

FAQ guide for Specialty Advisory Committee Chair roles at The Royal College of Pathologists

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1. Why should I consider becoming a committee chair?

As Chair of a Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC), you will lead key discussions for the specialty at the College, raise awareness of developing trends and be able to influence what's discussed and progressed at College Council. As Chair, it is your opportunity to help shape the future of the engagement of College members with the specialty.

Terms of office are usually 3 years in duration from the AGM in November of the year of appointment.

2. What are the key duties of a SAC Chair?

- Act as the key representative for your speciality for College members.
- In coordination with the SAC's allocated Governance and Committee Services Officer, plan and prepare the committee meetings, agendas and related activities as appropriate.
- Chair committee meetings (commonly these are held twice a year including via teleconference) and any subgroup/working group meetings as necessary ensuring:
 - A balance is struck between timekeeping and space for discussions
 - The agenda is dealt with, and decisions made
 - Decisions, actions, and deliberations are adequately minuted
 - The implementation of decisions is clearly assigned and monitored
 - Minutes are complete and accurate and reviewed promptly
- Ensure responses to consultation requests from the Registrar or College staff are provided. These may be a College response to policy documents produced by external organisations and governing bodies, such as the Department of Health and Social Care, other Government departments and Medical Royal Colleges. This may be done in consultation with other committee members or by delegation to an appropriate person.
- Provide annual plans for its work and submit an annual report to College Council.
- Ensure committee members are aware of their obligations and that the committee complies with its responsibilities.

For further details on this, please see the role description.

3. What are the benefits of being a Chair of a College committee?

Influence

You will ensure the work of the committee is maintained within College Council's approved terms of reference and College By-Laws.

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Networking

Ensure engagement with College members regarding specialty matters e.g. through the Governance and Committee Services Officer or other staff teams. Your work will feed in directly to College Council.

Oversee a platform for contribution of knowledge

You will lead the development of objectives and programmes of work for the committee and ensure the agreed activities are monitored and reported.

Learning from peers

You will have the opportunity to be in joint discussions and part of intended induction sessions where serving and new chairs will discuss experiences and aspirations in relation to these roles.

Growth and development of my specialty and members' interests

You will help ensure engagement with College members regarding specialty matters. You will be at the forefront of making sure live and upcoming on the horizon matters are flagged to relevant subject matter experts in your field and dealt with in the most effective manner.

You will be leading contributions on specialty-specific issues such as developing standards, workforce and clinical issues, development of a regular programme of specialty specific webinars and information for members and promoting the specialty profile and pathology in general throughout the wider community.

4. How can joining a committee enhance my professional growth and development?

- A SAC Chair role is a superb opportunity to raise your profile while collaborating with other experts in the field.
- Provides the opportunity to gain early and in-depth insights to key issues for pathology and the specialties within, and be able to lead on effecting change and influence.
- You will bring together experts in their respective fields and trainee representatives, giving them an influential voice to flag national and regional matters related to the specialist fields and to their peers.

- You will hear and facilitate discussions and future direction on clinical and workforce considerations including needs across the UK.

5. What types of committees are available, and how do I choose the right one for me?

The College supports the interests of pathologists and scientists working in 17 different specialties, which include cellular pathology, haematology, clinical biochemistry and medical microbiology.

The Committees that support the 17 specialties deal with matters crossing all pathology specialties, while Specialty Advisory Committees advise on specialty-specific matters, for example, cellular pathology, medical microbiology and histocompatibility and immunogenetics.

For a full list of College committees, please click [here](#).

6. What is the time commitment required for membership, and how can I balance it with my other responsibilities?

Committee meetings are usually held twice a year (currently predominantly held virtually via MS Teams or Zoom), each meeting lasting for approximately 2 hours. At meetings, committees formally consider specialty-specific issues such as developing standards, workforce and clinical issues, development of programmes of specialty specific webinars and information for members and promoting the specialty profile and pathology in general throughout the wider community. Business is also conducted outside of meetings via email, telephone and ad-hoc video calls as felt necessary. It is expected that Chairs are able to make a small amount of time available to respond to queries in a timely way. This ensures the work of the committee can be maintained by College staff who support the committee's work.

7. Are there examples of successful projects or initiatives that have been undertaken by Committees?

Committees and regional councils have provided input into a number of national and regional consultations and provided input into workforce planning. A recent example of this is submitting evidence about the acute workforce shortage across the UK to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Baby Loss.

When the Covid-19 pandemic was spreading, the digital pathology committee was at the forefront of discussions that helped ensure that labs with digital scanners were able to switch to remote multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings without the need to install new equipment. They were able to maintain training activities with virtual multi-header training and reporting sessions, and facilitate service delivery by remote working.

In early January 2023, the Chair of the College's Prenatal, Perinatal and Paediatric Pathology SAC appeared on a BBC Radio 4 programme to discuss the work being done to address the shortage of paediatric pathologists.

8. How can I apply for the role of Chair and what is the application process like?

We are recruiting for a number of Chair roles, please [click here](#) for information and how to apply.

We are committed to increasing diversity and inclusion within our organisation, as well as using our voice and platform to help make pathology as a profession more inclusive. This means reflecting critically on issues of diversity and inclusion within all that we do, identifying and taking appropriate actions to reduce inequality, and welcoming challenge.

We welcome applications from anyone regardless of their disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion, or socio-economic background.