



**The World Organization of National Colleges,
Academies and Academic Associations of
General Practitioners/Family Physicians**



Vasco da Gama Movement

The WONCA Europe Network for New and Future Family Physicians

**Procedure for managing elections to the VdGM
Executive during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.**

1 May 2020

**ACCEPTED BY ELECTRONIC
VOTE BY VDGM EUROPE
COUNCIL ON 1 MAY 2020**

Temporary changes to the VdGM organisational policy on elections to facilitate elections to the Executive during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

Context

- At the request of the VdGM President, the Good Governance Committee has prepared the following temporary amendments to the elections policy.
- The elections will proceed as described in the existing elections policy (included below) except for these six amendments, which will take precedence over what is in the existing policy
- These amendments are only for the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, to facilitate online elections outside of an Ordinary Council Meeting. We envisage a return to the usual elections policy for elections taking place in 2021 and beyond.

Proposed temporary amendments:

1. Section 2.4 Election timing

Elections for the vacant posts on the Executive (advertised on 24 February 2020) will take place at an Extraordinary Council Meeting held online on Sunday 13 September 2020.

This is a change from elections being held at the annual 'Ordinary Council Meeting' (i.e. the council meeting during a pre-conference) to the proposed online meeting on 13/9/20.

2. Applies to all sections

Where the current elections policy refers to a 'council meeting' or 'Ordinary Council Meeting,' this will instead refer to the proposed online extraordinary council meeting on 13/9/20.

3. Section 1.1 Criteria for eligibility

The candidate must be present during the online meeting where the election takes place in order to be eligible. They must withdraw their candidacy if they will be unable to join the online meeting.

This is a change from being physically present to being present in the online meeting where the elections will take place.

4. Section 2.5 Candidate presentations

Candidates will have two options for giving their presentation to council:

- (1) Give their presentation live and in real time during the online council meeting
- (2) Pre-record their presentation and stream it during the online council meeting

This is to ensure that candidates with poor internet connections are not disadvantaged.

5. Section 2.5 Candidate presentations

More time will be given for questions after all candidates for a role have given their presentations, i.e. up to 20 minutes for the role of President and up to 15 minutes for all other roles.

Because it's more difficult to manage this interaction over an online platform.

6. Section 2.6 Voting

Voting will take place during the online council meeting using an online platform that can facilitate anonymous voting by the national delegates. This will be managed by two independent observers from within VdGM as in the existing elections policy.

**Existing VdGM Organisational Policy on Elections, accepted
by electronic vote on 22 February 2020 by VdGM Council.**

CLAUSE 1: ELECTIONS

1. Executive

.1 Criteria for eligibility

- The candidate must come from a country which is a Full or Associate Member of WONCA Europe, as outlined in Articles 2 and 4 of the Bylaws, and they must be a member of their WONCA National Member Organisation.
- On the day the election will take place, the candidate must be a trainee in family medicine or have completed their family medicine training within the previous 5 years.
- It is recommended that a candidate will still be within 5 years of completing their training for the duration of their term
- For the role of President, it is advisable that the candidate has previously had a significant role within VdGM. Examples of significant roles include SIG Lead, Liaison to another WONCA Europe network, member of VdGM Europe Council or member of the VdGM Executive.
- A single individual may not apply for more than one vacancy during one election cycle.
- The candidate must be physically present at the election in order to be eligible. They must withdraw their candidacy if they will be unable to attend the election in person.
- The candidate cannot be an active member of the Executive or Council of either WONCA Europe or WONCA World.
- Members of VdGM Europe Council must resign from their role on council if they are elected to a position on the VdGM Executive.

.2 Election process

.1 Procedure for arranging the elections

- Existing Executive Members who at the next Ordinary Council Meeting will reach the end of their term of office, should, not less than 120 days before the Council Meeting, inform the Secretary in writing by email of their intention to either stand for re-election or to stand down.
- Should there be vacancies on the Executive, the Secretary will inform National Delegates not less than 120 days before a Council Meeting of these vacancies and seek expressions of interest. Vacancies shall also be advertised on the VdGM website and VdGM platforms.
- It is the collective responsibility of members of the Executive and Europe Council to encourage VdGM members from both genders and from both higher and lower income countries within VdGM to present themselves as candidates.
- If the Secretary is applying for a post, the applications for that post should be sent to another member of the Executive, as agreed by the President
- In the event that no nominations are received by the deadline for a vacant role, the deadline should be extended for the relevant roles.
 - One further week is the suggested period of extension, closing the nominations no less than 3 weeks before the Council meeting.
- The Good Governance Committee will review the eligibility of candidates and check the integrity of required documents
 - A minimum of three people are required for the eligibility check
 - Members of the Good Governance Committee who are putting themselves forward as candidates will not be part of the group reviewing nominations for that specific role.

- The Good Governance Committee will co-opt members of Executive or Europe Council to help with this if multiple members of the Good Governance Committee are standing for election themselves.
- In the event that Executive positions remain unfilled following the Council meeting where elections take place:
 - The Executive may reopen nominations for a period of one month following the council meeting and hold a subsequent electronic vote.
 - Should the positions remain unfilled the Executive has a number of options:
 - Open a further rounds of nominations
 - Divide the outstanding responsibilities amongst themselves as they deem appropriate and manageable until such time as the position can be filled
 - Appoint someone to the role (e.g. current holder of the post), preferably for a maximum period of 6 months

.2 Required documents

- The required documents for election are as follows:
 - Curriculum Vitae
 - Motivational Letter
 - Proof of membership of their NMO
 - Proof of young doctor status
 - An essential letter of recommendation from their National Delegate if the candidate is not themselves a National Delegate, or from their NEC if the candidate is a National Delegate themselves and their country has a NEC.
 - Up to three desirable letters of recommendation:
 - From their NMO
 - A maximum of two letters from other VdGM members
- The documents must be sent to the Secretary no later than 30 days before the ordinary Council meeting
 - Documents submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.
 - In case of insufficient documents, the candidate will be ineligible to stand for election.
- Members of the VdGM Executive Group, except for the President, are allowed to offer letters of recommendation to formally support candidates.

.3 Communication

- Candidates and their friends/colleagues are advised against personally contacting Council Members ahead of the election to campaign for support/votes or to informally publicise their nomination/application
- The Secretary shall circulate, in writing by email, to Council Members the names and required documents of the candidates the day after the application deadline. This list of candidates will also be published on the VdGM website.

.4 Election timing

- Elections will take place when required at Ordinary Council Meetings to fill vacancies as they arise on the Executive.
- Election can take place by electronic vote if a post is unfilled at the Council meeting.

.5 Candidate presentations

- Candidates for all roles, except for that of president, will have a maximum of 3 minutes to give a presentation to council on the day of the election.
- Candidates for the role of president will have a maximum of 5 minutes to give a presentation to council on the day of the election.
- Rival candidates will be asked to leave the room when their competitors are giving their presentation.

- After all candidates for a role have given their presentations, there will be a maximum of 10 minutes for questions (15 minutes for the role of president) from members of council and executive.
- All questions from council and executive will be posed to all candidates for the role.

.6 Voting

- Candidates will be elected by secret ballot of VdGM Europe Council by absolute majority, i.e. they must receive >50% of the votes cast by the voting members of council, including those voting by proxy.
- In the secret ballot, members of Europe Council have the option to vote for one of the candidates, abstain or vote to reopen nominations.
- If no candidate receives an absolute majority in the first round of voting, then the candidate with the fewest votes will be disqualified and a second round of voting will take place. This process will continue until one candidate has an absolute majority.
- The candidate is not declared automatically elected if he or she is the only candidate. Council must vote and the candidate must still be elected by an absolute majority of voting Council Members.
- If a member of VdGM Europe Council will not be physically present at the election, there are two ways in which they can cast their vote:
 - They can cast their vote in advance by writing electronically to the VdGM Secretary. This must be done no less than 24 hours before the beginning of the council meeting where the election will take place.
 - They can assign a proxy to cast their vote during the council meeting on their behalf. They must nominate their proxy in writing to the VdGM Secretary no less than 24 hours before the beginning of the council meeting where the election will take place. The standard VdGM rules apply regarding who can be a proxy.
- Participation by electronic ballot is at the discretion of the VdGM Executive.
- A minimum of 2 independent observers (who do not hold formal positions within VdGM Council or Executive) will be utilised to count the votes for election
- The number of votes for individual candidates will be stated openly at the time of the election and recorded in the minutes.

.7 Duration of term

- The standard term of appointment for an Executive position is for a three (3) year period, except for the role of President.
 - The standard term of appointment to the office of President shall be for four (4) years and shall consist of one year as President Elect, two years as President, and one year as Immediate Past President
 - Should the president be unable to complete their term, the President Elect or Immediate Past President (whichever there is at the time) will assume their duties until the next council meeting when an election can take place.
- With the exception of the role of President, a candidate may stand for election to an Executive role for more than one term, with a maximum of two (2) consecutive standard terms of office.