apply for a representative role! All trainees at any stage of training are welcome to apply if they wish to, even if you have not yet attempted or passed a College exam. You may feel that you do not have as much experience or knowledge as others who are more senior than you; but this does not matter. You can always seek wider trainee views on particular topics that arise in any meeting you are attending. Other members of the committee are also available to offer advice if you need it too.



I have never been a trainee representative before – can I still apply?

Absolutely! You would be very welcome to apply. It is an opportunity to get some experience in a leadership and management role that could lead to further opportunities throughout your career. It would be very useful to get in touch with the outgoing representative to ask them about their experiences of what the role entails. You will be very supported in the role; the outgoing trainee representative and you should arrange a handover meeting to discuss current points of relevance. And the committee executive team will be very happy to meet with you and offer any advice that you may require. It may feel a bit daunting at first, but your perspective and viewpoints are valued and appreciated.

What are the benefits of being a trainee representative?

There are many benefits to becoming a trainee representative; if you enjoy teamwork and working with a diverse range of people to achieve objectives, it is a role for you! This is very rewarding when helping to implement changes for the benefit of others both now and in the future. We are part of cutting-edge specialties and therefore adaptations are frequently needed. Some of these changes can be 'quick fixes' and others may take longer. But it is a privilege to represent trainees and work with the College to help improve and develop training as best we can.

There are also personal benefits; it is an opportunity for you to gain experience in leadership, management, teamwork and communication skills, and also provides networking opportunities across different specialties which may lead to exciting projects and training opportunities for you and others. You will also be able to understand more about the workings of the College and how committees can bring about change.

I am worried about balancing this role with my training time!

This is a very reasonable concern to have. However, your training is always considered to be your priority. Always consider discussing your plans and thoughts with your Educational Supervisor or Training Programme Director and get in touch with other representatives on the committee to discuss the time commitment and workload of the role. If you do decide to apply for the post, but are finding things difficult, there is supported to help you. We are all part of a team and so other members of the committee can help and support you. All you need to do is ask; get in touch with one of the committee's executive team and they can provide advice and point you in the right direction.

A [letter of support](#) has also been written and co-signed by leaders from the NHS, Department of Health and Social Care, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the General Medical Council to help medical staff (including trainees) provision the time they need for the purposes of carrying out work for the wider health system. Your role and work associated with the TAC would be included in this remit.

How long will the post be?

Usually, the representative roles are for a duration of 3 years. However, you may find that you complete your training earlier than this; this is not a problem. All you need to do is keep the Governance and Committee Services Officer informed of your expected completion of training date (there will also be an opportunity to highlight this during each meeting).

What opportunities might this bring for me in the future?

This may be your first experience of a representative role, or it may be one of many that you have undertaken. Either way, it will give you valuable experience that you may choose to take forward into other roles. This may open opportunities for you to consider other roles on College committees, or other leadership roles in healthcare management more generally. Many former committee members of the TAC have gone on to hold senior leadership roles in the College, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and many other pathology and healthcare organisations – this could be you one day!
