BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

STANDING ORDERS
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Definitions:

In these Standing Orders, unless the context otherwise requires, the word "committee" or "committees" or "board" or "boards" shall be interpreted as including the Junior Members Forum and the Retired Members Forum.

In these Standing Orders, where the term “voting member” appears this refers to those members who are elected to Council by the membership in accordance with the Trade Union Act 1984.
PART 1 – CONDUCT OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings of Council

1. In accordance with bye-law 65, Council shall meet not less than four times each year. Ordinary meetings of Council will follow an agenda compiled under the Chairman’s instructions.

2. Special meetings, convened under bye-law 74, will only consider the business for which the meeting is convened.

3. The business of a meeting of Council held at the conclusion of an Annual Representative Meeting will normally be limited to the election of the Chairman of Council and only exceptionally will any other matter be considered.

4. Other than on those occasions when the first meeting of the session shall be to elect the Chairman of Council, meetings will normally begin at 10.00 am or at another hour fixed by the Chairman after consideration of the business to be transacted. Meetings shall normally finish no later than 6.30 pm.

Agenda

5. At least seven days before each meeting of Council a copy of the agenda will normally be sent to each member of Council. The agenda will contain all the items of business at that time known to require consideration. Matters for Council’s consideration which arise subsequently will be included on a supplementary agenda, which will be sent to members of Council if time permits, or otherwise issued at the meeting.

Quorum

6. No business shall be transacted in any meeting of Council unless at least one third of the voting members are present (Bye-law 67).

PART 2 - RULES OF DEBATE

7. A member of Council shall address the Chair when speaking and shall direct his/her speech strictly to the motion, amendment or rider under discussion.

8. The speeches of members moving motions will be limited to five minutes and other speeches to two minutes.

9. A motion, amendment or rider shall, if required by the Chairman, be in writing, and signed by the proposer and seconder. A motion, amendment or rider once moved and seconded shall not be altered or withdrawn without the consent of Council.

10. The proposer of a motion, amendment or rider, will have the right to reply immediately before the motion, amendment or rider is put to the vote, and will strictly confine himself/herself to answering previous speakers, and shall not introduce any new matter into the debate. Otherwise a member shall not speak more than once on any motion, amendment or rider except to a point of order or, by consent of the Chairman, in explanation of a part of his/her speech which he/she believes to have been misunderstood.

11. No seconder shall be required for a motion from the Chair, or for a motion by the Chairman or other member of a committee or board when officially submitting a report, minutes, or recommendations of the committee or board to Council. All other motions, amendments or riders must be seconded. Any member seconding a motion, amendment or rider, may formally reserve his/her right to speak until a later period subject to SOs 16, 17 and 18.
An amendment may be: To leave out words; to leave out words and insert or add others (provided that a substantial part of the motion remains); to insert words; or be in such form as shall be approved of by the Chairman.

A rider shall be to add words as an extra to a seemingly completed statement; provided always that the amendment or rider is relevant to the motion on which it is moved and is not equivalent to its direct negative.

When an amendment or rider has been moved and seconded, no other amendment or rider shall be moved until the first amendment or rider has been disposed of, but notice of any further amendment(s) or rider(s) to be proposed may be given.

If an amendment or rider is rejected, another amendment or rider may be moved on the original motion. If an amendment or rider is carried, the motion as amended shall become the motion, and shall become the question to which any further amendment or rider may be moved, or upon which the final vote shall be taken.

Any member may at the close of any speech move "That the question be now put" and this proposition if seconded shall immediately and without discussion be put by the Chairman and, if it is carried by a majority of two-thirds of the voting members present and voting, the question previously under discussion shall be put immediately, subject to the mover of the motion under discussion having a right to reply, provided always that the Chairman shall have power to refuse to put the proposition if, in his/her discretion, he/she considers it to be premature and declares accordingly.

Any member may at the close of any speech move, ‘That Council do proceed to the next business’ and this proposition, if seconded, shall immediately and without discussion be put to the vote, except that, before a motion to proceed to the next business is put, the proposer of the motion, amendment, or rider under discussion at the time shall have the right to speak against the proposal to pass to the next business. A two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting shall be required to carry the proposal, provided always that the Chairman shall have power to refuse to put the proposition if, in his/her discretion, he/she considers it to be premature and declares accordingly. In the event of a proposal to pass to the next business being defeated, the Chairman shall have power to permit the proposer of the motion or amendment under discussion to reply to the debate.

Any member may at the close of any speech move "That Council do now adjourn" or "That the debate be now adjourned" and he/she shall, if his/her motion is seconded and carried by a majority of two-thirds of the voting members present and voting be entitled to re-open the debate when resumed. Such proposition shall immediately, and without discussion except as to the time of adjournment, be put to the vote, provided always that the Chairman shall have power to refuse to put the proposition, if, in his/her discretion, he/she considers it to be premature and declares accordingly.

In order to avoid repetition, the Chairman shall be empowered to intervene in and, if necessary, conclude debates when the same points are reiterated.

Voting

Every question shall if challenged be determined by a show of hands or by use of an electronic voting system. If a member requests that his/her name be recorded on the minutes as voting for or against any motion or amendment, it shall be so recorded (Bye-law 71).
If, on the Chairman putting the question, a demand is made that the vote be taken by ballot, or by roll-call, and this demand is supported by five members, the vote shall be so taken and in the case of a vote by roll-call the names for and against the motion or amendment shall be taken down in writing and entered on the minutes (Bye-law 72).

To approve a decision or motion by a simple majority, more than one half of the votes cast (50%+1) shall be in favour of the motion or decision, excluding abstentions or spoiled votes. An equality of votes means that the decision or motion has fallen and the status quo will be retained. (Bye-law 73).

No person who is not a voting member of Council shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of Council (Bye-law 69).

**PART 3 – REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS**

At each meeting of Council the bodies listed below, which have met since the previous meeting of Council, shall submit reports on their work since the date of their last report:

Political Board, Board of the Professional Activities Directorate, Oversight and Finance Committee, Organisation Committee, Northern Ireland Council, Remuneration Committee, Scottish Council, Welsh Council.

However, no report need be submitted to the next meeting of Council except in respect of matters of urgent importance where:

1. A committee or board meets within ten days of a meeting of Council; or
2. A committee or board wishes to consult the Political Board or the Board of the Professional Activities Directorate, or has under consideration a matter affecting one or more of the NHS branch of practice committees, academic medicine or medical students.

(Bye-law 107).

The report of each committee or board shall be circulated to members of Council with the agenda papers for the meeting and shall include the following:

(a) Recommendations upon all matters involving a new declaration of policy or expenditure not already authorised and any other matters upon which the committee or board considers Council should pass a specific resolution. Recommendations on expenditure not already authorised shall have been previously notified to the Oversight and Finance Committee.

(b) A summary of other action taken by the committee or board since its previous report to Council.

(c) A list of the more important matters still under consideration.

The Chairman will move that all reports be approved en bloc and a report will only be moved by the Chairman of the committee if it contains recommendations or if questions on the content of the report have been received in advance.

Chairs of committees and national councils shall be permitted to send deputies to council meetings as follows:

(a) If a chair is unable to attend a meeting of Council at which a report from his/her committee or board is to be considered, another member of the committee or board also on Council shall normally present that report should it contain recommendations or questions have been received regarding its contents. Chairmen of committees or boards who are not members of Council will be not be
required to present their reports to Council in person unless they contain recommendations or questions have been received in advance of the meeting of Council regarding their contents.

(b) If a Council member who holds a Council seat as the chair of a standing committee or national council is unable to attend then they may send a deputy to the Council meeting to represent that standing committee or national council; that deputy must be one of the elected co-chairs, vice chair or deputy chairs of the standing committee or national council and may deputise provided that no other co-chair, vice chair or deputy chair of the standing committee or national council is attending Council in any other capacity. The chair who is unable to attend shall notify the Council secretariat of their non-attendance and the name of their deputy in advance of the Council meeting’.

PART 4 – MOTIONS SUBMITTED TO COUNCIL

Notice of motion

Notice of any motion/agenda item to be brought before a meeting of Council, other than a motion arising out of an item on the agenda or with the chairman’s assent, must be sent, as a hard copy or via e mail, to the Chief Executive/Secretary of the Association in writing so as to reach him not less than seven days before the meeting of Council at which it is desired that the motion shall be considered. The motion/notice must be proposed by 10 members of Council and accompanied by a paper outlining the background to the agenda item and any recommendations if appropriate. No motion/notice that has been proposed by 10 members of Council shall be excluded by the Chairman from the agenda.

Motions relating to matters dealt with in reports

If, in the opinion of the Chairman, a motion of which a member of Council shall independently have given notice, relates to any matter dealt with in a report of a committee or board coming before the same meeting of Council, it shall be considered as an amendment or rider to any recommendation dealing with the subject, or to the motion that the report be approved, as the case may be.

Motions affecting revenue or involving expenditure

Council shall not adopt any proposal affecting the revenue of the Association or involving expenditure not previously sanctioned unless it has received a report from Oversight and Finance Committee on the proposal.

If the Oversight and Finance Committee has taken exception to any proposed expenditure, Council shall not approve such expenditure unless two-thirds of the voting members of Council present and voting shall so approve (Bye-law 69 (2)).

PART 5 - ELECTIONS

Elections to Council

The Chief Executive/Secretary shall act as Returning Officer in connection with all elections to Council and shall sign all election notices. Nominations, candidate statements, deadlines and voting papers shall be in the form prescribed by the Returning Officer.

Candidates may submit statements in support of their nominations and these statements will normally be published, unless a candidate indicates that he/she does not wish this to happen.

Voting papers for elections conducted through the post shall normally be returnable not less than ten days from the date of issue, inclusive of the day of issue, and this period should normally include two Sundays.
Every candidate in an election to Council shall be informed of the detailed results of the election and these results may also be published.

**Election of Chairman of Council**

The Chief Executive/Secretary shall act as Returning Officer in connection with the election of the Chairman of Council. Nominations, candidate statements, deadlines and voting papers shall be in the form prescribed by the Returning Officer.

The Chairman of Council shall be elected by Council from among its own members. He/she shall hold office for an initial term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election for a further year on two occasions, but after an aggregate term of office of five years shall cease to be eligible for re-election unless Council shall on not more than two occasions, by a two thirds majority of those present and voting, decide that the circumstances are sufficiently exceptional to justify his/her re-election for a further year (bye-law 63 (1))

The election of Chairman of Council shall take place at the meeting of Council held immediately after the Annual Representative Meeting and this meeting will be chaired by the President or the Immediate Past President. If they wish, candidates may address the meeting for up to five minutes.

The nomination of candidates will be undertaken in advance of the meeting and nominations must be made in the form of a letter to the Secretary/Chief Executive signed by the candidate’s proposer and seconder and be accompanied by an application form to be circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting and made available for publication. Proposers and seconders must be members of Council. The application form will be sent to members in the form in which it is received in and there will be no amendments permitted after this date. Candidates cannot propose or second their own nominations. At the Council meeting held to elect the Chairman, candidates will be permitted to address the meeting for five minutes each.

Where a contest occurs in connection with the election of Chairman of Council, the election shall be conducted by the single transferable voting system (bye-law 64). In the event of a tie candidates names will be entered into a ‘hat’ and one name will be drawn out and declared the successful candidate. Arrangements will be made to allow those unable to be present at the Council meeting held on the conclusion of the ARM to participate in the election by completing their ballot papers in advance of the meeting either using hard copies or electronic ballot papers

The breakdown of results will be made available to Council and may be published.

**Election of Deputy Chairman of Council**

Council may elect a Deputy Chairman who shall be elected by Council from among its own members and shall hold office for a period of one year, with eligibility for re-appointment provided that the post-holder remains a member of Council. After an aggregate term of office of five years, he/she shall cease to be eligible for re-election unless the Council on not more than two occasions, by a two thirds majority of those present and voting, decide that the circumstances are sufficiently exceptional to justify his/her election for a further year (Bye-law 63 (2))

Nominations for the position will normally be sought by post or email and any ballot will be conducted by email by the use of the single transferable vote. Nominations should be in the form of a letter to the Chief Executive/Secretary signed by the candidate’s nominator and seconder. Proposers and seconders must be members of Council. Candidates may submit information about themselves to be circulated with the ballot papers and this information shall be limited to two sides of A4 paper.
Any member of Council may stand for election as Deputy Chairman, but only voting members of Council may vote in any ballot.

Elections to standing committees and boards

The Chief Executive/Secretary shall act as Returning Officer in connection with the elections. Nominations, candidate statements, deadlines and voting papers shall be in the form prescribed by the Returning Officer.

The election by single transferable vote of members of committees by the Council shall take place at a Council meeting as soon as practicable after the Annual Representative Meeting, or at such other time as shall be agreed by the Council, and such members shall remain in office until a new committee has been elected in the ensuing year. The standing committee elections shall take place as soon as practicable following the Annual Representative Meeting, or at such other time as shall be agreed by the Council (Bye-law 87).

It shall be open to any member of the Representative Body to nominate candidates for election by Council to standing committees or boards. Such nominations shall be made in a form approved by Council and the closing time for the receipt of nominations for election by Council shall be the same as that adopted for election by the Representative Body (Bye-law 88).

Voting papers shall include a curriculum vitae of the candidates and shall indicate the names of those members (if any) of each committee or board, already elected by the Representative Body.

In the event of insufficient nominations being received to fill the vacancies, Council (or the Chairman of Council), shall have power to appoint members up to the number required to complete that portion of the committee or board which it falls to Council to fill (Bye-law 89).

Elections to other committees and boards

Elections by Council to other committees or boards shall normally be conducted by email by the single transferable vote and ballot papers will be accompanied by information about the candidates.

PART 6 – COLLECTIVE ACTION

Council shall have power on behalf of the Association to take or recommend any action required in relation to the regulation of relations between the medical profession or any section thereof and employers whether in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute or otherwise. Council may normally consider a recommendation on this matter from the Political Board before taking any action. Where any unauthorised industrial action / a strike is threatened or taken the Chief Executive/Secretary shall take whatever steps are necessary to repudiate that action to protect the interests of the Association.

PART 7 – OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

Confidential character of documents and proceedings

The agenda and minutes of Council, and the reports of committees or boards to Council, shall not normally be considered "confidential" except when Council shall otherwise determine. Any member of Council may discuss with any division executive or regional council of which he/she is a member, any matter referred to in the Council agenda and minutes which affects in particular such division or region. This proviso shall not apply to any document issued as a "confidential" document which shall be strictly confidential to the members of Council.
Attendance of press at Council, committee and board meetings

53 No representatives of the press, other than the BMJ and BMA News, shall be permitted to attend meetings of BMA Council, committees or boards.

Meetings of Council in private

54 If the voting members of Council present and voting shall decide by a simple majority that any meeting or part of a meeting of Council shall be held in private, only members of Council, visitors to Council, officials and their assistants may be present.

Meetings of Council in camera

55 If two-thirds of the voting members of Council present and voting shall decide that any meeting or part of a meeting of Council shall be held in camera, only members of Council, Visitors to Council and, normally, the Secretary/Chief Executive, members of the Senior Managers Group, the Editor, Deputy Editors of the BMJ and the Committee Secretary to the Council may be present.

Reference to committees and boards

56 The Chairman of Council shall have power to refer to the appropriate committee or board for consideration and report to Council any communication or matter of business of Council but before so referring a resolution of the Representative Body he/she shall consult the Chairman of the Representative Body.

Observers and visitors

57 With the agreement of the Chairman of Council, (a) a member of the Junior Doctors Committee may attend a meeting of Council as an observer if a member of Council in the training grades is unable to attend, and (b) a member of the JDC may attend a meeting of Council as an observer if the Chairman of the JDC should be unable to attend.

58 The attendance of observers in place of other members of Council shall be at the Chairman’s discretion.

59 The Chairman of Council shall have power to invite not more than five members of the profession to be visitors to Council and they shall attend meetings. Any person invited shall be selected because in the opinion of the Chairman of Council he/she may be able to make a special contribution to the achievement of the objects of the Association. The appointment of a visitor shall expire at the close of the next Annual Representative Meeting but may be subject to renewal. A visitor shall attend Council as an observer in accordance with standing order 60.

60 Observers shall be entitled to receive relevant documents, but shall have no right to speak or vote or to be appointed by Council to serve on any committee or board or other body.

Deputations to Council

61 Council may decide to receive a deputation representing a regional council, division or special group of the Association, or representing other persons or organisations. A deputation representing a regional council, division or special group shall consist only of members of the regional council, division or special group. A deputation shall not exceed two in number unless Council shall otherwise determine (Bye-law 80).

62 After reception of the deputation its member(s) shall be invited to make a statement, and members of Council, at the discretion of the Chairman, may put questions to the deputation. The Chairman of
Council, or at his invitation a member of Council, shall reply to the points raised by the deputation, but if it appears to the Chairman of Council that the matter should first be debated, the deputation should be asked to withdraw until the debate is concluded. Members of any deputation shall be required to observe the confidential nature of Council documents and proceedings (Bye-law 81).

**Minutes**

Minutes shall be taken of the proceedings of each meeting of Council, and copies signed by the Chairman shall be bound in volume form at the end of each session. Any oral advice given by the Association’s Director of Legal Services at a meeting of Council shall be summarised and recorded in the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be issued to each member of Council.

**Reports to divisions**

With the consent of the Chairman of Council, important consultative documents, where considered appropriate, may be referred to the divisions and regional councils for consideration.

**Attendances and expenses**

Every member of Council attending a meeting of Council shall sign his/her name on the attendance sheet provided for the purpose. This shall constitute evidence of attendance for the purposes of Article 92.

Members of Council should send apologies for absence if not able to attend. Remote participation facilities may be available but cannot be guaranteed in either the Council chamber or any alternate venues. In the case that a member is unable to attend in person but wishes to participate remotely then a request should be made of the Council secretariat with as much notice as is possible in the circumstances.
Remote participation will be via video link (currently provided using Scopia from PC, iPad or smartphone). Any device used must have a microphone capable of being muted and this facility must be engaged when not speaking. Telephone access without video is not allowed. In order to protect the confidentiality of Council business, the remote end may not be in a public place (e.g. transport) or an NHS workplace. When Council agrees to move into private session or into camera, remote links will be terminated. Remote links may be terminated without notice if the technology link fails to function without disruption.

**Council luncheons**

The Chairman of Council shall have power to arrange on the days of Meetings of Council for luncheons at moderate charges for members of Council, to which he/she shall be at liberty to invite as guests of the Council one or two medical or lay persons.

**Chairman’s discretion and suspension of standing orders**

Any question arising in relation to the conduct of a meeting of Council which is not dealt with in these Standing Orders or in the Articles and Bye-laws or which relates to the interpretation of these Standing Orders shall be determined by the Chairman at his/her absolute discretion.

Any one or more of the Standing Orders other than those contained in the Articles and this Standing Order may, in case of urgency, or after notice duly given, be suspended at any meeting, so far as regards any business at such meeting, provided that two-thirds of the voting members of Council present and voting shall so decide.
PART 8 – DECISIONS OF COUNCIL RELATING TO GENERAL MATTERS

Honours of the Association

69 Gold Medal for Distinguished Merit

(a) Condition of award: The Gold Medal may be awarded to any person or persons who shall have conspicuously raised the character of the medical profession by scientific work, by extraordinary professional services, or by special services rendered to the British Medical Association.

(b) Proposal of award: Any three members of the Council may propose a name or names for the award of the Medal, stating the grounds of their proposition.

(c) The award: The award of the Medal shall be made by the Council; but all recommendations for the award shall, in the first instance, be considered by the Awards and Honours Subcommittee of the Organisation Committee before submission to the Council. Recommendations to Council shall only be made when the Council is meeting in camera.

(d) No award shall take place unless at least two-thirds of the voting members of Council present at the meeting when the decision is taken shall vote in favour of it. The vote shall be taken by ballot.

(e) Secrecy of discussion: Members of Council shall not divulge any proceedings relative to the award of the Medal.

(f) No discussion in Journal: The Editor of the British Medical Journal shall not permit any proposal or suggestion for an award of the Medal in the Journal; but shall forward any such suggestion to Council.

(g) Delivery of Medal: The person or persons to whom a medal has been awarded during the year shall at the Installation of the President Ceremony be invited to receive the same from the hands of the President or Chairman of the meeting, together with a citation, stating the grounds of the award.

(h) Medallist Guests at Council Dinner: The recipients of the Medal shall be invited as guests of the Association to each Council Dinner, at which they shall be expected to wear the Medal by a blue ribbon around the neck.

(i) Roll of Medallists: A suitable book shall be provided by the Association, in which the regulations relating to the Medal "For Distinguished Merit" shall be entered, together with the grounds for each award; and the Medallists shall be requested to enter their names in the same.

Association Medal

70 The Association shall have power to award the Association Medal to such members who have given outstanding and sustained national service to the Association in two or more constituencies, one of which should be national.

Fellowship of the Association

71 Fellowship of the Association is a high honour which may be granted to members whose services in the interests of the Association and of the profession of medicine have been outstanding and merit special recognition beyond that which can adequately be conferred locally.
**Distinguished Service Award**

72 A Distinguished Service Award will be made by Council on the recommendation of the Organisation Committee in recognition of distinguished, outstanding and exceptional services to the Association by non-medical personnel. It will be presented at the Installation of the President ceremony.

73 Exceptionally, any of the Association’s Awards and Honours may be made posthumously.

**Overseas members**

74 Overseas members shall be entitled to receive the international edition of the Journal and, when visiting London, to use the facilities at BMA House, including the Library.

**Obtaining legal advice**

75 For the purposes of interpreting Bye-law 99(4) "Solicitor" shall mean the Association’s Group Director of Legal Services.

76 Members of Council shall abide by the Code of Conduct for Council members, and shall confirm their agreement in writing when requested to do so.