

THE FACULTY OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES  
OF  
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON

**STANDING ORDERS**

Approved by the Council on 20 September 2018

11 St Andrews Place  
Regent's Park  
LONDON  
NW1 4LE  
Registered charity no. 210508

## **1 FUNCTION, OBJECTS AND REMIT**

### **1.1 Function**

The Faculty of Physician Associates (hereafter called “the Faculty”) is a faculty of the Royal College of Physicians of London (hereafter called “the RCP”), set up by these Standing Orders under and subject to Bye-Laws 172-187 of the College. The Board of the Faculty (hereafter called “the Board”) is elected by the members of the Faculty.

Approval to establish the Faculty was given by the College in Council as required under Bye-Law 172, at the meeting of Council that took place on Wednesday 19 March 2014.

The Faculty’s over-riding function is to share in the College's effort for the advancement of medical knowledge and care, and it shall consult and collaborate with the RCP on all appropriate measures.

The Faculty will operate with its own specific identity as described and defined within these Standing Orders but will be part of, and subject to the overriding authority of, the RCP.

Unless stated otherwise the Faculty will conduct its activities within the governance processes and other policies of the RCP.

The business of the Faculty shall be managed as provided in these Standing Orders.

The Faculty will operate within the overall financial framework of the RCP, and within funding limits or arrangements set by the RCP in consultation with the Faculty.

### **1.2 Objects**

The Faculty has the following objects, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011:

- To promote for the public benefit the advancement of education and knowledge in the work of physician associates in all its classes
- To develop and maintain for the public benefit the advancement of health and the saving of lives through good practice of the work of physician associates by ensuring the highest professional standards of competence and ethical integrity.

### **1.3 Furtherance of Objects**

The Board may and if requested by the RCP shall make recommendations to the RCP in furtherance of the objects of the Faculty, with special reference to research, lectures, awards, examinations, the appointments of examiners and other matters related to physician associates.

## **1.4 Remit**

For the purpose of achieving its objects the Faculty has the following remit:

- To set professional standards for admission to membership of the Faculty and regulate its members on a voluntary basis, until such time that statutory regulation is in place
- To promote training and research in the work of physician associates for the public benefit
- Through the RCP to conduct examinations and award certificates
- To disseminate in any appropriate way, information on matters affecting the work of physician associates
- To hold such meetings and courses as may be desirable in order to promote the work of the Faculty
- To advise on matters affecting the work of physician associates
- To represent the work of physician associates on appropriate councils, boards, and committees
- To secure and maintain recognition as the body responsible for professional standards in the work of physician associates under any scheme or schemes for specialist registration and/or certification (provided always that any benefit obtained by membership of the Faculty as a result of such recognition should be incidental to the achievement of the charitable objectives of the Faculty and of the RCP)
- To liaise with other bodies concerned with the work of physician associates
- To promote international communication in the work of physician associates.

## **2 THE MEMBERSHIP**

### **2.1 Categories of Membership**

There shall be three categories of membership of the Faculty within the RCP, namely physician associate professionals, physician associate students and Friend of the Faculty members. The criteria and admission requirements for membership of each category, and the benefits of membership, will be defined within the membership categories and entry criteria of the RCP and approved and whenever necessary amended by the Membership Support and Global Engagement (MSGE) Board of the RCP on authority delegated to it by the Council. Such decisions will be reported to Council for endorsement. The Faculty shall have one representative on the MSGE Board who shall be the President or nominated deputy, and the MSGE Board will always consult with and seek advice from the Board of the Faculty on any aspect concerning or affecting the membership of the Faculty.

The criteria for membership (excluding student or friend of the Faculty members) will always include a requirement to be registered with the Faculty until such time as statutory regulation is in place, when this requirement will be reviewed.

## **2.2 Register of Members**

The membership records of the Faculty will be managed and maintained within those of the RCP and subject to any data policies and requirements which arise from that.

Every official letter, message or notice which shall be sent by an appointed Officer, to any member, addressed to them by name, at the given address or email address as entered on the RCP records shall be considered to have been received and that person shall be deemed to have sufficient notice of the contents of such letter, message or notice, and shall be bound by it.

## **2.3 Subscriptions**

Members shall pay such registration fees and annual and other subscriptions as may be determined by the RCP in consultation with the Board. Annual subscriptions shall be payable to the RCP by any method and at any time agreed by the RCP and the Board.

## **2.4 Subscriptions in Arrears**

The Faculty Board will have authority to review and if necessary suspend or remove the status of any member who is in arrears in accordance with the procedure for disciplinary processes and appeals procedures to be managed through the Faculty's Professional Standards committee which can include specifically the suspension of the member from the Physician Associate Voluntary Register, until such time that the register is held by a regulator.

In any case, any member who is more than six months in arrears with payment of any annual subscription shall, if the RCP so directs, forfeit all rights and privileges of the Faculty and any office, appointments or positions in the Faculty, until all outstanding annual subscriptions have been paid.

## **2.5 Reduction and Remission of Fees**

The Board may at any time remit or reduce the fees or subscriptions to be paid by an individual based on an assessment of personal circumstances.

## **2.6 Good Standing**

The term 'in good standing' in these Standing Orders means that the member of the Faculty so designated has duly paid all fees and subscriptions due from them to the RCP, is included in the Physician Associate Register and complies with the Faculty's CPD requirements.

## **2.7 Misconduct**

If it shall at any time become known to the Board that any member of the Faculty has gained admission to the Faculty by fraud, false statement or imposition, or has acted in any respect in a dishonourable or unprofessional manner, or has violated any Standing

Order or regulation of the Faculty or the RCP, the Board may determine that the person's name shall be removed from the Physician Associate Register for such limited time or altogether as it shall determine.

The Board will establish a procedure for disciplinary processes and appeals procedures to be managed through the Faculty's Professional Standards committee and to advise the Board on specific cases.

## **2.8 Voting and Other Rights**

All members of the Faculty are entitled to receive the papers referring to General Meetings of the Faculty. They are also entitled to attend such meetings and to put forward written questions for reply.

Only members of the Faculty who are physician associate professionals and in good standing shall be entitled to vote at General Meetings of the Faculty, or to vote or otherwise participate in any elections provided for in these Standing Orders.

No candidate shall canvass for votes directly or indirectly for Membership, Fellowship or any office, distinction, advancement or promotion in the Faculty except as may be expressly permitted by the Council of the RCP.

## **2.9 Resignation**

A member may at any time resign by notifying the FPA.

# **3 OFFICERS OF THE FACULTY**

## **3.1 The Officers**

The Officers of the Faculty shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The President and Vice President shall be elected by democratic and inclusive ballot of the members who are physician associate professionals and in good standing. The Secretary and Treasurer will be appointed.

The Officers must be members who are physician associate professionals and in good standing.

## **3.2 The Role of the President**

The President shall be the public representative and spokesperson for the Faculty but will conduct their activities within the context of the governance process, policies, and conventions of the RCP.

The President shall appoint the Chairs of standing and ad hoc committees with the agreement of the Board.

The President shall preside over and make a report at the annual meeting of the membership of the activities of the Faculty and any recommendations made for consideration by the general membership.

The President or their nominee shall be a member of the RCP Council.

The President or their nominee shall be a member of the RCP MSGE Board.

### **3.3 The Role of the Vice President**

The Vice President shall assume the office of the president in the case of vacancy in that office. The Vice President shall chair all meetings in the absence of the President and shall perform any other duties assigned.

### **3.4 The Role of the Treasurer**

The Treasurer of the Faculty shall be responsible for assuring accurate maintenance and accounting of the finances of the Faculty within the systems and governance processes of the RCP. The Treasurer of the Faculty shall be subject to the greater authority of the RCP Treasurer and Board of Trustees.

The Treasurer shall give a report of the general financial condition of the Faculty at the annual meeting of the membership.

The Treasurer shall monitor monies generated by the Faculty into such accounts as are established by the RCP, shall disburse such monies as necessary on order of the Board but within the financial processes of the RCP, shall monitor such records of these transactions as necessary, report to the Board the financial status of the Faculty and accounts when requested and other duties as assigned.

### **3.5 The Role of the Secretary**

The Secretary shall have charge of recording and maintaining the minutes of the regular and other meetings of the Board and the annual membership meeting; maintaining and conducting correspondence on behalf of the Board. The Secretary will draft and circulate Board agendas. The Secretary will also be responsible for Faculty membership issues and professional standard issues relating to the Faculty and its members and other duties as assigned.

### **3.6 Elections**

The elected offices of the Faculty shall be the President and Vice President.

The terms of office for each elected officer shall be a maximum of three calendar years, with elections held at such time to comply with requirements for officers of the Faculty. The terms of office shall be staggered so as to maintain a continuity of purpose on the Board at all times.

The officers of the Faculty shall be elected in the following manner:

- Candidacy for office shall be made by nomination at a time and in a form designated by the Board and endorsed by the MSGE Board of the RCP
- Candidates for office must be members of the Faculty in good standing
- A list containing the names of such candidates shall be sent to each physician associate professional member of the Faculty, with details relevant to the process including the closing date. This list shall be used as a ballot paper to be completed by voting members and shall be constructed in such a way as to be used in a transferable voting procedure designated by Council of the RCP for the conduct of RCP elections
- The distribution of papers and the return of votes may be conducted using electronic means including the use of email and the internet
- Such elections will be conducted in accordance with the election practices and procedures of the RCP and the count will be conducted on behalf of the RCP by external independent scrutineers who will be appointed by the RCP
- In all cases of an equality of votes in favour of and as between any two candidates (except in cases otherwise specially provided for) the senior candidate in terms of duration of membership of the Faculty shall be deemed to have a majority
- Officers shall assume their offices on a date as negotiated between the outgoing and incoming officers with the approval of the Board.

Should a vacancy occur during a term of office, the following procedure for replacement shall apply:

- President; the Vice President shall assume the office of President upon a vacancy and shall serve the remainder of the assumed term
- Other officers; vacancies in the remaining offices shall be made at the next regularly scheduled board meeting by appointment of an eligible candidate from a list of volunteers solicited from the membership. Such appointee will serve a full term of office.

## **4 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

### **4.1 The Faculty Board**

The Faculty will be managed within the RCP by the Board of the Faculty of Physician Associates ('The Board').

The Board will report to and be accountable to the Council of the RCP on professional issues.

The Board will act to fulfil the remit of the Faculty as defined and described in Section 1.4 under authority delegated to it by the RCP and to be exercised within the governance framework of the RCP.

## **4.2 Responsibilities of the Board**

Within its remit the Board will be consulted by the RCP, and be responsible for:

- Development and recommendation to the RCP of policy in all aspects relating to physician associates
- Engaging and communicating with the membership of the Faculty on matters within its remit, and representing those views within the RCP
- Contributing to the development and implementation of RCP strategy in all aspects involving the work, development, or membership of physician associates.

The Board will report on the activities of the Faculty annually to the Council of the RCP and will be entitled to refer business to Council at any time.

## **4.3 Membership of the Board**

The Board will always be comprised so that a majority of its members are physician associates.

The voting members of the Board will comprise:

Ex-officio and serving for the term of their office or other status;

- The President of the Faculty
- The Vice President of the Faculty
- The Secretary of the Faculty
- The Treasurer of the Faculty
- The Registrar of the RCP as a senior officer of the RCP
- The Executive Director of MSGE as the manager responsible for the infrastructure of the Faculty.

Serving as specific appointments, each for a maximum of 4 calendar years (or less if their role or status changes before then);

- Four physician associate members of the Faculty, elected by the physician associate members of the Faculty
- A student member of the Faculty, elected by the student members of the Faculty.
- A physician in training who is a subscribing member of the RCP, appointed by the Trainees Committee of the RCP
- Chief Examiner for the FPA national examination
- A doctor in training who is appointed in consultation with the other Medical Royal Colleges
- A practicing physician who is a fellow of the RCP, appointed by the RCP
- A practicing doctor representing specialties other than medicine, appointed by the RCP in consultation with the other Medical Royal Colleges
- A patient representative nominated by the RCP patient involvement unit.

No member shall hold more than one position on the Board.

The fact that the Board may not comprise at any particular time all of the persons designated in this Standing Order shall not invalidate or otherwise affect any decision or action properly decided or taken by the Board.

#### **4.4 Chairing the Board**

The President of the Faculty shall preside at every meeting of the Board, but if the President is not present within ten minutes of the appointed time, the Vice President of the Faculty shall take the Chair. If the Vice President of the Faculty is also absent, the members of the Board shall choose one of their number who is a Fellow to take the Chair.

#### **4.5 Resignation and Disqualification of Board Members**

A member's seat on the Board shall be vacated automatically if:

- the Board member, if a member of the Faculty ceases to be in good standing, or
- by notice in writing to the Registrar of the RCP, membership of the Board is resigned, or
- without good cause there is a failure to attend three consecutive meetings of the Board, or
- the criteria either for election or appointment as a Board member are no longer fulfilled, or
- a conflict of interest arises which is incompatible with membership of the Board.

#### **4.6 Casual Vacancy**

The Board may at any time appoint a member of the Faculty to fill a casual vacancy provided that in relation to an elected member of the Board the person so appointed would be eligible to be elected in the same category as the vacating member of the Board.

Any person so appointed shall retire at the next Annual General Meeting unless formally elected to the Board before that date.

#### **4.7 Regulation of Meetings and Voting**

The Board may meet, adjourn and otherwise regulate its meetings as it thinks fit.

The Board must meet face-to-face on at least three occasions a year.

In relation to any additional meetings which are not held wholly face to face, any member of the Board may participate in the meeting by means of conference telephone or other communications equipment (including televisual means) which allows all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other.

Questions arising at any meeting and requiring decision shall be decided if necessary by a majority of votes of those taking part.

Questions needing a decision between formal meetings may be decided in the same manner (including the casting of votes by electronic communication) provided that all members of the Board are notified of the question to be decided and the number of them voting on the question would constitute a quorum.

In case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

#### **4.8 Quorum**

A quorum will comprise eight members of the Board, of whom at least four must be physician associates.

The Board may act if quorate even if a majority of the members present are not physician associates. In such case, any decisions made will be subject to endorsement by a majority of the physician associate members of the Board who will be consulted with as soon as possible after the meeting.

The Board may act despite any vacancy in its body, but if less than a quorum of members is present they shall act as a Board only for the purposes of filling vacancies in the Board, or summoning a General Meeting.

When a quorum is not present no significant decision can be taken, but discussions may be held and recommendations made which shall then be reported to the next full meeting of the Board for its decision, or by email to board members for a vote.

For the purpose of determining whether a quorum is present, all persons whose participation in a meeting conforms to the requirements of these Standing Orders shall be deemed to constitute persons present at such meeting.

#### **4.9 Acts Done in Good Faith**

All acts done in good faith by any meeting of the Board or by any person acting as a member of the Board shall be valid and binding, even if it be discovered later that there was some defect in the appointment, election or continuance in office of any member or members of the Board carrying out such acts.

#### **4.10 Meeting Records**

Minutes or other appropriate records of a type approved by the RCP shall be made of the proceedings of all meetings of committees including all actions agreed and decisions made at such meetings. The record of any meeting when adopted at the next meeting shall be sufficient evidence of the facts stated.

#### **4.11 Faculty Representation**

The Board may nominate representatives of the Faculty, who need not be members of the Board, to serve on other bodies as appropriate. The method of nominating any permitted representative of the Faculty shall be determined by the Board.

#### **4.12 Insurance**

The Board shall be insured or indemnified by the RCP against personal liability for acts properly undertaken in the administration of the Faculty and acts undertaken under an honest mistake during their period of service as Board members.

#### **4.13 Committees of the Board**

There will be two standing committees of the Board:

- Education and Training
- Professional Standards

The remit, membership, management of business, and meetings of each committee will be defined in Terms of Reference which will be agreed by the Board and reviewed annually. They will be attached to and form part of these Standing Orders as appendices.

The Terms of Reference of the Professional Standards committee shall include arrangements for the management of eligibility for membership including the Physician Associate Register that will operate until such time that statutory regulation is in place for physician associates.

Each committee will be empowered to act and make decisions within its Terms of Reference and will report to the Board after each meeting.

#### **4.14 Powers Delegated by the Board**

The Board may delegate such powers as it thinks fit to committees appointed by it and any such committee shall, in the exercise of its powers, conform to any conditions imposed on it by the Board, and report regularly to the Board as required. The meetings and proceedings of any such committee shall be governed by the provisions of these Standing Orders. The Board may at any time, by notice in writing to all members of any committee, revoke any powers delegated by it to such committee.

#### **4.15 Membership of Committees**

Members of a committee of the Board need not be members of the Board. All members of committees who are members of the Faculty must be in good standing.

#### **4.16 Co-Opted Members**

Any committee of the Board may add to its number on a temporary basis and for specific purpose (which may include filling a casual vacancy) with the approval of the Secretary. The names of co-opted members of committees shall be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

#### **4.17 Regulation of Committee Meetings and Voting**

Subject to any instructions by the Board, a committee may meet for the dispatch of business, adjourn and otherwise regulate its meetings as its Chair shall determine. Questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by the meeting or if not possible, or beyond the remit of the committee, they will be referred to the Board

#### **4.18 Acts Done in Good Faith**

All acts done in good faith by any meeting of a committee of the Board may be ratified by the Board at its discretion, even if it be discovered later that there was some defect in the appointment, election or continuance in office of any member, or members, of the committee carrying out such acts.

#### **4.19 Meeting Records**

Minutes or other appropriate records of a type approved by the RCP shall be made of the proceedings of all meetings of committees including all actions agreed and decisions made at such meetings. The record of any meeting when adopted at the next meeting shall be sufficient evidence of the facts stated.

### **5 GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE FACULTY**

#### **5.1 Annual General Meeting**

The Faculty shall hold an Annual General Meeting at such time and place as may be determined by the Board. Each Annual General Meeting shall be held not less than eleven nor more than fourteen months after the date of the last preceding Annual General Meeting.

The eligible voting members present at the meeting shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of conducting the business of the meeting. The primary purpose of the meeting will be to report the activities of the Board and the Faculty for the preceding year.

Notice of the general membership meeting shall made under policies and procedures established by the Board with the date and agenda of the meeting provided to the membership at least six weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

## **5.2 Quorum for General Meetings**

No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum is present when the meeting proceeds to business. Twenty voting members of the Faculty personally present shall be a quorum.

## **5.3 Accidental Omission to Give Notice**

The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of such notice by, any person entitled to receive notice shall not invalidate any resolution passed, or business transacted at any meeting.

## **5.4 Extraordinary Meetings**

Extraordinary meetings of the general membership shall be called by the Secretary upon request of the President or upon written request by 25% of eligible voting members in good standing.

Notice of the extraordinary meeting shall be made under policies and procedures established by the Board with the date and subject of the meeting provided to the membership at least two weeks prior to the date of the special meeting with the subject of the meeting presented and action by the membership limited to the subject notified.

## **5.5 Dissolution and Adjournment of General Meetings**

If within half-an-hour from the time appointed for the holding of a General Meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting, if convened at the request of members of the Faculty, shall be dissolved.

In any other case it shall stand adjourned until another time, date and place determined by the Board.

If at such adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half-an-hour of the time appointed for holding the meeting the members of the Faculty present shall be a quorum.

## **5.6 Chair and Alternate Chair at General Meeting**

The President shall take the Chair at every General Meeting. If the President is absent, the Chair shall be taken by the Vice President or, if both are absent, by the Secretary of the Faculty.

## **5.7 Adjournment**

The Chair of the meeting may with the consent of any meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting) adjourn the meeting from time to time,

and from place to place, but no additional business shall be introduced at any adjourned meeting.

Whenever a meeting is adjourned for one month or more, notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given in the same manner as for the original meeting.

### **5.8 Method of Voting at General Meeting**

At any General Meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided by a show of hands.

If in the opinion of the Chair the show of hands is inconclusive, or on the prior written demand of ten members of the Faculty present, a ballot shall be held. Unless otherwise required by the provisions of other Standing Orders a resolution shall be passed if a simple majority of those voting (being entitled to do so) vote in favour.

### **5.9 Chair's Casting Vote**

In the case of an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or ballot, the Chair of the meeting shall be entitled to a casting vote.

### **5.10 Entitlement to Vote**

Except in a casting vote, every member of the Faculty present and entitled to vote shall have one vote.

### **5.11 Conduct of General Meeting**

Subject to the provisions of these Standing Orders the Chair of a General Meeting of the Faculty shall have authority to direct and control the conduct of business at that meeting, including the discretion to decide that a matter might lead to a change in Standing Orders.

Those entitled to speak at a General Meeting of the Faculty shall address the Chair; shall speak to the subject before the meeting, and once only shall speak as briefly as possible and if requested by the Chair, shall be silent.

## **6 EXAMINATION**

### **6.1 Chief Examiner**

The Board shall appoint a Chief Examiner for the FPA national examination in conjunction with the RCP Education Board. The Chief Examiner shall provide regular reports to the Board. The Chief Examiner will also chair the National Examination Board. The Chief Examiner shall be a physician associate.

## **7 MATTERS RELATING TO THE STANDING ORDERS**

### **7.1 Proposals for Change**

The Board may make, or accept from members of the Faculty, proposals for additions or amendments to the Standing Orders.

### **7.2 Notice of Alterations**

Not less than four weeks' notice shall be given to all members of the Faculty of proposed alterations to the Standing Orders.

### **7.3 Approval of Alterations**

No alterations to the Standing Orders shall come into effect unless approved by the Council of the RCP and also approved at a General Meeting of the Faculty by the affirmative votes of a two-thirds majority of such members of the Faculty present at the meeting and entitled to vote.

### **7.4 Status of the College as a Charity**

No alteration to the Standing Orders shall be made which would prejudice the status of the RCP as a charity.

### **7.5 Interpretation of Standing Orders**

Any question concerning the interpretation of these Standing Orders shall be referred to the Registrar of the RCP whose decision shall be binding.

Any matters concerning the activities of the Faculty which are not covered by these Standing Orders shall be dealt with according to the Bye Laws and Customs of the College.

### **7.6 Revocation of Powers**

The Royal College of Physicians in Council shall be entitled at any time in writing to revoke the delegation of any of the powers delegated to the Faculty by these Standing Orders and shall also be entitled to exercise all other rights reserved to it under its Charter and Bye-Laws.

*Date September 2018*

