



**Elections Manual**  
**Revised February 2025**

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## **I. Introduction to the Elections Manual**

### **A. Purpose of the Manual**

The Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (OAPA) Elections Manual, herein referred to as the “Manual”, includes policies and procedures that are applicable to all OAPA elections. OAPA holds regular elections of the Board of Directors, herein referred to as the “Board”, officers, representatives to the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) House of Delegates (HOD), student representative, and when called for, special elections. The audience for this Manual includes all OAPA members, candidates, prospective voters, and other stakeholders.

The vice president of the Board is the chairperson of the Elections Committee and has the delegated authority to organize and conduct, with assistance of the secretary-treasurer and the student representative, all annual elections in accordance with the OAPA Bylaws (Appendix A) and as charged by the Board. The provisions in this Manual are subject to the approval of the Board.

### **B. Updates and Revisions**

The Elections Manual will be updated as necessary to reflect any changes in policy and/or procedure, subject to the approval of the Board.

### **C. Distribution and Access**

This Manual is available to all OAPA members on the website throughout the year. Election candidates receive a link to the Manual and are required to attest to having reviewed it in advance of submitting a candidate application.

### **D. Terms Used in this Manual**

In this Manual, “candidate” refers to all those seeking election, regardless of the stage of their candidacy (prospective candidates, applicants, and those slated on the official ballot). Therefore, all candidates in the Board officer, AAPA HOD, and student representative elections are expected to adhere to the procedures and guidelines contained in this Manual. “Voter” refers to anyone eligible to vote in a particular OAPA election, including the Board officers, AAPA HOD, and student representative elections.

## **II. Procedures and Guidelines for OAPA Elections**

### **A. General Information**

OAPA conducts annual elections in accordance with the OAPA Bylaws and other policies. This includes the election of the Board officers, AAPA delegates, and the student representative. OAPA’s leadership year spans July 1 to June 30. The annual elections cycle is conducted to fill positions that are due to expire at the close of a given leadership year.

Leaders are elected by various constituencies within OAPA, with eligibility as defined in the OAPA Bylaws:

- The president-elect, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and regional directors, all of whom serve on the Board, are elected by eligible fellow, associate, new graduate, retired members, and the student representative.
- The AAPA delegates are elected by eligible fellow, new graduate, and retired members.

Terms of service are unique to each position and determined by the Board prior to elections as outlined in OAPA Bylaws and OAPA Policy Manual (Appendix B):

1. President-elect - elected annually for one year of service (with subsequent one-year terms as president and immediate past president).
2. Vice-president - elected bi-annually for two years of service.
3. Secretary-treasurer - elected bi-annually for two years of service (term alternates with the vice president).
4. Regional directors - elected annually to a two-year term of service on a staggered basis.
5. AAPA delegate - elected annually to staggered three-year terms as determined by the AAPA apportionment of delegates.

## **B. Elections Timeline**

In accordance with OAPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1, elections rules and regulations are established by the Elections Committee including the election timeline.

Throughout an election cycle, the official elections timeline can be found on the OAPA website.

## **C. Candidate Application**

All candidates are required to complete an application to verify eligibility and provide information and materials that will support voter education.

Materials submitted as part of the application process are considered final and may not be edited, amended, or altered in any way. To complete the application, candidates must attest to having read and understood OAPA's election policies and procedures as stated in this Manual and other applicable OAPA Bylaws and policies. Prior to submitting the application, candidates should also take care to review all information provided on the OAPA website, especially the elections timeline, specific position descriptions and expected meeting dates.

## **D. OAPA Promotion of Elections & Voter Education**

To increase visibility for campaigns, OAPA uses the OAPA website to house all information pertaining to the Board and AAPA delegate elections. Candidates and voters are encouraged to visit this site regularly for announcements and new information.

During an election cycle, this page will include:

1. General information about OAPA elections (e.g. timelines, FAQs, a link to this Manual, and position descriptions, etc.)
2. Additional sections featuring specific information about each election (i.e. Board, student representative and AAPA delegates election)
3. Candidate information and qualifications as submitted on their applications. The materials included vary per each election but can generally include any of the following:
  - a) Summary biography
  - b) CV
  - c) Photograph
  - d) Responses to short answer questions as deemed appropriate by the Board
  - e) Optional: contact information, including up to three personal social media platform links

OAPA may utilize any of the above information to promote the elections and support voter education. OAPA will also promote elections by sharing general information about the process (e.g. announcing the slate of candidates and voting procedure reminders) via web, email, electronic newsletters, and/or social media.

### **E. Candidate Professionalism**

As prospective leaders of the OAPA, all candidates are expected to conduct their campaigns with the utmost integrity and in a manner that is professional, issues-oriented, and honest. Candidates are expected to treat their fellow candidates, members, and staff respectfully. Violating OAPA elections policies or procedure, including those found in this Manual, may be grounds for dismissal from the elections process.

### **F. Campaigning During Board and AAPA Delegate Elections**

#### **1. General Expectations**

Prospective candidates are not limited in discussing their intention to run for office, or when to begin their campaign, except when on official OAPA business. Prospective candidates are cautioned that those who campaign prior to the release of the official slate of candidates do so at their own risk. OAPA is not responsible if an applicant fails to meet eligibility requirements, submits an incomplete application, or decides not to self-declare.

Candidates must abide by OAPA's expectations regarding candidate professionalism regardless of the method or platform used to campaign. The focus of a campaign should be issues-oriented and reflective of the candidate's experience, vision, and expertise. Campaigns should not serve as a commentary on other candidates and differing points of view must be addressed in a respectful manner. Candidates should always remember that the way they campaign is a reflection on themselves, OAPA, and the profession as a whole.

#### **2. Campaign Restrictions While on Official OAPA Business**

Current OAPA volunteers and leaders are not restricted from performing their official duties while running for office. However, when engaging in official OAPA-sponsored business, candidates are prohibited from campaigning.

For the purpose of this section, official OAPA business is defined as activity where a volunteer is representing OAPA in their volunteer role. This definition does not preclude a candidate from campaigning at OAPA conferences. However, other campaigning exclusions may apply to areas within the OAPA conference where otherwise indicated.

### **3. Campaign Materials**

All information must be truthful, accurate, and reflect a professional business tone. The penalty for falsification of campaign literature or information supplied by the candidate to the Election Committee will result in disqualification from the election, or if elected, forfeiture of their office. Individuals will also be considered for disciplinary action and/or denial of membership with OAPA. Individuals may be referred to national PA organizations including AAPA and NCCPA.

### **4. Communication with Voters**

OAPA may not provide a list of member contact information to candidates. Furthermore, **candidates are prohibited from utilizing current OAPA group email lists to send any election-related communications.**

When sending an email to personal contacts, candidates are encouraged to consider email etiquette. It is specifically recommended that those candidates who choose to email personal contacts use the BCC function when emailing multiple contacts at once. Using the BCC function will prevent the inadvertent sharing of email addresses and overloading of inboxes with “reply all” responses.

### **5. Appearance in OAPA Publications**

Once the slate of candidates is announced, OAPA will freeze the inclusion of candidates from OAPA publications and web postings (except for official election-related postings) until voting has concluded. OAPA will not remove or alter any publications or web postings that were published prior to the candidate announcement. OAPA reserves the right to use subject matter experts, who may be candidates, as needed to further strategic priorities.

### **6. Personal Social Media and Online Presence**

Candidates are encouraged to use personal social media platforms to promote their candidacy. Candidates may provide up to three personal digital platforms (social media or website) to appear on the OAPA website. Candidates must adhere to the professional expectations noted above when engaging on social media.

### **7. OAPA Social Media**

Individual candidates may not post to OAPA social media accounts. OAPA will share election-related information via these channels and point back to the OAPA

website, which will contain candidate information. OAPA reserves the right to remove any election-related posts not generated by OAPA from its social media accounts.

### **8. Other Campaign Activities**

Campaign activities may be permitted during in-person OAPA events at the discretion of OAPA leadership so long as there is equitable opportunity for all candidates. OAPA may, at its discretion, provide other methods or communications channels to connect candidates with voters.

## **III. Candidate Endorsements**

### **A. Board Involvement in Candidate Endorsements and Campaigns**

Current OAPA officers are sometimes asked to support or endorse a candidate. When this occurs, Board members should be aware of the potential impact partiality might have on boardroom dynamics following the elections. To avoid the appearance of partiality in general, Board members are strongly discouraged from publicly campaigning or endorsing any candidate. To guard against any appearance of bias, individual members of the Election Committee (including Board representatives) are expressly forbidden from campaigning or endorsing a particular candidate for office. In the event that the vice president, who is the chair of the Elections Committee, declares candidacy, self-endorsement is permissible.

## **IV. Board of Directors and AAPA Delegates Election**

### **A. Positions and Terms**

The OAPA election is held to elect the following positions in accordance with the OAPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Term Length</b>
President-Elect	1 Year (followed by subsequent one-year terms as president and immediate past president)
Secretary-Treasurer	2 Years (staggered with VP)
Vice President	2 Years (staggered with Sec-Treas)
Regional Director	2 Years (staggered by region)
AAPA Delegate	3 Years, subject to change per Board approval (staggered terms according to number of delegates apportioned by the AAPA)

*Additional information about position descriptions and terms will be available during the election period on the OAPA website.*

### **B. Commencement of Terms**

In accordance with the OAPA Bylaws (Article VII, Section 6-7) and OAPA Policy Manual, Section 3.3, elected positions begin their terms at the start of the next leadership year on July 1.

### **C. Eligibility**

The following are the eligibility criteria for Board candidates (for all roles except the student representative):

- a) A candidate must be a fellow member of OAPA and AAPA and membership is verified by the Executive Director (ED). This membership must be maintained throughout their term, if elected.
- b) New graduate members shall be considered eligible Board candidates provided they are an AAPA fellow member when declaring candidacy and maintain OAPA fellow membership status when their new graduate membership expires as outlined in OAPA Bylaws (Article III, Section 10).
- c) A candidate must have an initial membership join date of August 1 of the prior year, or earlier.
- d) The ideal candidate will have current or prior leadership experience within their workplace, during their PA studies, or in organizations such as OAPA, AAPA, or related PA organizations.

The following are the eligibility criteria for AAPA delegate candidates according to OAPA Policy Manual, Section 3.0:

- a) A candidate must be a current fellow member of the OAPA and AAPA and must maintain this membership status during their term.
- b) The candidate must be willing to attend all HOD sessions at the AAPA Annual Conference.

### **D. Seated Board Officer Declaration**

If a seated officer elects to run for an alternate office, their position will automatically be resigned effective at the end of the leadership year. Seated board members must declare their intentions to run for office prior to the candidate application period in accordance with the timeline established by the Election Committee. Positions expected to be vacated by means of this policy will be included in the annual election cycle, in lieu of holding a special election.

### **E. Candidate Application Process**

The candidate application process is established in the official election timeline that is approved by the Elections Committee. The call for nominees to the membership will be provided electronically by the ED. All candidate application materials must be submitted by the established deadline to be accepted.



A candidate may declare for only one Board office, but shall be permitted to declare for an AAPA Delegate position concurrently. Self-declaration shall be permitted. All candidates for the Board and AAPA delegate are required to undergo the same three part process, which includes:

1. *Candidate Interest & Eligibility Submission* – on this application form candidates will provide contact information, which position they are interested in, eligibility information, summary bio, responses to short answer questions and a CV. Candidates are also required to submit a conflict of interest disclosure form.
2. *Election Committee Review & Slate Selection* - upon receipt of necessary material, the Election Committee shall review the applications of all eligible prospective candidates and present an official slate of candidates for the election.
3. *Official Declaration of Candidacy* - all candidates will be informed confidentially of the endorsed slate and will make a final decision whether to declare candidacy. The candidate declaration form will include submission of a campaign photo, summary bio, responses to short answer questions, and preferred social links for voter education on an optional basis.

In accordance with OAPA Bylaws Article VII, Section 3 and OAPA Policy Manual, Section 3.2, Board and AAPA delegate candidates may run as a self-declared candidate. Candidates who meet the eligibility requirements will be evaluated by the Elections Committee based on materials provided on the Candidate Interest and Eligibility form. The Elections Committee will then make a final decision regarding candidates to be included on the official slate.

Candidates who are not selected for the official slate may proceed as self-declared candidates so long as they meet the eligibility criteria established in the Bylaws and policy.

In accordance with the OAPA Policy Manual, Section 3.3, AAPA delegates shall be elected according to the number of seats apportioned by the AAPA. The candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will be selected for service, with the candidates receiving fewer votes either observing or filling in on an as needed basis.

The official OAPA ballot will consist of candidates confirmed by the Elections Committee and self-declared candidates as outlined above.

#### **F. Voter Eligibility**

In accordance with the OAPA Bylaws, eligible fellow members, associate members, new graduate members, retired members and the student representative may vote in OAPA elections, except that only fellow and eligible retired members may vote for AAPA delegates. Additionally, voting members shall have initial membership status that commenced prior to the opening of the election.

### **G. Election Procedures**

The OAPA Board and AAPA delegate elections shall be conducted electronically at least 45 days prior to June 1. (OAPA Bylaws Article VII, Section 8).

Within fourteen (14) days after the close of the nomination process as determined by the Elections Committee, all eligible voters shall receive a ballot via email for all Board and AAPA delegate positions to be elected.

Candidate names will appear in alphabetical order on the ballot. Write-in candidates are permitted.

The deadline for submitting ballots will be fourteen (14) days after the ballots are distributed.

The ED manages the access to secure ballots by eligible voters. Eligible voters must have a current, valid email. Information on casting ballots will be distributed to eligible voters via email and other available means of communication.

If the ED identifies a write-in candidate who has received enough votes to win the election, the ED and Elections Committee will confirm the individual has met all eligibility requirements. Misspelling of names does not invalidate a vote/ballot if the intent of the voter is clear.

All ballots are tabulated and results are certified by the ED and vice president at the close of the voting period. The vice president or the ED will contact each candidate to inform them of their individual results after ballots have been tabulated. At the close of the election, an announcement shall be sent via electronic means notifying the Board and the membership of the election results. The OAPA website shall be updated with election results thereafter.

### **H. Vote Necessary to Elect**

A plurality of votes cast shall elect the president-elect, secretary-treasurer, vice president, regional directors, and AAPA delegates. In the case of a tie vote, the Board shall vote to decide the election from among the candidates who tied.

## **V. Vacancies**

### **A. General Information**

In the event that an office vacancy occurs and is not covered by any pertinent bylaw(s), the Board may appoint an officer to fill the vacancy from a slate of qualified candidate(s) submitted by the Elections Committee. A deadline for the submission of the candidate(s) and appointee confirmation will be set by the president.