

Final Version Agreed by Council 6 June 2024
Royal College of Emergency Medicine Presidential Elections
Canvassing Code of Practice

1. This Code of Practice sets out the way all candidates for the post of President are required to conduct canvassing during the elections. The Code is mandatory for all candidates, and the College reserves the right to amend its terms and conditions as it sees fit.
2. The Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) supports canvassing and indeed encourages it, but it is essential that the Code is fully complied with in the interests of clarity and to provide a fair process for all candidates, whilst also encouraging informed participation.
3. Canvassing by candidates is therefore allowed, subject to compliance always with the terms and conditions of this Code and with the terms and spirit of the RCEM's Code of Conduct <https://rcem.ac.uk/code-of-conduct/> and any Social Media Guidance issued by RCEM.
4. All candidates are required to:
 - 4.1. prepare personal election statements, limited to a maximum of 500 words, which will be uploaded to the election website and linked to the College's centrally managed social media accounts.
 - 4.2. produce a 50-word summary statement for use on College communication channels as well as an edited version of their personal election statement, limited to a maximum 250 words, which will be published in a College election membership e-newsletter.
 - 4.3. record a three-minute statement to camera, recorded as live and which will be used on College communication channels.
 - 4.4. take part in a hustings event if the Council decides to convene one at the College which will be recorded and live streamed. Space will be limited to the room capacity at Octavia House for the meeting and attendees will be booked in on a first come first served basis. During the hustings events, candidates will be required to make a statement, after which there will be a "Q&A" session dealing with questions selected from those submitted by voters in advance. Any hustings event will be officiated by an independent chair appointed by the outgoing President.
 - 4.5. take part in an online "Q&A" session if the Council decides to convene one. If convened this will be hosted and managed by the College on a platform selected by the College.
5. All candidates can address RCEM committee meetings during the election period. If a request is received from a candidate to address a Committee meeting then Committee Chairs must make all reasonable efforts to invite all other candidates to address its members either at the same meeting or an equivalent meeting, provided that this does not become a hustings event. College committees cannot hold their own full scale hustings events. Information about candidates standing may be made known by Chairs of College Committees to members, but such information

must include the names of all the candidates and must not advocate support for any one particular candidate.

6. Canvassing by candidates and their supporters by personal email, telephone and their personal social media is allowed, subject to compliance with this code and those codes referred to in paragraph 3.
7. In their personal election statements, candidates may include links to their own social media accounts, a URL to a personal website, and/or to the election pages on the RCEM website. Candidates may also make available for download from their social media accounts and personal websites, any live recordings made from events referred to in this Code.
8. Use of RCEM social media, email accounts or mailing lists for canvassing purposes, including those of RCEM committees, by any individual is prohibited, except for those College employees already authorised to use those channels in an official capacity by the Chief Executive or nominated deputy. College employees in the Communications Team may use College social media to raise awareness of the election, the election process and the candidates standing to increase engagement in the election process by referencing content on the election micro-site.
9. The College does not provide funding for candidates' canvassing campaigns.
10. The College election services providers will create an election micro-site using a third party to promote and administer the election. This site will include the information provided by candidates about themselves alongside information from the College employees on the election process and timetable.
11. Members of the Board of Trustees must not endorse nominations for any individual candidate, nor should they campaign for any candidate (unless campaigning for their own election to a particular office).
12. Council members, College office or role holders (who are not Trustees) are allowed to openly support individual candidates but must do so in their personal capacity, not as an office or postholder of the College and not through any RCEM channels or using College resources.

The following restrictions apply to canvassing:

13. From the date of their nomination until after the voting closing date candidates must:
 - 13.1. abstain from acting as a spokesperson for the College in the media on any matter, and
 - 13.2. candidates who are tutors or presenters at College training events, study days or conferences not use these events to campaign.
14. candidates and their supporters must not:
 - 14.1. spend their own money on campaigning activities, nor raise commercial or other sponsorship to fund their campaign, save for it is recognised that candidates will self-fund their own personal email, website, video and website hosting and telephone services.

- 14.2. use, or attempt to access, any databases or other records held by the College, including any of its committees, and nor can they use their own personal databases for any purpose connected to the elections to the extent that those databases include information obtained from databases held by the College;
 - 14.3. use any RCEM email address, social media accounts, branding or stationery or any College resources to conduct canvassing;
 - 14.4. conduct any canvassing through the local or national media or press, and nor should any comments or responses be made to journalists, the media or press by candidates, including through social media which relate to their election campaign. Any enquiries received must be referred immediately to the College Communications Department. This means that any candidate who because of their current office is a media spokesperson will need to step back from role from then their nomination is put in until the voting closes;
 - 14.5. engage paid-for agents or any non-RCEM members to act for them in the conduct of their canvassing;
 - 14.6. must not make any adverse comment about, or make reference to, another candidate's personal election statement, or any live recording or podcast made pursuant to this Code, nor to another candidate's canvassing campaign generally and must not make any comments that are not in line with the College's Code of Conduct;
15. candidates must:
- 15.1. ensure that any statements or claims made by them or their supporters are accurate, fair, reasonable and not misleading;
 - 15.2. maintain the confidentiality, integrity and good standing of the election and its process and the College, and not bring the election or the College itself into disrepute; and
16. employees of the College must remain neutral and candidates must not request support from any employees. If candidates would like College information, they should request this from the Chief Executive Officer or nominated deputy.
17. Where 'RCEM communication channels' have been referred to, this includes those of Civica Election Services, or any other supplier appointed by the College to assist with the elections.

Breaches of the code

- 18. In the event of an allegation being received that this Canvassing Code has been breached the President will:
 - 18.1. convene a panel comprising the President and two lay Trustees to decide: a) whether the allegation has, prima facie, sufficient substance to suspend the election whilst it is investigated or if not b) dismiss the allegation as in-substantive.

- 18.2. If it decides to dismiss the allegation, then the matter is closed and the election will proceed accordingly.
19. If it decides the allegation is of sufficient substance to merit further action, then the panel will:
 - 19.1. Suspend the election;
 - 19.2. Arrange for the allegation to be investigated;
 - 19.3. Arrange for the results of the investigation to be presented to it for a decision to be made;
 - 19.4. The panel shall meet to determine whether a candidate is complying with this Code, and to take appropriate steps, which may include disqualification of a candidate(s) from the election if found to be in breach of the spirit and terms of this Code.
 - 19.5. A decision of the panel may be subject to appeal, any such appeal must be made within twenty-one days of the panel decision. In which case the appeal shall be considered by a panel formed of three Presidents drawn from members of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges.
 - 19.6. Once the allegation and any appeal has been dealt with, the election may proceed with the remaining candidates.

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine, 6 June 2024