

# BMA committee visitors scheme

Effective from 1 July 2021

## Purpose

The BMA committee visitors scheme was established to give grassroots members an opportunity to experience BMA committee meetings, processes and discussions. For many, it has offered invaluable insight into the BMA's medico-political environment before making the decision to stand for an elected position. As such, the scheme is open to any BMA member who:

- is a grassroots BMA member and has not previously nor is currently elected to a BMA UK committee (LNC members who are also BMA members and members elected onto BMA regional or national committees but have not sat on a BMA UK committee will be able to participate in the scheme);
- has declared any/all conflicts of interest or sanctions under the BMA code of conduct during the application process which may prevent them from participating;
- has not stood for election to any of the committees that they are applying to through the scheme.

The scheme operates annually giving visitors the opportunity to join one committee for one meeting. There will be three visitors seats available per committee per meeting. Visitor seats are distributed on a first-come first-served basis, however preference is given to members who have not been elected to any BMA committee before.

Members participating in the scheme hold a **non-voting visitor seat** and are therefore not representatives of the committee or the BMA. Visitors participating in the scheme are to be reminded that they are not a BMA representative and can only engage in the debate to speak on procedural points (ie points of expertise, points of information and points of query).

Members must behave in line with the [BMA code of conduct](#), behaviour principles and also observe the [BMA's confidentiality policy](#). Any applicants who are subject to sanctions under the code of conduct must declare these sanctions during the application process.

The committee chair will reserve the authority to hold sessions in private and/or in camera due to the sensitive nature of the discussion, for which committee visitors may be asked to leave the meeting as set out in the relevant committees' standing orders.

If a member participating in the scheme is found to not be fulfilling their role as visitor or in violation of the BMA code of conduct, their participation from the scheme will be discontinued and they will no longer be able to attend the committee meeting. Participants will also be expected to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Visitors are unable to apply for executive subcommittees and committees that oversee the governance of the BMA as they are not included in the scheme.

## Application process and administrative responsibilities

Any eligible members interested in participating in the scheme should download the application form from the [BMA committee visitors scheme webpage](#). The completed application form and any queries about the scheme should be sent to [CVS@bma.org.uk](mailto:CVS@bma.org.uk).

Having received the application form, staff from the professional and specialists committees team will review the application to ensure the following:

- the applicant is a current BMA member who has not participated in the BMA committee visitors scheme before, if the applicant has participated before they are still eligible, however preference should be given to members who are applying for the first time;
- the applicant has selected committees that are included in the scheme and does not have any conflicts of interest or sanctions under the BMA code of conduct that would prevent them from participating;
- the applicant has not previously attended any of the selected committees (ie as a representative, deputy or observer);
- if a branch of practice committee has been selected that the applicant is a member of that branch of committee (medical students or resident doctors applications may be reviewed on a case by case basis);
- the selected committees have seats available.

Once the above criteria have been confirmed, the applicant will be provisionally assigned to one of their three preferred committees listed on the application form. The application will then be forwarded to the relevant committee secretary for approval. If the committee secretary is unable to approve a visitor seat, the application will be returned to the team whereupon the application will be sent to the committee secretary of the applicant's next preferred committee.

Following the application's approval, a visitor seat will be allocated and the applicant will be informed via email, and provided with information regarding the next steps.

Once participating members have attended the committee meeting they will be sent a feedback form to gather information on their experience.

Member feedback will be reviewed annually and actioned as appropriate. A central record of the application forms and collected feedback will be held by the professional and specialists committees team. Demographics of those taking part in the scheme will also be kept under review.

## Expenses

Members participating in the scheme are eligible to claim for expenses incurred when attending committee meetings. Expenses may be claimed through the Concur system in compliance with the BMA committee and GPC expenses policy. As visitors in the scheme are not elected members, they will therefore not be eligible to receive the standard BMA honoraria. Expenses may be claimed for:

- travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses incurred in relation to the committee meeting;
- any child or dependent care and any associated costs;
- any locum costs incurred, subject to the maximum limit which can be found in the BMA committee rates and limits document.

Should you have any questions about this scheme please contact Shola Powell, Corporate Development Directorate ([spowell@bma.org.uk](mailto:spowell@bma.org.uk)).

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### BMA

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