

Policy on Volunteers' Terms of Office

Background

All of IPEM's Boards, councils and committees have Terms of Reference which set out the length of time which a member can serve on the group: their 'term of office.'

The term may be renewable, which allows expertise to be retained (particularly important where skills are scarce or knowledge is built up slowly over time e.g. in the professional conduct committees); or it may be limited to a single term, in order to allow other members the opportunity to contribute, and to allow the membership to be regularly refreshed with new perspectives. When a position is renewable, it must still be advertised, in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection of volunteers policy, to allow the opportunity to be open to other members.

IPEM's committee year runs from September to September, with the official changeover of membership dating from the AGM each year.

Policy

1. Committees are not normally permitted to extend terms of office to 'make up time' for members who have been away due to illness or maternity leave: their term must finish as originally designated when they were appointed.

However, if a volunteer requires a break from volunteering responsibilities of more than 6 months due to personal or family circumstances we will work together with the volunteer and the committee / group to find a solution on a case-by-case basis.

We aim to accommodate this situation but need to take into account the following:

- the overall length of the absence
- the starting point within the committee year
- the length of the term of office as per the Terms of Reference
- the type of role the volunteer is leaving
- the availability of cover (external and within the committee)
- the nature and work of the committee or group involved.

In case no satisfactory solution can be reached between the national office, the volunteer and committee involved the decision will be referred to the Council the committee is linked to.

2. A member returning from illness or leave after the end of their original term can notify the National Office of their desire to be considered for any committee vacancy available; and as there are usually mid-year vacancies to be filled, they are very likely to be able to contribute to another committee as soon as they are ready.
3. Committee Chairs can co-opt a temporary replacement if it becomes known that a member will be away for a significant period during their existing term of office if their absence is going to detract from the committee's achievement of its objectives.