

## Council Paper 140421-4 New Membership Types Chris Champion, Head of People Services April 2001

### Executive summary

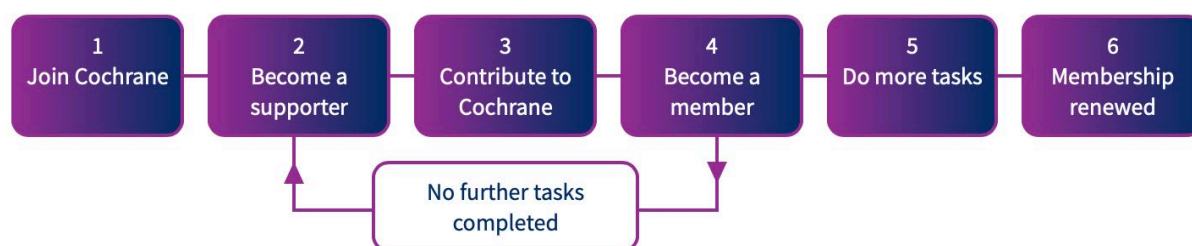
Our membership system is based on active contributions, so when someone leaves the organization and stops contributing their membership ceases. For some individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution to the organization this is inappropriate and so we want to formalize criteria for offering membership to these individuals that is not linked to continued contribution, but is instead a recognition of their previous extraordinary contribution. This paper sets out how these two new membership categories of Lifetime Member and Emeritus Member will work.

### Background and context



[Cochrane Membership](#) rewards those who contribute to Cochrane's work. Membership is primarily based on a points system. Anyone who signs up to Cochrane as a supporter can earn points and when they reach a threshold they become a member for a certain amount of time (1, 3 or 5 years). Cochrane Group staff and those in governance positions are also eligible for Membership whilst in post. People who contribute to Cochrane over many years continue to have their membership renewed over an extended amount of time. However, the system is set up in such a way that when people stop contributing, they cease to be a member once their current membership period expires (this will range between 12 months and 5 years depending on their membership).

In the original membership concept, we had the idea that some people would become Lifetime Members or Emeritus Members, but we have never formalized these categories of membership.



### Issues

In previous papers around Membership we have not confirmed the mechanism for Lifetime and Emeritus Memberships. Certain people have been awarded emeritus status in recent years, including the Board designating David Tovey Emeritus Editor-in-Chief and a number of retiring Co-ordinating Editors were designated Emeritus Co-ordinating Editor in 2020. This proposal is to formalize and standardize the way in which Lifetime and Emeritus awards will be used in future.

## Proposal

To create a formal way of recognising exceptional contributions to the organisation through memberships that are not time limited and are not linked to continued contribution. We propose to do this through two mechanisms:

**Lifetime Membership** and **Emeritus Membership**.

**The two categories are deliberately similar in their criteria, and the main defining point is that Emeritus status is linked specifically to leadership contributions.**

## Lifetime Membership

For those individuals who have been part of Cochrane for many years who are approaching the end of their time working in the organization we can consider Lifetime Membership to acknowledge their longstanding commitment to Cochrane. For example, many CRGs have staff members who have worked for the Group for more than a decade and contributed significantly to Cochrane's success.

Long service alone is not enough to receive this award, the individual nominated for the award should have made a significant contribution to Cochrane beyond their day to day work. This may involve participating in committees, working groups or other initiatives where they have contributed to Cochrane more generally and beyond their specific day to day remit.

There is an expectation that people being nominated for this award will have worked in Cochrane for over 10 years, though in some cases where there has been an exceptional contribution in a shorter time and a person embodies the characteristics that this award seeks to reward, this award can still be considered.

We envisage that a list of new lifetime memberships will be published annually in the Annual Review, though they may be given out at any time of year. There would not be any formal ceremony associated with these awards. We would expect to award around ten to twenty of these awards per year, but there may be peaks and troughs, as, for example, there may be a large number of Group staff who have worked with Cochrane from the early 1990's who retire over the coming years leading to a peak.

The following criteria describe the sort of contribution that this award seeks to recognize. Awardees should meet all of these criteria to some degree.

- Served in a Cochrane role for a significant period of time, normally more than 10 years;
- Made an extraordinary contribution to Cochrane that exceeds the expectations of their role in Cochrane;
- Held positions of responsibility in the organization, e.g. contributed to committees, governance groups or other initiatives;
- Embodies [Cochrane's Principles](#), especially the principle of collaboration.

Standard membership terms and conditions apply, e.g. not working for pharmaceutical companies, so if someone moves on to a role in industry they may be unable to accept their membership.

*These criteria are similar to those of the Chris Silagy prize, which is no coincidence, as lifetime membership is attempting to capture similar qualities, but just acknowledging this at the end of a person's time in Cochrane.*

## Emeritus Membership

The concept of Emeritus Membership is to acknowledge those who make a significant contribution to the leadership of the organization over a significant length of time. As with Lifetime Membership, there is an expectation that the individual will have contributed to the organization for a significant period of time, normally over ten years, but in this case there is a requirement that the person has held a significant leadership position in the organization or has acted in a leadership capacity. We would expect there to be a smaller number of these each year, perhaps between five and ten per year.

In certain circumstances, Emeritus Membership status may be given with an associated title: e.g., Emeritus Co-ordinating Editor, which may come with specific additional acknowledgement (for example, a certificate from the Editor in Chief).

New Emeritus Members should be announced annually, ideally at the AGM.

The criteria for emeritus membership are the same as lifetime membership, but there is an additional requirement that the individual has:

- held a significant leadership position in Cochrane, e.g., Co-ordinating Editor, Centre Director;

### **Reward**

Both Lifetime Members and Emeritus Members will have an open-ended Cochrane Membership, with associated rights and benefits that come with that. Importantly, this includes the right to contribute to our governance through voting in Cochrane Elections.

Certificates of appreciation will also be sent to these individuals in addition to their membership certificate that is available on demand in [Cochrane Account](#). Recipients of these awards may use these titles and the associated downloadable membership badge in email signatures, or in other ways if they wish to do so.

Whilst we hope that these benefits will be appreciated, the main focus of these awards is on the acknowledgement rather than the reward.

From informal feedback received we know that these awards will be appreciated. For example, in 2020 we announced that a number of retiring Co-ordinating Editors would gain a title of Emeritus Co-ordinating Editor and that was very well received.

### **Identifying or nominating candidates**

The Membership team in People Services administer the membership database and can assign Lifetime or Emeritus Memberships as required. The membership team will actively promote nominations for Lifetime Membership in appropriate areas of the organisation, but we will also monitor changes in Group staff roles to actively identify potential nominees. The membership database will track who holds different sorts of membership and can be searched as required to produce reports.

Nominations can be made by peers by writing to [support@cochrane.org](mailto:support@cochrane.org) and they will be processed by the membership team before being passed on for approval.

### **Approval of these Membership awards**

We propose to convene a small Governing Board sub-committee (a Membership Committee or Awards Committee) to oversee approval of these awards.

### **Retrospective memberships**

Where someone wishes to be acknowledged retrospectively, they or their peers may write to [support@cochrane.org](mailto:support@cochrane.org) with an explanation of their previous role in the organization and what status they believe

would be relevant to them. If someone is nominating themselves for a retrospective award, they should include a named referee who will be able to confirm their previous contributions.

Retrospective awards will follow the same approval processes as above. We do not intend to offer posthumous recognition through this system.

### **Costs, Benefits and Risks to Cochrane**

These awards do not come with any physical reward, nor do they have any financial reward attached, so there is no direct cost. The staff cost associated with managing the awards is minimal.

These people who have contributed significantly to Cochrane would feel alienated by the organization if they remained part of our normal points based system, and so this scheme seeks to retain the good will of these individuals who will continue to be advocates for Cochrane and it also allows us to continue a relationship with these people to involve them in ways that benefit the organization in the future.

There are no significant risks identified. All memberships are subject to the terms and conditions of membership and, if necessary, they can be revoked by the Governing Board, for example, if we felt that someone with one of these memberships was bringing the organization into disrepute.

### **Request to the Council**

We ask the Council to comment on this proposal before formal sign off from the Governing Board.

### **Next steps**

- Governing Board to approve the formalization of these awards
- The People Services team will set up the required internal processes.
- A Terms of Reference for the sub-committee will be drafted
- We will communicate to the community that these awards are now available.