

Medical Schools Council Assessment Alliance Common Item Bank Authors Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

1.1 The role of MSCAA Common Item Bank Authors is to ensure that:

- items of an appropriate level of knowledge and which adhere to the style guide are authored and submitted to the MSCAA Common Item Bank. This bank is used by all medical schools to construct assessments.
- items cover a broad range of areas of clinical practice, conditions, and presentations.

2. Key objectives

2.1 MSCAA Common Item Bank Authors will be responsible for the following activities:

- authoring items as commissioned by the Common Item Bank Final Review Group
- authoring items that adhere to the MSCAA style guides and standard operating procedures for item authors
- submitting items for review in a timely manner and by the dates identified by the MSC team
- engaging in constructive discussion of item content and working collaboratively with other members of the group to reach a consensus
- using the Exam-Write® platform for authoring and reviewing items
- reflecting on feedback from the Final Review Group and making appropriate changes
- completing any training required by the Final Review Group.

3. Confidentiality

3.1 The work of the Common Item Bank Authors is sensitive since the Common Item Bank is used by all member medical schools for examination content, and it is the responsibility of those in the Group to ensure that the confidentiality of examination content is respected at all times. Participation in any external commercial or non-commercial enterprise related to the MSCAA Common Item Bank or MS AKT without express permission from the MSC, is not allowed. Confidentiality constraints will continue to remain in place for 5 years after demitting office.

4. Membership

4.1 Members will be appointed based on their question writing skills and specialist expertise.

4.2 Members will be appointed to item review groups during question review events. Item review group numbers are not fixed and will be decided based on attendance at meetings although the aim will be a minimum of four members and chaired by a member from the Final Review Group.

5. Meeting Frequency

5.1 It is anticipated that events will be held twice a year, one in –person and one virtual. The in-person event will be 1 full day, and the virtual event will be 0.5 days. These will be in addition to time spent authoring questions. The venues for in-person events will vary but are likely to include London, Coventry and a location in the north of England. Members will need to commit to attending a minimum of one of the two meetings held per year, in addition to completing all mandatory training requirements.

6. Review

6.1 Members join the Common Item Bank Authors for a 4 – 5 year term with the possibility to re-apply for another term thereafter. Members who fail to attend the required number of meetings, submit sufficient questions or to meet the required standard of work may be asked to step down from the group.

7. Conflict of interest

7.1 Should a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest arise it is the responsibility of the individual to inform the Chair of the Final Review Group.

8. Promoting equality and diversity

8.1 Members must engage with MSC’s aim that all doctors, irrespective of their background, have the competence and skills to care for the diversity of the UK’s patient population, and understand the ethical and professional issues that arise in practising in the UK. Members will need to ensure that items are unambiguous, fair and avoid bias for or against candidates from different backgrounds.

8.2 Members must have an understanding of and a commitment to addressing equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusivity, with a non-discriminatory approach to cultural differences and take into account the needs of individuals who share protected characteristics. Members must also have an appreciation of the issues faced by newly qualified doctors.

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