



# WONCA Policy on Conduct of Candidates for Election

REV 24 April 2025

This policy applies to the conduct of elections for WONCA World Executive Committee.

## Background

By-laws Articles 12.6 and 12.7 refer to “Nominations, Election and Appointments” and “Voting and-Ratification” respectively. These provide the assurance of a transparent and fair process by the WONCA organization. By-laws Article 12 must be complied with, noting that any organizational policy made by Executive is binding, only if it is in full accord with the WONCA Bylaws.

This policy refers to Candidate Conduct during the election process for all positions on the WONCA World Executive which includes for:

- Regional Presidents
- The World President Elect
- Young Doctors’ Representative
- Member-at-Large of the Executive Committee

This policy may be used for any other election process within WONCA where such guidelines are considered desirable.

## WONCA Election Committee

WONCA will form an Election Committee to assist management and Executive with oversight of conduct during the WONCA World election process. This will be a short term committee with explicit Terms Of Reference (TOR) that forms ONLY during the time of the election process and for two weeks post-election. Immediate Past Presidents, as members of an Election Committee are ideally placed to participate due to low levels of personal conflict of interest. Such a committee is to ensure process oversight for a fair, ethical and equitable election of officers.

## Disagreements

All matters of dispute will be referred to the CEO in the first instance, who may refer the matter to the Election Committee or Executive depending upon the timing of complaint received and seriousness of the alleged breach.

WONCA Executive shall be the ultimate arbiter of what represents appropriate or inappropriate campaigning behaviour.

WONCA Executive shall have the power to disqualify candidates from eligibility for election should they consider the inappropriate behaviour of campaigning to be a significant cause for concern.

## Eligibility To Stand

Requirements for Candidates for WONCA Executive are:

- Member of WONCA or of a WONCA recognized Member Organization.
- Nomination has been made in accordance with the relevant requirements in WONCA By-laws Article 12.6
- Registered Medical Practitioner in the discipline of Family Medicine/General Practice

It is to be noted that any successful Candidate will be required to sign a Declaration of Interests before taking up office.

## Nomination Process

Nomination will be in accordance with the relevant requirements in WONCA By-laws Article 12.6.

WONCA requires the following of **Candidates for President Elect and Member-at-Large**:

- A letter of nomination as per By-laws Article 12.6
- A letter signed by the nominee to accept the nomination
- A curriculum vitae maximum of 2000 words in PDF format or hyperlink
- A candidate statement of maximum length 2000 words for World President Elect Candidates, and 800 words for other positions' Candidates.
- A recent photograph of good quality

In addition, **Candidates for Young Doctors' representative** shall provide:

- evidence of participation in their regional Young Doctors' Movement and
- confirm that at the time of the proposed election at World Council, they will meet the definition of Young Doctor.

**Candidates for Ratification by Council as Region President** shall provide evidence that the nomination has the support of the majority of the Member Organizations of the Region.

Candidates may wish to translate key documents into another language. Please ensure that your photograph:

- is portrait orientated
- is in JPEG format
- is clear and in focus
- is in colour
- shows your head, shoulders, and upper body and
- contains no other subject matter

Once assessment of nominations has been completed, applicants will be informed whether their candidature has been accepted, or not. After acceptance, an election video of maximum length five minutes for President Elect Candidates and three minutes for all other candidates will be required.

The “Election Period” commences when a Candidate submits their application to contest a WONCA position.

## **Endorsements and Use of WONCA Resources**

### ***WONCA Executive and Council Conduct***

WONCA Executive Committee members, Council representatives and immediate past officers do not endorse Candidates, either explicitly or implicitly.

Executive Committee members and Vote-holding representatives on WONCA Council will make individual decisions regarding their voting preference for Candidates but shall not publicly endorse or support them.

### ***Use of WONCA Resources for Campaigning***

Unless expressly permitted under these Rules, Candidates, their supporters, and WONCA officers and Members shall not use any ‘in office’ privileges, including but not limited to, access to communications channels attached to any WONCA office or position, for any activity that could be considered as Campaigning for election or promoting one or more Candidates during the Election Period.

Unless expressly permitted under these Rules, no communications may be sent on a WONCA letterhead, from a WONCA email address, or through WONCA databases or mailing lists, if the communication could be considered Campaigning for election, in form or substance.

No WONCA branding may be used in colour or form. Campaign material is not to resemble a WONCA product or webpage in colour or format. WONCA Executive shall be the ultimate arbiter of what resembles WONCA branding.

## **Conduct of the Election**

Candidates may not begin campaigning / canvassing until they have formally submitted their documents for Candidature and have been confirmed as eligible by the Nominations and Awards Committee.

Campaigning for votes, as well as advertisements, must comply with this ‘Policy on Conduct of Candidates for Election Candidates’. Candidates should ensure they have fully read this document before beginning campaigning.

No statements that could be considered to be libel, slander, non-evidence based, or indecent will be accepted. Commentary on other candidates, or past WONCA officers, must always be professional, non-disparaging and collegiate.

Complaints regarding conduct of other Candidates must be received in writing (email is acceptable) formally drafted, with evidence, and submitted to the WONCA CEO ([secretariat@wonca.com](mailto:secretariat@wonca.com)).

Candidates may be liable to disqualification from the election if found to be in breach of the terms of this ‘Policy on Conduct of Candidates for Election Candidates’.

## Communications

Candidates must make the text and format of any election advertising, publicity or campaign material available to the WONCA CEO, ideally before, but in any event promptly after, any such material is printed, published electronically, emailed or otherwise distributed.

Candidate statements may only be published if the Candidate reasonably believes the information is accurate, is unlikely to mislead or deceive, and is not defamatory.

Any printed, website or electronic materials (including email or materials provided on social media platforms) must be identifiable as election-related advertising, publicity or campaign commentary, including where practicable, a heading identifying such materials as an “ADVERTISEMENT”, in English, or an appropriate regional language with a font size of at least 11.

All advertising, publicity or campaign material developed by Candidates must be available to all eligible voters.

Candidates’ advertising, publicity or campaign material must not contravene this ‘Policy on Conduct of Candidates for Election Candidates’. The candidates’ material, however, can advocate change to particular policies.

To assist candidates and for equity reasons, WONCA will provide the following;

1. Equal but limited space for each Candidate’s standardised election material submitted with their application on the WONCA website. No updates or changes to material will be considered other than the official statements, Curricula Vitae and photos specified.
2. Newsletter coverage for all candidates
3. Requests will be considered for limited translation services into English, if required, for candidates from LMICs’. (Please contact [secretariat@wonca.com](mailto:secretariat@wonca.com))

For any Candidate forum sessions, WONCA will attempt to ensure equal exposure time and equity, in particular in regard to time zones. WONCA may need to provide this equity through multiple sessions and/or recordings. WONCA management will endeavour to operationalize this organizational equity depending upon the Candidates’ geographic origin.

4. Scheduled time will be allocated during World Council for presentations to Council from Candidates who will be considered for election at the Council meeting. The presentation will be time-limited and may be provided as an in-person presentation or by video link. This presentation may include supplementary technologies such as power point or similar.

## **Social Media**

All material on social media must be compliant with this policy. Normal interactions, dialogue and communications are considered exempt but expressly promotional material must comply with this policy.

During the ballot process all promotional material and current social media activity should cease whilst the ballot is conducted.

## **World Council Conduct**

The election of Candidates concludes at the end of the ballot process conducted at the World Council. As such, in the days leading up to time when many delegates are together, campaigning is allowed as long as it is transparent, collegiate, and consistent with the professional principles of this policy and of medical practice.

Leading up to and during World Council the distribution by each Candidate of an A4 or A5 single page leaflet summarizing the Candidate's campaign material is permitted. Links to social media, and to websites are allowable if the material is compliant with this 'Policy on Conduct of Candidates for Election Candidates'.

WONCA Council meets and conducts the election of officers, immediately preceding the WONCA World Conference. Candidates must note that their success in the election could be challenged if they have accepted to be a conference keynote speaker as this will have resulted in advertising and promotion of them. Their candidature could also be challenged if the Conference organisers have paid for their travel to the city of the World Conference to be a keynote speaker.

## **Gifts**

While it is anticipated that most Candidates will circulate printed election material as above at World Council, it is preferred that Candidates do not provide voters with material inducements or gifts.

'Gifts' include physical objects, services or invitations, and meals. Clarification of gifting can be sought from the CEO.

The 'recipient' includes the voter and their immediate family.