

The College

Distinction Awards in Psychiatry (Scotland and Northern Ireland)

Professor Rawnsley prepared a note on the Distinction Awards system in England and Wales (*Bulletin*, September 1985, 9, 187). It was suggested that it would be helpful if similar notes could be prepared on the systems operating in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Scotland

It is worth noting that in Scotland the arrangements for providing information to the UK Advisory Committee on Distinction and Meritorious Service Awards is different, in some respects, to the system described by Professor Rawnsley. There is a Scottish Sub-Committee of the UK Advisory Committee, with its own allocation of Awards, which receives nominations from a number of sources including health boards, senior award holders in psychiatry, regional advisory committees and the Scottish Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Each of the regional committees, covering North, North-East, East, South-East and West respectively, include regional advisers appointed by the Scottish Sub-Committee (there is one psychiatrist among the eleven advisers at present) and also award holders from all specialties within the region.

Quite separately from these regional committees, the Chairman of the Scottish Division is invited by the Scottish Sub-Committee to submit a list of nominations after consultation with senior award holders in psychiatry. In practice, there is consultation with the senior award holder in each health board area and also with the chairman of each specialty section and the views of all these individuals are then taken into account at a meeting of the Chairman and Secretary of the Scottish Division with senior award holders representing each of the five Scottish Regions. It follows that the recommended names going directly to the Scottish Sub-Committee are also known to those senior award holders attending the regional meetings and can, therefore, be taken into account by the five regional committees. The list is also

presented for comment and approval to the College Distinction Awards Committee.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has its own Advisory Committee for Distinction and Meritorious Service Awards. The Committee, which is similar to the UK Advisory Committee, advises the Department of Health and Social Services which is responsible for determining the number and allocation of awards.

The Committee has seven members—three consultants (including a psychiatrist) from Great Britain who are appointed with a view to ensuring parity of standards throughout the UK: three consultants from Northern Ireland who are of such standing as to have no personal interest in the allocation of awards; and the seventh, who is a serving Lord Justice of Appeal of the Supreme Court.

The values of the awards in Northern Ireland are the same as in Great Britain and the number is in direct proportion to the number of consultants in both countries. The number under each category is likewise in proportion to the number in the corresponding category in Great Britain.

The Committee seeks recommendations from various sources to help it in its deliberations. It takes advice from the Royal Colleges and Faculties, health and social service boards (equivalent to health authorities) and award holders on the basis of seniority, specialty, and geographical location. The Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast makes recommendations in respect of those consultants who hold joint appointments with the University and the Eastern Health and Social Services Board.

The Committee members also pay rotational visits to different parts of the Province to meet the consultants in those areas who are addressed by the Chairman on the whole process of the Committee's work. At such meetings there are opportunities for consultants to ask questions or to speak individually to members of the Committee.

Advice on Research

A revised and expanded set of notes which might be of help to those planning research projects is now available. It is entitled 'Hints on Research' and is available free from the Research Committee of the College.

The Research Committee would also like to remind members that it is very willing to try and help members who have queries about research matters or who are having difficulty finding advice about a particular research

project. The Committee cannot offer any financial support for research nor can it offer regular supervision of projects, but it can try and put members in touch with experienced researchers or experts in particular areas of psychiatric research.

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