



Specialty Advisory Committee on Genetics and Reproductive Science

Terms of Reference

1. The College's Mission Statement

The College is committed to promoting excellence in the study, research and practice of pathology and to be responsible for maintaining the highest standards through training, assessments, examinations and professional development, for the benefit of the public.

As a College, we need to **adapt** to the changes in the health service. We will forge strong links with Health Education England and the devolved nations, revising our training and education programmes to equip the consultants of tomorrow to deliver measureable improvements in clinical practice.

We must **engage** our members and Government, opinion formers and decision makers to support efficient, effective and sustainable pathology services nationally and internationally.

Inspiring the pathologists of the future is vital to deliver first-class patient services. We will work to boost the understanding of the essential contribution pathologists make to the range of clinical disciplines and healthcare settings.

2. Background

The SAC consists of previously distinct professional groups: genetics (cytogenetics and molecular genetics); reproductive science (embryology and andrology) and molecular pathology whose professional interests overlap in the delivery of services for inherited and acquired genetic disorders and *in vitro* fertilisation.

3. Terms of reference of the Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC)

The SAC on Genetics and Reproductive Science will advise Council, Trustee Board and the President on all matters concerning genetics and reproductive science which are within the remit of the College.

These include but are not confined to:

- Examinations in genetics and reproductive science.
- Development of Higher Specialist Scientific Training (HSST) curricula and examinations in genetics and reproductive science in the context of Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) genetics and reproductive science and responding to and advising on the impact of MSC on all three disciplines.



- Activities to promote the public understanding of the disciplines of genetics, and reproductive science.
- Collaborative working with other specialties to promote good practice and shared learning.
- Support the development of a national pathology catalogue
- The SAC will comment on, assist in the formulation of policy and/or promote any of the following in relation to the disciplines of genetics and reproductive science.
 - The provision of national assessors (administered by the College).
 - Accreditation, registration and regulation issues
 - Standards of professional practice
 - Research and development
 - Proposals, guidelines and other documents from the Department of Health, NHS or other bodies relevant to service delivery.

4. Membership of the SAC

- Chair (appointed by Trustee Board/Council for a three year term)
- Chair of the Panel of Examiners in Genetics (appointed by Council on the recommendation of the SAC for a five year term)
- RCPATH Specialty Advisor for Clinical Molecular Genetics
- RCPATH Specialty Advisor for Clinical Cytogenetics
- Trainee Representation for Genetics: two trainees representatives (at least one of whom must be a registered RCPATH trainee) to ensure representation on the Trainees Advisory Committee and on HSST/curriculum matters
- RCPATH Interspecialty Committee on Molecular Pathology (one representative)
- Representatives (who in the case of external bodies are nominated by those organisations) of:
 - Association for Clinical Genetic Science (ACGS) (two representatives)
 - Association of Clinical Embryology (ACE) (two representatives, to include trainee representation)
 - Royal College of Physicians (one representative)
- Co-opted members (for a fixed term and with the approval of Council)

The composition of the SAC is not immutable, and variations to the membership, by co-option or invitation, may be made with the approval of Council. Other interests in genetics and reproductive science may be represented in an *ad hoc* manner, which may include exchange of minutes of meeting with related committees, as members of the SAC may have multiple roles within their profession. Most appointments are for a three-year term, except where specified below. In accordance with Council requirements that total membership should not normally exceed ten, individual members may hold more than one of the above roles. The invited specialist societies and other organisations are responsible for the expenses of the representatives they send to this committee.

Members who are unable to attend meetings at the College should whenever possible join the meetings by teleconference. The position of members who fail to join three successive meetings will be reviewed by the Chair and the Committee Administrator.

Expenses for members appointed in consultation with kindred societies should be paid by those societies.

The SAC Chair convenes the meetings, provides direction to the SAC and acts as the SAC's representative to other meetings or functions as required. This includes the RCPATH Clinical Science Committee and the RCPATH Working Group on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Chair is the RCPATH representative on the JCMG and UKGTN CSAG – see key working relationships.

The Chair of the Panel of Examiners is responsible for examinations in the specialty, including the appointment of examiners, the setting and supervision of examinations, attendance at meetings of the College Examinations Committee and responding to specific problems or questions as they arise. They are appointed by Council on the recommendation of the SAC for a five year term. The Panel Chair is the principal point of contact for the College in ensuring that there are sufficient examiners in genetics and clinical embryology for the requirements of the examination system, that examiners are identified for particular tasks within a particular examination cycle and that the Specialty Advisors in cytogenetics and molecular genetics receive sufficient information to allow them to provide unsuccessful candidates with appropriate informed support.

The Specialty Advisors in Clinical Molecular Genetics and Clinical Cytogenetics are responsible for providing advice and guidance to Fellows and examination candidates, and are often the first point of contact for queries. They are appointed for a period of five years.

Institutional Members (representing external organisations) contribute to the development of the specialty and represent their organisations at the SAC. They are normally appointed by a proposal from the organisation represented. The relevant organisation is responsible for all expenses related to the attendance of these members.

Other positions on the SAC are filled by an invitation from the SAC Chair with the approval of Council.

5. Meetings of the SAC

The SAC normally meets twice yearly, at the College. Other meetings and working groups may be convened as necessary if business requires it.

The SAC is encouraged to host academic meetings at the College every two or three years. This is organised by the College Academic Activities Advisor in collaboration with members of the SAC.

6. Key Working Relationships

Joint Committee on Genomics in Medicine (JCGM)

The SAC liaises closely with and is represented on the JCMG, which is a tripartite body providing a forum for representatives from Royal College of Pathologists, The Royal College of Physicians and British Society for Human Genetics. Policy on genetics issues within the remit of the SAC are usually discussed at the JCMG which allows the formulation of a response that is agreed by the joint committee. These responses pertain principally to the practice and use of genetic knowledge, tests and service provision within the context of public and private healthcare.

UK Genetic Testing Network (UKGTN)

The SAC Chair sits on the UKGTN Clinical Science and Advisory Group (CSAG) and provides a report on relevant College activities to the UKGTN.

Other organisations

The SAC provides reports, via the nominated representatives, to the ACGS, ACE and the Interspecialty Committee on Molecular Pathology.