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# How the College works

## The Dean's roles and responsibilities

*John L. Cox*

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According to the Bye-Laws, the Dean is the Principal Academic Officer of the College and has responsibility for the management of all matters relating to examinations held and prizes or other awards given by the College. The Dean has the management of other matters, whether of an academic or educational nature, or in the field of research, as may be entrusted to him/her by the regulations of the Bye-Laws or by the Council or the Court of Electors.

The Dean is one of the elected Honorary Officers of the College, and is as such elected by the whole Membership and holds office for a term of not more than five consecutive College years.

The Dean is supported in these academic matters by four Sub-Deans, each of whom has specific responsibilities relating to education, training, the MRCPsych examinations, and the Overseas Liaison Committee. The Dean is based in the Postgraduate Education Department of the College, and receives administrative support from the Postgraduate Education Officer and her staff.

For work concerning the Central Approval Panel, the Dean is assisted by the Deputy Postgraduate Education Officer. In addition to his work in the Postgraduate Education Department, the Dean has a constitutional responsibility for the smooth running of the Examinations Department. In this regard he works closely with the Chief Examiner and the Examinations Officer due to his overall monitoring responsibility on behalf of the Court of Electors. The Dean's office is responsible for eligibility for the MRCPsych examination, and for communicating on behalf of the Court of Electors with successful and unsuccessful candidates.

The work of the Dean generally requires the Honorary Officer to work at the College for two days a week. The Dean's interests and responsibilities are wide-ranging and it is therefore necessary for him to deal with a substantial amount of correspondence and committee documentation. The coordination of such documentation and the provision of appropriate briefings is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Education Officer. A part-time secretary provides personal assistance with regard to travel arrangements and correspondence.

The Dean is responsible for representing the views of the College on relevant academic topics and for implementing new initiatives in postgraduate training for psychiatrists, i.e. the recent Educational Supervisors Conference to discuss the one hour 'face-to-face' supervisory requirement for Educational Supervisors, and the forthcoming one day conference for Course Organisers, to establish the academic content of the MRCPsych course and the scope for multidisciplinary teaching.

The Dean is Chairman of the Central Approval Panel, which is primarily responsible for monitoring and approving psychiatric training at general professional training level on UK and Republic of Ireland schemes. The Central Approval Panel is a Sub-Committee of the Court of Electors and meets four to five times per year, depending on the number of reports to be considered.

The Dean chairs the Education Committee, a Standing Committee of Council which meets three times per year, and holds informal meetings with the Sub-Deans which precede the Education Committee. The Education Committee is one of the central coordinating committees of the College responsible for initiating educational policy, strategies and structure and, in particular, for monitoring the College's educational strategy. Additionally the Dean participates in discussions with other College Officers at the monthly Officers' meeting when the work of the College is reviewed.

The Dean is an Ex-Officio member of the Court of Electors, Executive and Finance Committee, Council, Psychiatric Tutors' Sub-Committee, Examinations Sub-Committee, the Joint Committee on Higher Psychiatric Training (JCHPT), meetings of Regional Advisers and their Deputies, and the Collegiate Trainees Committee (CTC). The Dean provides the link between the CTC and College Officers and has responsibility for ensuring that CTC affairs are integrated within the College administration. The Dean attends the Fellowship Sub-Committee and when necessary the Overseas Liaison Committee. He also attends meetings of the Committee of Postgraduate Medical Education Deans (COPMED) and the Association of University Teachers of Psychiatry (AUTP). The

Director of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is responsible to the Dean.

Since most of the Dean's work takes place in the Postgraduate Education Department, the following information is a guide to its remit and responsibilities, summarised by the Postgraduate Education Officer.

### **The Postgraduate Education (PGE) Department**

The PGE Department was formed out of the existing Education Department in early 1994, to reflect changes within the structure of the College itself, postgraduate education and the NHS.

The election of new officers during 1993 led to various initiatives in College activities, including the development of new departments whose work would more accurately reflect national - and international - change. The renaming and restructuring of the old Education Department was one such change. The PGE Department continues to act as the administrative focus for all educational and training issues within the College, and to take on any new areas of work as these become evident.

The Department has nine members of staff, headed by the PGE Officer under whose direction activities falling within its remit are carried out. It undertakes the organisation and administration of all work connected with committees such as the Court of Electors, AUTP, COPMED, Education Committee, JCHPT, Central Approval Panel, Overseas Liaison Committee, Collegiate Trainees Committee, Psychiatric Tutors' Sub-Committee, Fellowship Sub-Committee, Research Committee (RAID), and the production of handbooks for inceptors, tutors, overseas trainees, and those directly connected with existing committees.

The Department also continues to administer the census, manpower issues including British Medical Association advertisements, the setting up of Advisory Appointments Committees, enquiries from the general public, the organisation of senior house officer and senior registrar conferences, as well as all work connected with CTC elections and its 'away-day', the Overseas Doctors Training Scheme and other overseas activities, induction days and fora and European issues (particularly those concerned with the

Union of European Medical Specialties - UEMS) and the Clinical Complaints Procedure.

Following reorganisation, its responsibilities also include:

- The implications of recent change and innovations arising out of NHS reforms, including the emphasis on increased provision for care in the community
- The Chief Medical Officer's (Calman) Report on Specialist Training - in particular the implications of the Unified Training Grade (UTG) and the award of Certificates of Completion of Specialist Training (CCSTs)
- The current emphasis in postgraduate education on issues of quality control, monitoring and general audit - in particular, the need to maintain and improve training for psychiatrists at all stages of their career
- The development of an educational strategy for the College which will detail criteria for assessing the professional and clinical attainment of psychiatrists at each level of their training, through to consultant status
- Assisting with the development of a definitive document on "The Role of the Consultant Psychiatrist in the NHS and in Private Practice"
- Assisting with the standardisation of job descriptions across each speciality for consultants
- The possible implementation of a new diploma in community psychiatry
- The piloting of trainees' log books
- A review of all College prizes
- The establishment of an Alumni Association for members of the Overseas Doctors Training Scheme and producing a newsletter for the same group
- Revising the criteria by which Fellows and Staff Grade doctors are elected
- Responsibility for the dissemination of careers information and the organisation of career fairs
- The Department may also take on other relevant postgraduate education projects as required.

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