

# Guide to the RCN accreditation and dis-accreditation process for RCN Representatives

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This guidance should be read alongside the [RCN regulations](#) and flow charts on accreditation and dis-accreditation.

RCN representatives are RCN stewards, learning representatives and safety representatives

The processes and supporting guidance on the accreditation and dis-accreditation of RCN representatives are a matter for the RCN itself.

## 1 Accreditation

1. It is the RCN branch that accredits and dis-accredits RCN representatives.
2. RCN representatives can be registered nurses or health care assistants who are employed by an organisation that they are seeking accreditation with. It is necessary that anyone wishing to become an RCN representative should fully understand the expectations of the role and what support the RCN is able to offer both in the process of becoming a representative and after they are fully established as an RCN representative.
3. To ensure that prospective representatives are fully informed of the role and expectations they should first complete an application form, either in hard copy, or online at the RCN website. Applications should be sent to the local RCN officer.
4. On receipt of the application, a telephone meeting will be arranged for the prospective representative and the relevant RCN officer / ARO for the branch. The purpose of the conversation is to check out their understanding of the role and the expectations,

including L&D pathway and activities. This is also an opportunity to discuss the support they have from their line manager and whether the officer needs to offer extra support.

5. If they wish to continue with their request for accreditation the office will inform their local Branch by email who will have 10 days to confirm accreditation. If they choose not to continue, a note to this effect will be made on their CRM record and a letter closing the application process will be sent.
6. The branch are ultimately responsible for the decision to accredit a member as a rep. If the Officer has concerns about the member becoming a rep, but the member would still like to proceed, the Officer should raise those concerns with the branch. Similarly if the branch chooses not to accredit a member who the officer feels is suitable, the officer has the opportunity to discuss with the branch and share their perspective, based on their earlier discussions with the member. An Officer and a branch should attempt to reach a consensus, however, if consensus is not reached, the discussion can be taken to the Board for review.
7. Once agreed by the Branch, a letter will be sent to the new representative welcoming them along with a letter to their HR Director informing them of the accreditation.
8. Once accredited the representative will undertake the relevant RCN learning and development programme and will not be considered by the RCN as a 'fully accredited representative' until such time as they have completed the learning and development pathway. After then they will be expected to maintain and develop their practice through continuing learning and development with support from their Officer.

## **2 Dis-accreditation**

9. The annual branch AGM will decide whether or not to ratify a representative's accreditation. Branches are also able to remove accreditation between AGMs if necessary, but in either case, the RCN dis-accreditation process must always be followed. A representative who does not wish to continue with accreditation may simply resign at the AGM or at any other time by writing to the branch accordingly.
10. Where a representative fails to engage with or complete satisfactorily the learning and development pathway the representative will meet with the learning and development facilitator (LDF) and discuss any issues that may give rise to their failure to complete. The representative will, if they so wish be invited to resign as a representative if they feel that they cannot continue with the process.
11. If the representative wishes to continue with the process of moving to full accreditation they will, in the first instance, be supported by their LDF and a process will be agreed to enable them to move towards full accreditation in a timely manner. Continued failure by the representative to meet the requirements of the L&D pathway will result in referral back to the country/region by the LDF and subsequent notification to the branch for dis-accreditation.
12. Where a branch is of the view that a representative should no longer be accredited e.g. failure to complete the programme, failure to attend branch meetings or a failure to undertake the role expected of an RCN representative, they will write to the representative confirming that it is their intention to disaccredit them and outlining the reasons why. The representative will be given 21 days to respond to the intention to dis-accredit them.
13. After a period of 21 days has elapsed the branch will decide whether or not to dis-accredit the representative. If the decision of the branch is to dis-accredit they will

write to the member notifying them of their decision. In such cases the representative will be unable to make an application to be a representative again until a period of six months has lapsed since they were formally dis-accredited.

14. If the branch decides not to dis-accredit they will outline to the representative how they will be supported to address the concerns raised and a detailed process will be agreed with the representative, including timescales for the achievement of any mandatory steps. The branch can consider the dis-accreditation of a representative at any time. Criteria for the disaccreditation of reps is included at Appendix C.
15. Under the RCN's Standing Orders, the Council may take disciplinary action against any member who is guilty of conduct unfitting of an RCN member (as per the RCN Members Disciplinary Policy. A finding of unfitting conduct may result in the removal or suspension from any elected office or other position within the RCN. In these circumstances, formal disciplinary process (including appeals) and decisions are final and no further appeals can be made.

Where a representative is dis-accredited they can no longer represent the RCN.

### **3 Representatives who move to a new role with the same employer but covered by a different RCN branch**

16. The representative will be asked by their branch and / or region/board whether or not they wish to continue as a representative in their new role. If they wish to continue the country/region/board will write to the new branch confirming their continued accreditation as an RCN representative. If they wish to resign as a representative the country/region / board will notify their current branch and their employer.

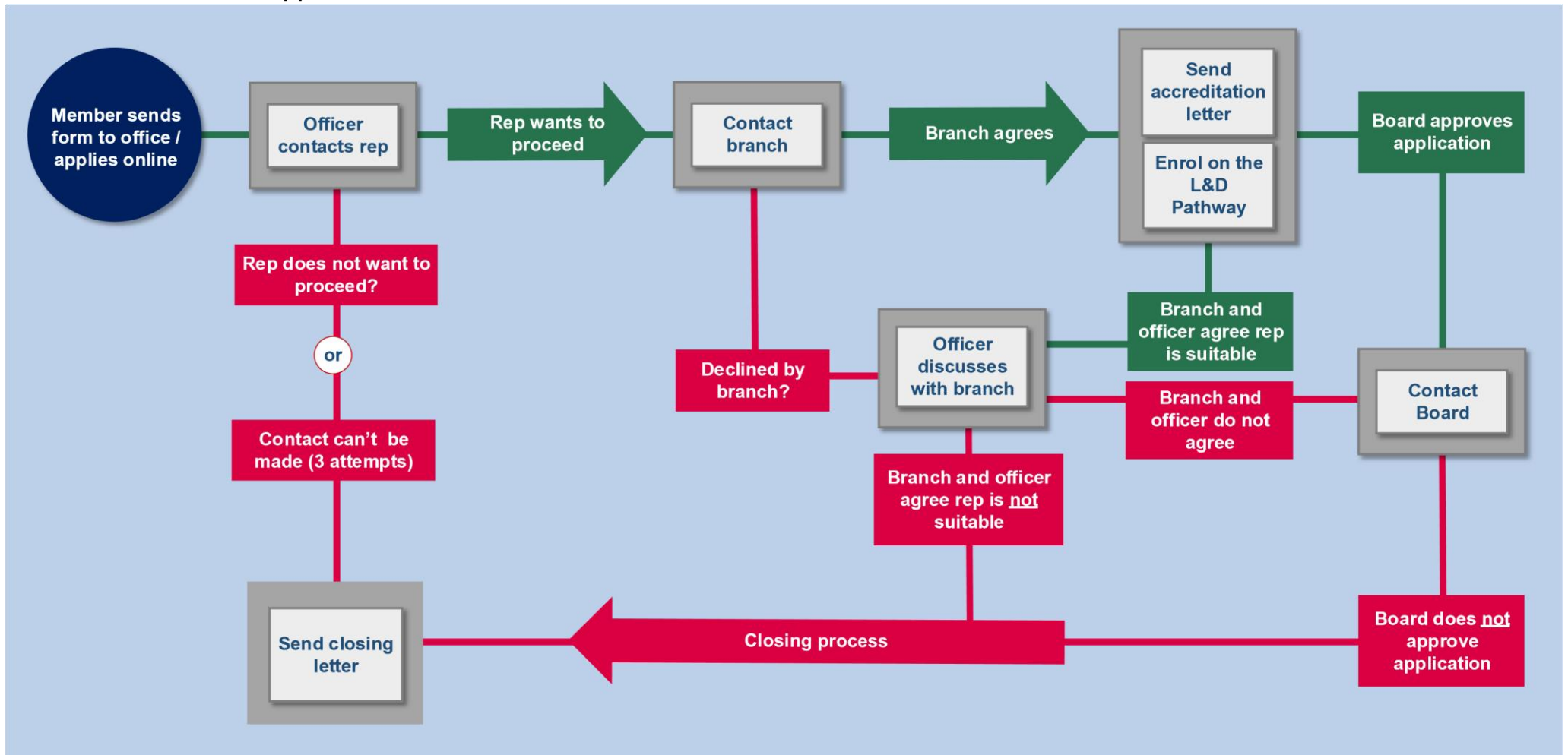
### **4 Representatives who move to a different employer**

17. When an accredited representative moves to a different employer they will be contacted by the RCN country/region/board and asked if they wish to continue in the role of an RCN representative. If they do not wish to continue they should resign and their previous/existing branch will be notified.
18. Where the representative wishes to remain as an accredited representative in their new organisation the RCN region/board will write to the new and old branch and the new employer notifying them of the change. Where the new organisation is in another RCN region/board the country/region/board will write to the new country/region/board notifying them as well.

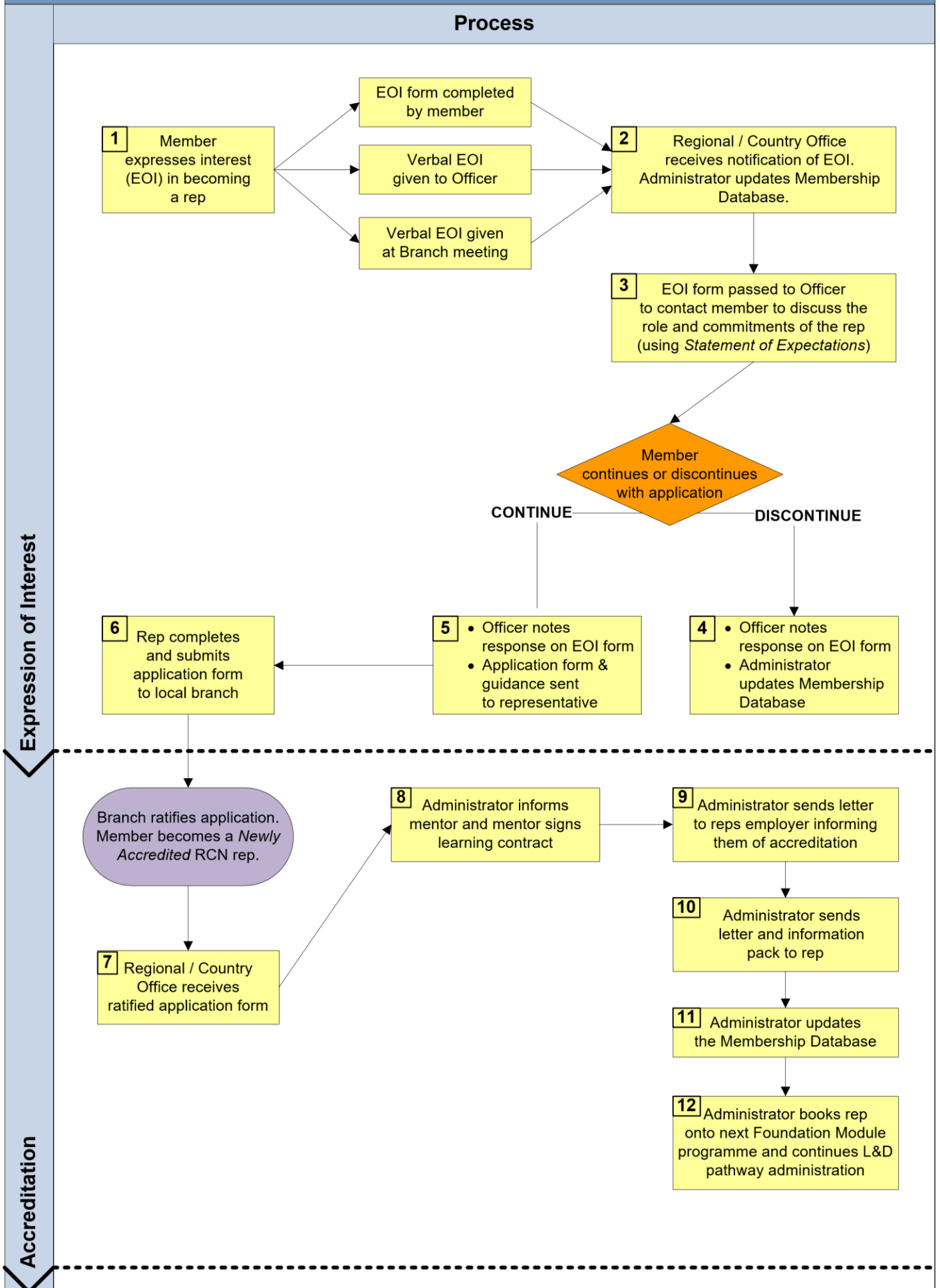
### **5 Recognition of the contribution a representative may make**

19. Where a representative leaves or retires have given the RCN and its members considerable or notable service, the Branch should give the rep due recognition of this and appropriately mark their final meeting accordingly.

Appendix A

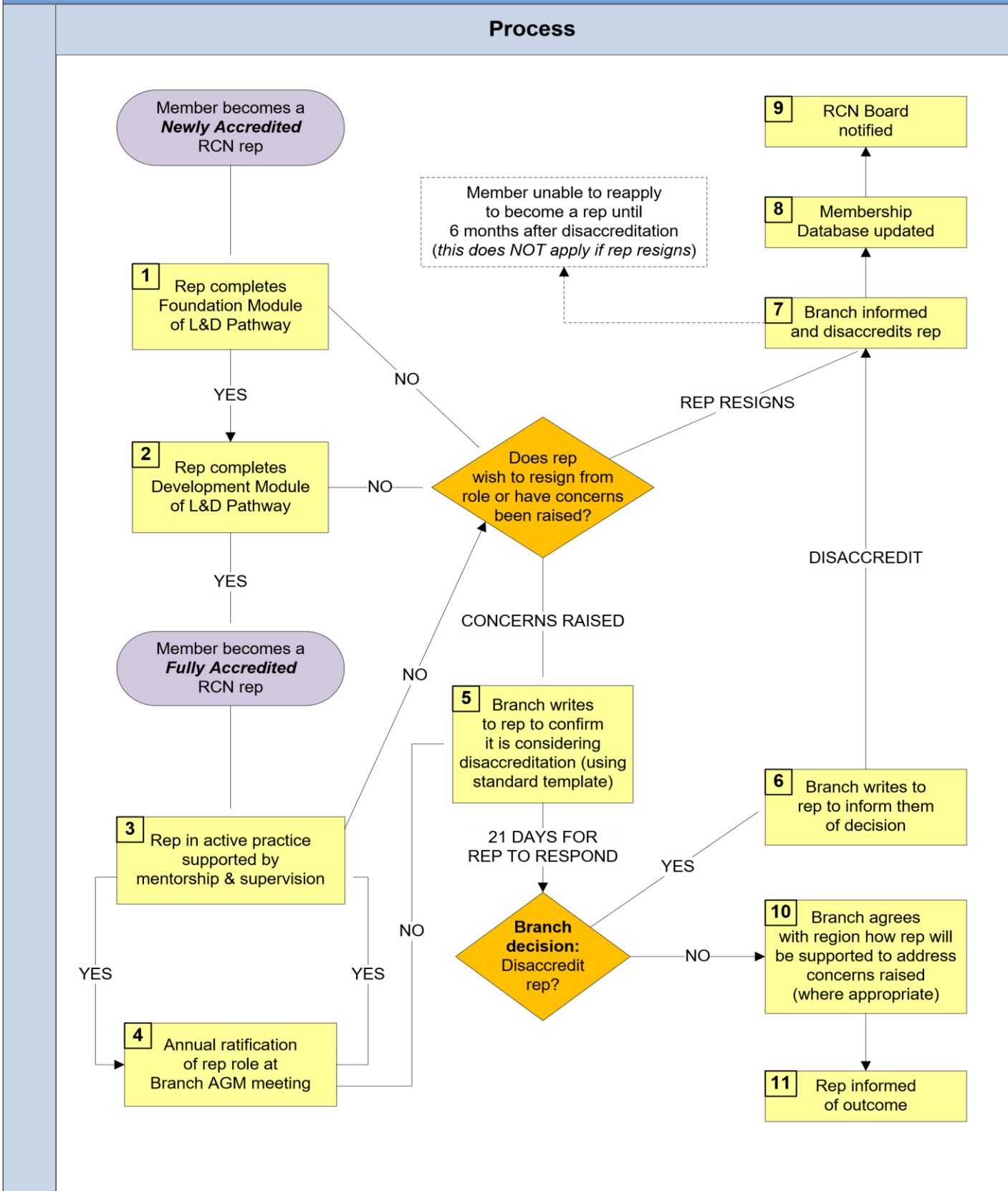


# The Accreditation Process for New RCN Representatives



Appendix B

**Disaccreditation of RCN Reps Procedure**



If at any stage of this process a representative changes role, please refer to the **Transfer process for fully accredited, competent and active reps that change role** diagram

If the RCN Branch, in the opinion of the RCN Board, fails to take appropriate action in relation to an RCN member under this procedure, the RCN Board shall ensure that appropriate action is taken, including, but not limited to, substituting itself for the relevant RCN Branch under this procedure.

## Appendix C: Branch dis-accreditation criteria

**Dis-accreditation criteria for branches****CRITERIA FOR DISACCREDITATION**

<b>Reason for dis-accreditation</b>	<b>Criteria to be applied</b>
The Rep asks to be disaccredited	There are no criteria as this is the rep's personal decision.
Rep moves employer	There are no criteria as the rep's accreditation can be transferred to a new employer. The rep will be disaccredited from one employer and accredited with the new employer.
Not engaging with the L&D Pathway Training	Where new reps are not engaging with the L&D Pathway Training, and they are not responding to the Learning and Development Facilitator (LDF), the LDF will recommend that the branch disaccredits the rep due to "non-engagement with the pathway".
Lack of engagement with supervision and other RCN activity	Reps are expected to access and work within RCN support structures. Indications that this is not happening are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not engaging with supervision sessions</li> <li>• Not responding to requests from supervising officers</li> <li>• Not making reasonable efforts / refusing to engage with other reps when asked to do so</li> <li>• Not reasonably responding with the branch when asked to do so such as regarding AGM attendance</li> <li>• Not keeping mandatory GDPR training up to date.</li> </ul>
Lack of activity as described in the Role Descriptor	Reps are expected to work within the role descriptor to support and represent and improve the working lives of members. Examples of this not happening are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not reasonably responding to requests to support RCN campaigns alongside work being undertaken by the Organising teams</li> </ul>

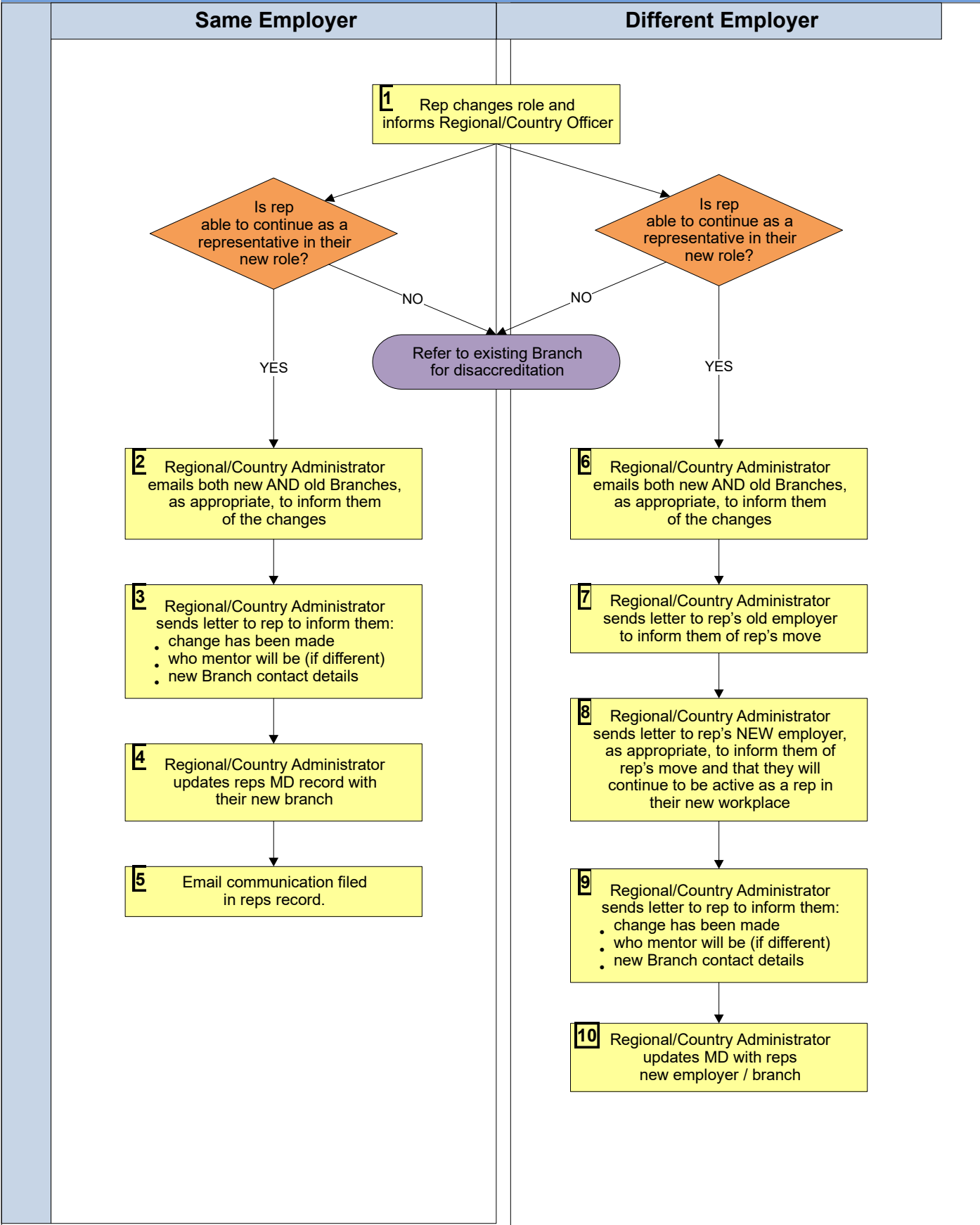
<b>Reason for dis-accreditation</b>	<b>Criteria to be applied</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not responding to requests to support RCN activity in the workplace or within the branch area (ie student recruitment or pay / safe staffing)</li><li>• Not carrying out the statutory functions of a H&amp;S Rep in the workplace (for H&amp;S Reps)</li><li>• Not carrying out the trade union duties of a Steward in the workplace which may include holding elected office and attending Local / Regional and National Committees. Stewards are expected to be active on behalf of members in a variety of ways. Not holding cases is not a reason to disaccredit where other work is being undertaken on behalf of members.</li></ul>

Agreed by the Trade Union Committee 20th November 2024



Appendix D

**Transfer process for fully accredited, competent and active reps that change role**



Same Employer

Different Employer

1 Rep changes role and informs Regional/Country Officer

Is rep able to continue as a representative in their new role?

Is rep able to continue as a representative in their new role?

Refer to existing Branch for discreditation

2 Regional/Country Administrator emails both new AND old Branches, as appropriate, to inform them of the changes

6 Regional/Country Administrator emails both new AND old Branches, as appropriate, to inform them of the changes

3 Regional/Country Administrator sends letter to rep to inform them:
. change has been made
. who mentor will be (if different)
. new Branch contact details

7 Regional/Country Administrator sends letter to rep's old employer to inform them of rep's move

4 Regional/Country Administrator updates reps MD record with their new branch

8 Regional/Country Administrator sends letter to rep's NEW employer, as appropriate, to inform them of rep's move and that they will continue to be active as a rep in their new workplace

5 Email communication filed in reps record.

9 Regional/Country Administrator sends letter to rep to inform them:
. change has been made
. who mentor will be (if different)
. new Branch contact details

10 Regional/Country Administrator updates MD with reps new employer / branch