

The Vascular and Endovascular Research Network (VERN) Constitution

Mission Statement:

The Vascular and Endovascular Research Network (VERN) is a multidisciplinary collaborative for those involved or interested in the care of individuals with vascular conditions. Our mission is to improve the care and lives of people with vascular conditions through delivering high quality research.

Objectives:

- To design, lead and deliver vascular research.
- To support research of other researchers in the field of vascular surgery.
- To collaborate with other relevant research collaboratives, organisations, groups and individuals.

Constitution and Rules:

Structure

VERN consists of an Executive Committee. Each VERN project will have an associated group of collaborators. By applying to be a member of the VERN Executive Committee, members are agreeing to abide by the constitution detailed in this document.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for the running of VERN and delivery of specific VERN led projects. Members are selected by applying to the Executive Committee when a call for new members is made by the VERN Executive Committee.

Any changes to Executive Committee roles must be unanimous and agreed by all members of the VERN Executive Committee.

The VERN Executive Committee:

President

- Prerequisite:
 - To have been the immediate VICE President.
 - Be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (national training number (NTN) or non-NTN).
 - Be at least 6 months away or more from their expected CCT date at the date of the Presidential tenure commencing.
- Role:
 - Chair Executive Committee meetings and set the agenda items.
 - Organise and secure sponsorship for the Dragons' Den session at the Vascular Societies' Annual Scientific Meeting.
 - Represent VERN at meetings and conferences.
 - Produce VERN update reports for Journal of the Vascular Societies of Great Britain and Ireland.
 - Produce VERN letters of support, when agreed by the VERN Executive Committee.

- Respond to requests of support and discuss requests of support at committee meetings.
- Respond to requests and produce editorials relating to VERN and its activities from journals, when agreed by the VERN Executive Committee.

Vice President

- Prerequisite:
 - Involvement in VERN for at least 2 years.
 - Be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (NTN or non-NTN).
 - Be 18 months or more away from their expected CCT date at the date of the Vice-Presidential tenure commencing.
- Role
 - Support the President in chairing VERN Executive Committee meetings.
 - Chair VERN executive meetings when the President is not available.
 - Organise the Dragon's Den session at the Vascular Societies' Annual Scientific Meeting by liaising with the Vascular Society for Great Britain and Ireland's committee.
 - Liaise with the project leads and provide support when required.

Secretary

- Prerequisite:
 - o Involvement in VERN for at least 1 year.
 - o Be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (NTN or non-NTN).
- Role
 - Organise the VERN Executive Committee meetings. This includes producing the agenda documents, sending meeting invitations, recording the minutes of meetings and circulating meeting minutes to VERN Executive Committee members. If the secretary is not able to attend, the secretary should identify another member to stand in to take the minutes.
 - Ensure that there are no recording of meetings (audio or visual) unless verbal consent is provided from all parties present at the meeting.
 - To review and update the VERN constitution every two years.
 - Provide support to project leads when required.

Treasurer

- Prerequisite:
 - o Involvement in VERN for at least 1 year.
 - o Be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (NTN or non-NTN).
- Role
 - Monitor and manage VERN's finances and produce a quarterly finance report.
 - Provide support to project leads when required.

Ordinary Members

- Prerequisite:

- Have experience in research and/or audit.
- Be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (NTN or non-NTN) OR be part of the vascular multidisciplinary team.
- Role
 - Lead and support VERN in-house projects or be the VERN nominated project lead. This includes producing a protocol, managing collaborating centres, monitor data collection, undertake data analysis and lead in manuscript production.
 - Report on project progress at VERN meetings.

Communication Lead

- Prerequisite:
 - Have experience in website design.
 - Be able to use social media.
 - Be a medical student/foundation doctor/core surgical trainee/junior clinical fellow/staff grade/clinical fellow interested in vascular surgery OR be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (NTN or non NTN) OR be part of the vascular multidisciplinary team.
- Role
 - Produce tweets and monitor the VERN Twitter account.
 - Monitor and respond to emails on the VERN email account.
 - Provide support to project leads when required in communications with collaborating centres.

Publicity Lead

- Prerequisite:
 - Have experience in website design.
 - Be able to use social media.
 - Be a medical student/foundation doctor/core surgical trainee/junior clinical fellow/staff grade/clinical fellow interested in vascular surgery OR be a UK/Ireland vascular surgery trainee (NTN or non NTN) OR be part of the vascular multidisciplinary team.
- Role
 - Maintain and regularly update the VERN website.
 - Produce and distribute the VERN newsletter.
 - Provide support to project leads when required in disseminating project results.

Associate Surgical Specialty Lead(s)

- Prerequisite:
 - Current Royal College of Surgeons England Vascular Surgery Associate Specialty Surgical Lead(s) (ASSL).
- Role
 - Provide liaison between the Surgical Specialty Leads and VERN.

- Provide support to project leads when required.

Senior/Honorary Members

- Prerequisite:
 - o Consultants and/or trainees previously on the VERN Executive Committee.
- Role
 - Provide advice and guidance to the VERN Executive Committee members.
 - Review manuscripts produced by the VERN Executive Committee members.
 - Provide networking and contacts, as appropriate, to assist with VERN's objectives.

All members are required to volunteer to represent VERN on other organisations/committees, where the VERN Executive Committee agrees, for example the Vascular Society of Great Britain and Ireland Speciality Interest Groups and relevant platform trials and grants.

Each year, members of the Executive Committee who have been part of the VERN Executive Committee for 2 years or more will be invited to apply for the role of Vice President. If there is more than one applicant, the committee will hold a discussion and a decision on the new Vice President must be unanimous. After appointing a new Vice President, the previous Vice President will become the new President of VERN.

For other committee roles, members will have the opportunity to relinquish the role or re-apply for the position or another position on the committee after one year. If more than one person applies for a position the committee will vote.

Meetings:

The VERN Executive Committee meetings will be held a minimum of once per month, increasing to twice a month when required. Non-senior/honorary members are expected to attend 12 meetings per year and Senior Members to attend 4 meetings per year.

Collaborators:

VERN's general collaborative authorship policy (dated Feb 2020) is published online at www.vascular-research.net, however the collaborative authorship criteria will also be stated in each VERN project's protocol. Collaborative co-authors will be listed as such if they meet the ICMJE authorship criteria. It is the responsibility of the lead at each collaborating centre to ensure that accurate details of all those who meet the authorship criteria are provided to VERN for inclusion in the final manuscript.

Project Leads

A project lead is someone who can be either a VERN member or non-VERN member who leads a project they have developed, in collaboration with VERN. If the person is not a VERN member they must work with a member of the executive committee who will be the VERN nominated lead on the project. The VERN nominated lead will update the committee on the project's progress during committee meetings.

Types of VERN Support:

1. VERN Led

VERN led describes a research study or project that is conducted by the VERN Executive Committee.

2. VERN Supported

VERN support describes when VERN collaborates with a researcher(s) in conducting a research study or project. At the beginning of the collaboration both parties will outline the expectations from each party. This will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

3. VERN Endorsed

VERN endorsed support describes when VERN assists with the promotion of a study. This includes access to the VERN network and previous collaborations to advertise a project. VERN will contact their network and previous collaborations on behalf of the research party(ies). VERN does not take any responsibility in any further aspect of delivering the project.

Code of Conduct:

All VERN Executive Committee members will act as ambassadors for the organisation. This includes:

- Promoting and representing VERN at national and international meetings to support the work of VERN.
- Exhibit full engagement with their role and feedback to the committee on a regular basis.
- Attend at least 12 meetings per year (or 4 meetings per year for Senior Committee Members) where possible and engage in discussions with the rest of the committee.
- Act with professionalism during the Executive Committee meetings.

Financial Responsibility:

The finances related to VERN will be kept in the 'Vascular and Endovascular Research Network' bank account:

Bank: [REDACTED]
Bank Address: [REDACTED]
Account number: [REDACTED]
Sort code: [REDACTED]

The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer will be signatories on the bank account. All transactions must be approved by two signatories.

Removal of a Member from the Vascular and Endovascular Research Network:

A member will only be removed from the VERN Executive Committee in the event:

- Exhibits behaviour that is damaging to VERN.
- Breaches the code of conduct.
- Displays lack of engagement in their role.
- Fails to attend the specified number of meetings in a year, without prior discussion with the President .

If a member meets any of the above criteria the President will discuss with the member about their involvement in the VERN Executive Committee. A decision will then be made by the President to remove the member. The President will notify the member verbally and through written (electronic) communication.

A member can choose to leave the VERN Executive Committee by discussing with the President and providing written communication to the President of their desire to leave.

When a person leaves the committee the Vice President will fill that person's role(s) until a new member is appointed.

Appointment of New Members:

The VERN Executive Committee will advertise for new members at interims decided by the committee. Applicants wishing to join the VERN Executive Committee will be invited to submit a 200 word manifesto. Applicants may apply for more than one position.

The VERN Executive Committee will review applications after the deadline for applications. All committee members will vote for eligible candidates to join the committee and the applicant(s) with the highest votes will be offered to join the VERN Executive Committee. Committee members will complete a voting form and return to the Secretary.

The ASSL position(s) will change when there is a change of ASSL appointments.

Amendments to the Constitution:

Amendments to the constitution may be made when approved by no less than two thirds of the total number of committee members.

Dissolution of the VERN:

VERN may be dissolved by resolution by no less than three quarters of the total number of committee members and voting at an extraordinary meeting called for the purpose by the VERN Executive Committee. The disposal of assets held by, on behalf of, or in the name of, the Vascular and Endovascular Research Network, after satisfaction of all debt and liabilities shall not be paid or distributed among the members, but shall be given or transferred to such other charitable associations for institutions having similar objectives to those of VERN.

Date: Friday 4th August 2023

Date for review: Friday 8th August 2025