Guidelines for applicants
BMA essay competition on justice and fairness in medical practice and policy

The following is a summary of requirements but you are required to read our full terms and conditions which shall prevail in the event of any conflict

1. The competition is being run by the British Medical Association. It is open to single applicants or groups who are resident in the UK and aged 18 or over. BMA members may apply unless excluded in the next sentence. The following are not eligible to enter:
   a. employees or contractors of the BMA or its holding or subsidiary companies (including BMJ);
   b. members of a BMA branch of practice or specialist committee;
   c. BMA Chief Officers;
   d. employees or contractors of agents or suppliers of the BMA or its holding or subsidiary companies, who are professionally connected with the competition or its administration; or
   e. members of the immediate families or households of (a) to (d) above.

2. The theme for the competition is justice and fairness in medical practice and policy. Essays must have a practical, medical focus and use ethical reasoning and theory to analyse an issue or issues relevant to the current or future UK health system.

3. The competition is being run as a two-stage process. First, entrants are asked to submit an initial abstract in English of no more than 500 words excluding title and any references (a maximum of 10 references is permitted for the abstract) but including footnotes (as distinct from references) and any words included within any illustrative material to support the abstract, such as graphs, charts or images.

4. The opening date for abstracts is 5 December 2019 and the closing date for abstracts is 30 January 2020, 5pm GMT.

5. 10 abstracts will be shortlisted by the judging panel, and the selected authors will then be invited to submit a full and final essay for judging, which is stage two.

6. Shortlisted entrants for stage two will be informed by 24 February 2020.

7. The opening time for stage two is from notification of shortlisting and the deadline for final submissions from shortlisted authors is 30 April 2020, 5pm GMT. The winner will be notified by 1 June 2020.
8. Final essay submissions must be in English and should not exceed 5000 words (but with a 5% leeway — so no more than 5250 words), excluding title and references but including all words in the abstract, in any footnotes (as distinct from references) and any words included within any illustrative material such as graphs, charts or images, which supports the essay. The abstract, should be similar to, but does not have to be identical with the abstract originally submitted.

9. All essays must be typed and submitted as MS Word or PDF documents. Pages must be numbered.

10. References must be at the end of the essay, should be easily accessible by the judges and other readers, and must support the specific issue being referenced. References to books and other long works should include relevant page numbers. We recommend a maximum of 15 references.

11. A cover sheet must accompany the abstract and the essay detailing:
   a. Title(s);
   b. Name(s);
   c. Address(es);
   d. E-mail address(es);
   e. Work organisation/institution(s) (if applicable);
   f. Statement of word-count (excluding references and title) but including all other words including the abstract, any footnotes (as distinct from references) and any words included within any illustrative material supporting the essay, such as graphs, charts or images; and
   g. A declaration of any competing interests for any authors (or if none, a statement that there are no competing interests) — see the terms and conditions for more detail.

Apart from on the cover sheet, the author(s) should not identify himself/herself/themselves.

8. All abstracts and essays should be e-mailed as an attachment to your coversheet to essay@bma.org.uk with the subject ‘Essay competition abstract’ or ‘Essay competition full essay’.

9. By entering, authors are agreeing that their names and entries may be published by or on behalf of the BMA. Please see the full terms and conditions regarding all uses of your personal data and any rights granted regarding this and entries.

10. The marking criteria and exclusion criteria are specified below.

11. The decision of the judging panel is final. Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide feedback on either abstracts or full essay submissions and no correspondence concerning the judges’ decisions will be entered into.

12. The winning essay author(s) will receive a total of £4000 for the essay and the essay may be published by or on behalf of the BMA. The shortlisted abstract author(s) will receive £100 in total for each abstract, subject to a full essay being submitted in line with these guidelines and our terms and conditions. All prize money for stages 1 and 2 will be paid after the essay winner has been announced and the competition has ended.
Judging

Exclusion criteria; abstracts and essays characterised by any of the following exclusion criteria will be rejected:

- The abstract is more than 500 words (not including the title or references) but including any footnotes (as distinct from references) and any words included within any illustrative material supporting the abstract, such as graphs, charts or images

- The essay is more than 5250 words (not including the title or references but including the abstract) but including any footnotes (as distinct from references) and any words included within any illustrative material supporting the essay, such as graphs, charts or images

- The entrant(s) are not UK residents or aged 18 years or over

- The essay does not have a practical or medical healthcare focus and use ethical reasoning and theory to analyse an issue or issues relevant to the current or future UK health system

- The essay or abstract is not in English is not submitted as a Microsoft Word or PDF document or otherwise meet the stated requirements in these guidelines and/or terms and conditions

- Late submission

- An author is ineligible as stated in paragraph 1 above

Marking criteria

Poor – 1
Average – 2
Good – 3
Very Good – 4
Excellent – 5
Outstanding – 6

- Practical applicability or contribution to the problem discussed
- Originality
- Explanation and application of theory
- Clarity of argument and exposition
- Reasoned conclusion