

Election guide

Medical Students Committee Elections

2024



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Introduction to online elections

The online elections system was introduced to ensure our elections process is open, transparent and accessible to our members.

This guide will provide you with the necessary information for this particular election and will guide you through the online election process. For specific help as to how to nominate, vote and view results, please refer to the demonstration and quick guides found at bma.org.uk/elections

Introduction to medical students committee elections

- The BMA MSC (medical students committee) conducts annual elections for medical student representatives of each medical school in the UK. The role profiles for each type of representative are available online at the [MSC election page](#)
- Each medical school will hold one election. The candidate receiving the most votes will be elected as the representative, with the candidate with the next highest number of votes elected the deputy representative.
- For split campus medical schools (Nottingham/Derby and York/Hull) the highest placed runners-up for each campus will be elected as the deputy representative for their respective campus.
- Additionally, an extra deputy representative will be elected from Manchester, Keele, Exeter, Imperial, and Cardiff medical schools to represent their campus. This will work in the same way as with split campus universities with the highest placed runners-up for each campus will be elected as the deputy representative for their respective campus.
- Similarly, St Andrews University and the University of Dundee will elect a ScotGem deputy representative as per the same processes as above
- Elections are advertised by the BMA and current representatives at medical schools, on medical schools' Facebook pages, via direct emails from the BMA, Twitter and the BMA website.
- Candidates submit their nominations online at the BMA elections website.
- Voting is by single transferable vote and is online.
- Detailed instructions on how to vote are provided.

Election Principles

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Eligibility—to stand for election

Only BMA student members may run for positions in BMA elections.

Students must be registered as full-time medical students. Intercalating students may stand for election if they are completing their additional degree at the same university as their medical school.

Eligibility—to vote in BMA elections

Only BMA student members may vote in MSC elections.

In order to ensure that ballot notifications are received by emails, students must make sure that the BMA has their correct contact information – please go to <https://www.bma.org.uk/membership>

Election schedule

Nominations open – **12pm Tuesday 2nd April 2024**

Nominations close – **12pm Tuesday 30th April 2024**

Voting open – **12pm Wednesday 1st May 2024**

Voting close – **12pm Wednesday 29th May 2024**

Results will be published – shortly after voting closes

Candidate statement guidelines

Role profile and skills: First, read the role profile to make sure your statement is relevant. You could use real-life examples to demonstrate that you have the skills needed.

Don't write in CAPITALS: Writing in all-capital letters can come across as shouting, as do exclamation marks. Consider other ways to convey the importance of your message.

Abbreviations: Recognised BMA and other abbreviations can help you keep within the word limit, but make sure they are easily understood. Try to avoid jargon and write what you mean.

Be concise: Don't make your statement longer than it needs to be. A long statement can be discouraging and lose readers before they get to your final point.

Tone: Avoid irony and humour that can be misunderstood. It's always best to keep the tone professional and business-like. Discriminatory, unpleasant or negative comments could constitute harassment and are not acceptable. If these are found in your statement, you will be asked to remove them.

External links: No hyperlinks are permitted within your statement, including links to websites, YouTube or other media. Depending on the election you may be able to upload a photo or video, please note there should be no BMA branding in the photo.

Review your statement: Allow plenty of time to complete your statement and revisit it before the nominations close. When you return to it, read it through from the voter's perspective.

Check before you save: Once nominations close, you cannot edit your statement. Treat it like any other official document. Read it before you save it – errors are just as unfortunate in candidate statements as in any corporate correspondence. Look out for potential misunderstandings and check for tone. You're responsible for your content – the elections team will not amend grammar and spelling.

If there is a problem with your statement, such as inappropriate content, the elections team will contact you. If you do not respond within the time limit given, they will amend as necessary. Any civil or criminal liability in respect of publishing or copying an election address rests solely with the candidate.

What is STV

STV (Single Transferable Vote) is a form of proportional representation where you rank the candidates.

Candidates don't need a majority of votes to be elected, just a known 'quota', or share of the votes, determined by the size of the electorate and the number of positions to be filled.

Each voter gets one vote, which can transfer from their first-preference to their second-preference, so if your preferred candidate has no chance of being elected, or has enough votes already, your vote is transferred to another candidate in accordance with your instructions. STV thus ensures that very few votes are wasted, unlike other systems, especially First Past the Post, where only a small number of votes actually contribute to the result.

Why do we use STV?

STV gives voters more choice than any other system. This in turn puts most power in the hands of the voters.

Fewer votes are 'wasted' (ie cast for losing candidates or unnecessarily cast for the winner) under STV. This means that most voters can identify a representative that they personally helped to elect. Such a link in turn increases a representative's accountability.

Contacts

For any questions on eligibility to nominate or vote or about the election process please contact the elections team at elections@bma.org.uk.

To check or update your membership details please go to <https://www.bma.org.uk/my-bma>

Canvassing guidelines

When canvassing:

- Role model BMA behaviours at all times in the election process.
- Highlight your strengths and experience.
- Don't make negative comments about rival candidates.
- Don't put pressure on people to vote for you or ask others to do so.
- Don't make promises you can't keep – you will be held to account in the next round of elections.

Candidates must not use BMA resources to canvass voters, including:

- BMA Listservers
- BMA social media accounts
- BMA email addresses
- BMA staff resource

While canvassing through personal social media accounts and emails is allowed, you must ensure that any communication does not contravene any policies of any organisation, forum or group and is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

If you're not sure what is acceptable, ask for advice from the committee secretary or elections team: elections@bma.org.uk

Oversight and sanctions

The BMA's Chief Executive (or their nominated deputy) is the returning officer for all BMA elections.

These election rules are referenced in the BMA code of conduct (referred to as the BMA canvassing guide) and not adhering to these rules can lead to an investigation under the code of conduct and sanctions applied through the BMA's resolution process.

Election Memorandum of Understanding

The elections memorandum of understanding applies to all committee members and posts in the BMA. Candidates for election to posts will be asked to declare that they have read the memorandum of understanding when submitting their nominations.

The BMA can only function with the contributions of those members who seek election as representatives. Thank you for making the commitment to help represent your colleagues. In order that elected BMA representatives can work together effectively the following principles are important.

- When you are speaking to or communicating in the broadcast, print or social media as an elected BMA representative, or are identified as such, you must honestly represent the views of the BMA.
- When speaking in a personal capacity you must explicitly ask not to be identified as an elected BMA representative.
- Committee officers must coordinate media engagements with the press office.
- You must declare and update as required conflicts of interest as outlined in the [BMA conflicts of interest policy](#).
- You must uphold the confidentiality of your committee when requested. If in doubt, ask the chair of the committee or committee secretariat.
- As a member of the medical profession and as an elected representative, you must behave in a professional manner at all times and abide by the [BMA's code of conduct](#). Robust debate is sometimes essential in forming policy, but you must always treat patients, colleagues and staff with respect.
- As an elected, appointed member, or representative of the BMA, you are expected to follow the [guidelines and policies](#) in place to protect you and the organisation, including, but not limited to: expenses and honoraria; technology and privacy; communication including social media policy; and anti-corruption and bribery.
- All individuals engaged in BMA business eligible for BMA membership must be and continue to be BMA members.
- In standing for election you agree to uphold these principles.