

Job description

Chief Operating Officer – The Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK

Vacancy reference	FED104
Grade	9
Location	London
Department	Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK
Reports to	Federation Chief Executive Officer
Contract type	Permanent
Working hours	35 hours a week. Standard working hours between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. <i>You will agree your working pattern with your line manager.</i>

Role context

The Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK (“the Federation”) is a collaboration between the three physician colleges of the UK: The Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

It plays a pivotal role in setting curricula and assessment standards and, through a range of activities, influences the quality of physician training and medical practice. It conducts examinations, defines training standards, provides education and research activities and advises the government and the profession on health and medical matters.

The Federation is not a legal entity. As such, staff are employed through the Royal College of Physicians, but our work is in support of and delivered on behalf of the three Colleges.

We are committed to a hybrid working model in which most staff work flexibly, spending a minimum of 6 days a month in the RCP London office. We are committed to an inclusive culture and welcome applications from all sections of society.

The purpose of your role

You will provide executive leadership across the Federation's operational functions, ensuring the organisation operates as a coherent, efficient and high-performing system in support of its strategic objectives.

You are accountable for the performance, resilience and sustainability of the Federation's operational services, infrastructure and corporate functions, working in close partnership with the CAQO, who leads assessment standards, quality and delivery.

You will act as a key adviser to the CEO, shaping organisational strategy, ensuring its effective translation into delivery, and maintaining a strong focus on performance, value for money and organisational effectiveness.

This role requires strong executive judgement, pace and accountability. You are expected to operate with autonomy, take ownership of decisions within your remit, and provide clear direction across the organisation.

You will:

- Champion strategic transformation, ensuring operational delivery is high quality, efficient and aligned to organisational priorities
- Lead and empower teams, creating a high-performing, accountable and values-driven culture
- Drive data-informed decision-making, using insight to improve performance and outcomes
- Build and sustain strategic partnerships, internally and externally, to support delivery and influence.

The COO leads and is accountable for the Federation's broader organisational performance, operational infrastructure, systems, services and sustainability, while the CAQO is accountable for the integrity, quality, standards, risk and end-to-end effectiveness of Federation assessments. Both roles operate in close partnership, with clear individual accountability for their respective domains.

As a member of the executive leadership team, you will contribute to the wider strategic direction, performance and leadership of the Federation.

How we'll measure your success

Success in the role will be demonstrated through strong organisational performance, effective delivery of services and the development of a high-performing, resilient and well-governed organisation.

We will measure this through:

- Achievement of organisational objectives across all operational functions
- Financial performance, sustainability and delivery of value for money
- Strength and maturity of governance, risk management and internal control frameworks
- Delivery of high-quality services across training, CPD, international, research and corporate functions
- Successful delivery of organisational, digital and cultural transformation initiatives
- Performance, engagement and development of teams and a high-performing senior

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management team

- Positive feedback from stakeholders and partners
- Contribution to the Federation's overall strategic success and culture
- Active contribution to collective executive leadership and organisational priorities
- Consistent demonstration of, and contribution to, our values.

What you're responsible for

Strategic leadership and operational oversight

- Provide executive leadership across all operational functions, ensuring alignment with organisational strategy and priorities
- Translate strategic objectives into clear, deliverable plans across multiple directorates, ensuring pace, accountability and measurable outcomes
- Act as a key adviser to the CEO on organisational performance, operational strategy, delivery risk and capacity
- Ensure effective integration across functions, removing silos and delivering a coherent, efficient and high-performing organisation
- Work in close partnership with the CAQO to ensure alignment between assessment activity and wider organisational systems and support
- Take ownership of operational decision-making within your remit, ensuring appropriate escalation only where required
- Work in close partnership with the relevant Medical Directors to ensure clear alignment between clinical leadership and operational delivery

Operational delivery and service excellence

- Oversee delivery across training, CPD, research and development, international activity, finance, customer services, communications and corporate operations
- Ensure services are high quality, efficient, accessible and responsive to stakeholder needs
- Drive continuous improvement across operational processes, systems and service delivery
- Ensure organisational resilience through robust operational capability, continuity planning and risk mitigation.

People and organisational culture

- Lead and develop senior leaders across operational directorates, setting clear expectations for performance, accountability and delivery
- Build a high-performing, collaborative and values-driven culture across the organisation
- Ensure clear structures, roles and accountabilities across all operational areas
- Develop organisational capability and leadership capacity to support long-term success
- Model and embed executive-level behaviours, including accountability, responsiveness, collaboration and constructive challenge.

Innovation, improvement, and transformation

- Lead organisation-wide transformation across operational functions, including digital, operational and cultural change
- Drive continuous improvement through data, technology and process optimisation
- Lead modernisation initiatives, including the use of digital and AI-enabled solutions with appropriate governance and safeguards
- Ensure transformation initiatives deliver measurable improvements in performance, efficiency and stakeholder experience
- Ensure that organisational transformation enables and supports assessment transformation delivered in partnership with the CAQO.

Governance, quality, and regulation

- Lead the Federation's organisational governance, risk, assurance and internal control frameworks
- Ensure alignment between organisational governance frameworks and assessment-specific assurance led by the CAQO
- Ensure robust systems are in place to identify, manage and mitigate strategic and operational risks
- Ensure timely escalation of material risks and issues to the CEO and Board
- Provide assurance to the CEO and Board on organisational performance, risk and control
- Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and policy requirements across all operational areas
- Lead organisational business continuity and resilience planning.

Financial and resource management

- Hold accountability for the Federation's overall financial planning, management, budgeting and performance across operational areas within remit
- Drive value for money, cost optimisation and alignment of resources to strategic priorities
- Oversee procurement, supplier management and resource allocation as appropriate
- Ensure financial plans and assumptions are robust, challenged and aligned to organisational priorities
- Ensure alignment of financial planning and resource allocation across the organisation, including assessment activity led by the CAQO.

Transformation, systems and organisational effectiveness

- Ensure systems, infrastructure and processes support organisational effectiveness and future growth
- Oversee digital and technology strategy, ensuring systems are secure, resilient and fit for purpose
- Drive continuous improvement in organisational effectiveness, structures and ways of working

- Own and oversee the Federation’s operational infrastructure, systems, shared services and organisational capability, ensuring they effectively support all functions, including assessment.
- Ensure organisational systems, infrastructure and transformation activity effectively support the Federation’s strategic priorities and future growth.

Stakeholder engagement

- Build and maintain strong partnerships with key stakeholders, including the three Royal Colleges and delivery partners
- Own strategic relationships with delivery partners and suppliers where appropriate, ensuring effective collaboration and digital transformation
- Support the CEO in representing the Federation externally and with key stakeholders as appropriate
- Ensure strong internal communication, alignment and clarity across the organisation
- Contribute to the Federation’s reputation as a high-performing, trusted organisation.

Other duties

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant policy, regulatory and sector developments
- Comply with Health and Safety, data protection and organisational policies
- Undertake duties in line with equal opportunities principles
- Contribute to the wider work of the Federation.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level of the post.

Your experience includes

Qualification, education and knowledge

Essential

- Qualification or equivalent experience in leadership and management.

Desirable

- Strong understanding of issues affecting medical workforce and training in healthcare
- In depth knowledge of postgraduate medical education structures and processes
- Understanding of regulatory approaches to the quality assurance of postgraduate medical education.

Experience, skills and abilities

Essential

- Significant experience in a senior executive role (e.g. COO, Director of Operations or equivalent), leading complex, multi-functional organisations

- Proven ability to lead large, diverse teams with clarity, authority and empathy
- Strong strategic and operational leadership capability, with the ability to translate vision into delivery
- Extensive experience of delivering organisational performance through operational leadership
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, with accountability for budgets and long-term sustainability
- Experience leading governance, risk and assurance processes at organisational level.
- Proven experience of leading large-scale transformation, including digital, operational and cultural change
- Experience overseeing significant digital and technology-enabled programmes
- Ability to design and optimise organisational structures, systems and processes
- Strong decision-making capability and sound judgement in complex environments
- Highly developed influencing skills, including working with Boards and senior stakeholders
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to present complex information clearly
- Experience of developing and leading high-performing senior leadership teams
- Strong analytical capability, using data to drive performance and decision-making
- Familiarity with data protection (GDPR) and information governance
- High level of digital literacy
- Commitment to continuous professional development.

Desirable

- Experience in healthcare, medical education, professional membership or regulatory environments
- Understanding of assessment and examination delivery sufficient to work effectively alongside the CAQO
- Experience working in complex partnership or federated organisational models
- Crisis management experience in high-profile or high-stakes environments
- Experience overseeing the responsible use of digital and AI technologies.

RCP values

We are committed to **taking care**, **learning**, and **being collaborative**. These values drive the way we behave, how we interact with each other, and how we work together to achieve our vision and improve patient care.

We value taking care

This means we behave respectfully towards people, whatever their role, position, gender or background. It means we act as representatives of the RCP, and take decisions in the interests of the organisation as a whole.

We value learning

This means we continuously improve through active learning and honest reflection, so that we grow personally and as an organisation, while striving for excellence. We support learning and development opportunities.

We value being collaborative

This means we work together towards the RCP's vision in a collaborative and professional way, understanding that individuals bring different strengths and approaches to our work. We value diversity and each other's contributions.

The RCP positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender status, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy and maternity.

The RCP is all about our people – our members, staff, volunteers and leaders. We educate, influence and collaborate to improve health and healthcare for everyone and know we can only do this by being inclusive, encouraging and celebrating diverse perspectives. Welcoming into our community people who represent the 21st-century medical workforce and the diverse population of patients we serve is a priority for us.

As an employee/volunteer/temporary contractor you are expected to comply with all RCP data protection and security policies and procedures.