



British Orthopaedic
Association

BOA Code of Conduct 2025

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and responsibilities expected of all individuals participating in BOA activities, including professional, educational, and social events. It outlines the procedures for reporting actual or perceived breaches of the Code and, for employees, should be read alongside the Association's Equal Opportunities, Anti-Harassment, and Bullying policies. Where any provision of this Code conflicts with applicable law, the law shall take precedence.

The purpose of this Code is to foster a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment that reflects the charitable aims and values of the BOA. While this document does not form part of any contract of employment, it remains a guiding framework for conduct and may be amended at the Association's discretion.

All members are expected to uphold high standards of personal conduct and to treat colleagues, members, staff, and others with courtesy and respect. New members will be required to confirm their agreement to the Code as part of the membership application process. Ongoing membership, including renewal by Direct Debit, will be regarded as continued acceptance of and commitment to the Code's provisions.

In addition, the BOA has issued a dedicated **Statement of Expectations on Sexual Misconduct**, applicable to the workplace, educational settings, and social functions. This can be found at <https://www.boa.ac.uk/about-us/rules-and-codes/code-of-conduct.html>.

1. Scope of application

- 1.1. This Code applies to all BOA members, trustees, officers, and employees engaged in Association-related activities. These activities include, but are not limited to: formal meetings, written and verbal communications, educational programmes, social events, and engagement via the Association's website or social media platforms.

2. Professional Responsibilities

- 2.1. BOA members are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, serving as role models within the medical community—particularly in the field of trauma and orthopaedic surgery. Members must act in the best interests of patients, promote respectful and ethical behaviour, and actively challenge inappropriate or unprofessional conduct when it arises.

3. Responsibilities of the BOA



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- 3.1.** The BOA is committed to promoting a supportive, inclusive, and professional environment for all members and employees. The Association actively encourages and supports individuals who speak up against inappropriate conduct or behaviour. Pastoral support is available to all parties involved in a complaint, and further information and resources can be accessed via the BOA website (www.boa.ac.uk) and through internal employee support channels.

4. Good Standing

- 4.1.** All BOA members must be in good standing with the GMC or other appropriate regulatory bodies. If, for any reason a member's status changes so that they are no longer in good standing, the member must immediately notify the Chief Operating Officer of the BOA in writing.
- 4.2.** In cases where the General Medical Council (GMC) has formally erased a member from the medical register—whether as a result of a decision by the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS) or other regulatory processes—the Association will adopt an equivalent sanction by terminating the individual's membership. This action shall be enacted by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), in consultation with the Conduct Committee, without the need for further internal investigation, in recognition of the GMC's authority and findings.
- 4.3.** Where erasure has been requested voluntarily by the member (e.g. prior to or during GMC fitness to practise proceedings), the Association reserves the right to review the circumstances and may determine that termination of membership is appropriate. The Trustees will be formally notified of any action taken and its rationale.
- 4.4.** Where a member has been suspended by the General Medical Council (GMC), the Association will ordinarily impose a corresponding suspension from Association membership for the duration of the GMC sanction. This action shall be undertaken by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) in consultation with the Conduct Committee. The Trustees shall be notified of the suspension.
- 4.5.** Following the conclusion of the GMC suspension period, any application by the individual to reinstate their membership of the Association will be considered by the Conduct Committee. Reinstatement is not automatic and may be subject to additional conditions or review, at the Committee's discretion.

5. Responsibilities as a member or employee

- 5.1.** Members and employees are required to adhere to the principles outlined in this document. All members and employees must act with honesty and uphold professional probity, ensuring that their conduct, qualifications, and communications

reflect truthfulness and honesty in line with professional standards.

- 5.2.** All members and employees must treat patients, colleagues, and others with respect, courtesy, and dignity, avoiding bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination, and abuse of professional authority.
- 5.3.** Members and employees must avoid situations where their actions could be perceived as breaching professional boundaries—particularly where a power imbalance exists. This includes any behaviour that may be construed as an abuse of hierarchical position, seniority, or authority over others. The BOA expects all individuals to recognise and respect the influence their role may carry, and to avoid using their position in ways that could undermine, intimidate, or disadvantage colleagues, trainees, or staff.

6. Information technology and social media

6.1. Professional Conduct Online

Members and employees must ensure that any use of social media or digital platforms—whether personal or official—reflects the core values of our Association. This includes avoiding content that is defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, or could reasonably damage the reputation of the Association or its members (e.g., insults, hate speech, confidential disclosures).

6.2. Distinction Between Personal and Association Representation

When referencing affiliation with the Association (in profile, bio, posts), members and employees must clearly state that their opinions are their own and not official Association policy. Official channels and brand elements (logos, banners, etc.) may only be used by those explicitly authorised to speak on behalf of the Association.

6.3. Protection of Confidential Information & Privacy

Members and employees must not share any confidential or proprietary information—about the Association, its members, stakeholders, or partners—through any digital platform. Think before posting: if the information is sensitive, personal, or would be inappropriate in a public forum, it should not be shared. All members are personally responsible for safeguarding privacy and data integrity.

7. Bullying and Harassment

- 7.1.** Our Association upholds a strict zero tolerance policy towards bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment in any form—whether in person, online, via email, or during meetings and events. Under the Equality Act 2010 (section 26), harassment based on a protected characteristic—including unwanted sexual conduct—is unlawful when it violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or



offensive environment.

- 7.2.** Sexual harassment—defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature—can include remarks, jokes, images, physical advances, or other unwelcome behaviours and is also unlawful under the Act and supported by the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which requires “reasonable steps” to prevent it.
- 7.3.** Bullying and non-sexual harassment—while not criminalised specifically—can still amount to unlawful harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 or the Equality Act if linked to protected characteristics.
- 7.4.** Reports of such conduct will be taken seriously, investigated, and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including membership removal. We are committed to fostering a respectful, safe, and inclusive environment for all members.

8. Boundaries between Professional and Personal Matters:

- 8.1.** Individuals must avoid situations in which an actual or perceived breach of professional boundaries, or abuse of power may occur. Relevant events include, but are not limited to: conferences, meetings, working away on BOA business, representing BOA at a third party event, BOA related social events, including office parties, particularly when alcohol is involved.
- 8.2.** Whilst consensual relationships are understood, a power gradient often exists between colleagues of the same professional background, as well as between medical and non-medical BOA personnel which influences the relationship. Clear boundaries must thus be maintained between professional and personal matters and proactive disclosure is recommended so that appropriate measures can be put in place to avoid conflicts of interest.

9. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviours and How to Raise a Complaint

- 9.1.** Any concerns about inappropriate behaviour, including formal complaints, are addressed through the BOA’s dedicated *Complaints and Resolution Process*.
<https://www.boa.ac.uk/about-us/rules-and-codes/code-of-conduct.html>