

U.S. Masters Swimming Election Operating Guidelines

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USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

(As Amended through February 2024)

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Election Operating Guidelines is to list and maintain in one place all the election policies and procedures currently in existence in U.S. Masters Swimming. The guidelines shall be reviewed annually by the Elections Committee and shall be updated by the Elections Committee and the USMS Board of Directors as necessary. The current EOG shall be posted on the USMS website.

II. Definitions

- A. Annual meeting—Annual meeting of the HOD held pursuant to article 504.3.
- B. Application—The Candidate Application is an application, submitted online, which includes a questionnaire about the nominee’s involvement with USMS and qualifications for the position being sought, a nomination and two recommendation letters, a photo, and several required agreements.
- C. BOD—USMS Board of Directors.
- D. Candidate—A person who has been slated by the Elections Committee.
- E. Chair—Chair of the Elections Committee.
- F. Committee—The Elections Committee, which is responsible for running the election (defined in article 506.7.3).
- G. Delegate—A member of the HOD who has been certified to vote at the annual meeting.
- H. Director(s) or at-large directors—Members of the BOD, elected pursuant to article 506.2.
- I. Election—Held at the annual meeting of USMS at which the HOD elects officers or directors.
- J. EOG—Election Operating Guidelines. The guidelines, policies, and procedures that govern elections.
- K. HOD—USMS House of Delegates.
- L. Incumbent—A director or officer who is running for reelection for the same currently held position.
- M. MTC—Meet the Candidates. Refers to Meet the Candidate session(s); see Appendix D.
- N. Member in good standing—Any person or club that has fulfilled the requirements for membership and who has not voluntarily withdrawn nor been expelled or suspended.
- O. Nominee—A person who has submitted a candidate application but has not yet been slated by the Elections Committee.
- P. Officer(s)—Officer(s) of USMS, elected pursuant to article 505.2.
- Q. Part 5—Organization and Bylaws. Part 5 of the *USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition*.
- R. Slate—The list of candidates that the Elections Committee has validated as having met all qualification criteria that have been put forth by the Elections Committee in the EOG.
- S. USMS—U.S. Masters Swimming

III. Election Policies

- A. Parts One and Two of the EOG contain the policies that govern elections.
- B. If situations occur during an election year in which compliance with these policies would not be in the best interest of USMS, the BOD may suspend policies provided two-thirds of the BOD members approve.
- C. Election policies may be amended by a simple majority vote of the BOD.

IV. Election Procedures

- A. Part Three and the appendices of the EOG contain the procedures that implement the election policies.
- B. If situations occur during an election year in which compliance with these procedures would not be in the best interest of USMS, the Elections Committee may adjust these procedures provided such adjustment is in compliance with the governing policies. The Elections Committee shall inform the BOD of all such adjustments.
- C. Election procedures may be amended by a simple majority vote of the BOD.

PART TWO: ELECTION POLICIES

I. General Information

- A. Pursuant to Part 5, USMS shall hold an election of officers in odd-numbered years and directors in even-numbered years (see articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS).
- B. The Elections Committee shall be formed according to articles 506.7 and 506.7.3 and shall:
 - 1. Be appointed by the president, with the concurrence of the BOD, and be composed of USMS members neither seeking election nor related to any election candidate.
 - 2. Be responsible for running the election according to rules set out in Part 5 as well as the EOG.
 - 3. Be augmented by delegates during the annual meeting, should the need for support arise. Any additional support personnel will not be considered to be Elections Committee members.
- C. All communications between the committee and the candidates shall be handled by the chair or by designated committee members.
- D. Elections Committee members may not nominate or endorse any candidate.
- E. Per “Robert’s Rules of Order,” the committee chair shall not vote unless there is a tie.
- F. All election-related dates can be found in Appendix A: Schedule.

II. Publication of Information

- A. Information regarding the election shall be published and regularly updated using appropriate USMS communication media.
- B. The announcements containing the request for nominations for the officers and directors shall include the candidate qualification criteria.
- C. Information regarding the election and candidates shall be included in the annual meeting information and shall appear on the USMS website’s Elections page. Dissemination of this information shall conform to the USMS privacy policy. ([U.S. Masters Swimming Privacy Policy \(usms.org\)](https://www.usms.org/privacy-policy))
- D. The candidate’s application and attachments, including the photo and letters of nomination and recommendation, shall be published without the specific permission of the authors.

III. Candidate Qualification Criteria

- A. Each candidate shall be a current USMS member in good standing for the year in which the election is held.
- B. Each candidate shall have attended one or more annual meetings in the preceding five years.
- C. Each candidate shall plan to attend the annual meeting at which the candidate is standing for election.
- D. Each candidate shall plan to attend all annual meetings, Board of Directors meetings, and other assigned meetings during the candidate’s tenure.
- E. Each candidate shall have the technological capability to fully participate in USMS video conference meetings.

- F. Each candidate running for an at-large director position shall be a member of an LMSC within the zone of candidacy.
- G. All candidates shall give their consent to run and make an attestation of truthfulness when they submit their Candidate Application.

IV. Nomination Policies

- A. Prior to the nomination period, the Elections Committee shall submit the Candidate Application and directions to the National Office for publication.
- B. Nomination of Candidates
 - 1. Each person seeking election shall submit a completed Candidate Application, including nomination and recommendation letters and a photo, by the deadline indicated in the EOG, Appendix A: Schedule.
 - a. For an officer position, any USMS member, except for an Elections Committee member, may nominate a candidate.
 - b. For a director position, any USMS member from the zone of candidacy, except for an Elections Committee member, may nominate a candidate.
 - 2. A person may be nominated for more than one position; however, if nominated for more than one position, the nominee must choose only one position to stand for election and shall inform the chair of the Elections Committee of the decision prior to the nomination deadline.
- C. After the nomination period expires, the committee may extend the nomination period for any office that has no nominees eligible to be slated. The time for any extension shall be determined by the committee and announced at the time of the extension.
- D. Nomination of Current Officers and Directors (Incumbents)
 - 1. Officers and directors eligible for reelection to their current position, who are seeking reelection, shall notify the chair that they will be seeking another term and must submit a completed Candidate Application (including letters of nomination and recommendation).
 - 2. In the event a director registers in a LMSC in a new zone prior to the next election, such person will be considered an incumbent and the new zone will be the zone of candidacy.
- E. Floor Nominations
 - 1. Floor nominations for all positions shall be accepted prior to, but no later than, the time designated by the Elections Committee in Appendix A: Schedule.
 - 2. Floor nominations shall follow all requirements described in the EOG, Part Two, IV B. Nomination of Candidates and Part Two, IV E. Floor Nominations.
 - a. If the nomination precedes the Candidate Application submission, the nomination shall be made by a delegate from the floor of the designated meeting or session.
 - b. The nominee shall immediately confirm willingness to run as a candidate for the nominated position.
 - 3. Following a floor nomination and confirmation, nominee(s) shall submit the completed Candidate Application, including a photo and two recommendation letters, by the deadline indicated in Appendix A: Schedule.
 - 4. Each floor nominee's application shall be reviewed by the Elections Committee to verify compliance with the EOG, including all the qualifications set forth in the EOG, Part Two, Article III, Candidate Qualification Criteria. Once validated by the committee, the nominee shall be added to the slate of candidates. The new candidate's application and recommendation letters shall then be posted on the USMS website's Elections page.
 - 5. Floor nominees and newly slated candidate(s) should complete the Meet The Candidate video interview and shall participate in any subsequent MTC session(s).

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V. Slating Policies

- A. The Elections Committee shall validate that each nominee meets all the candidate qualification criteria.
- B. The committee shall place validated nominees on the slate.
- C. The committee shall not slate a candidate for more than one position.
- D. The chair shall notify all nominees of their status once their application has been reviewed.

VI. Campaign Policies

- A. Publicity for the candidates, both prior to and during the annual meeting, shall be provided only by USMS.
- B. Mailings shall not be sent on behalf of a candidate.
- C. Handouts, signs, stickers, pins, or other promotional items on behalf of a candidate shall not be used or given out prior to or at the annual meeting.
- D. The committee shall provide opportunities for candidates to be introduced to delegates via an online Meet The Candidate video interview and during one or more Meet the Candidates session(s) held at or in conjunction with the annual meeting.

VII. HOD Voting

- A. Voting shall be conducted early in the annual meeting but not before the Meet the Candidates session(s).
 - B. Only delegates who are certified and are present (in person or virtually) shall be eligible to vote.
 - C. Any candidate(s) running unopposed after floor nominations have been closed shall be elected by acclamation prior to the distribution of ballots.
 - D. For positions for which voting is to proceed, the Elections Committee, with the assistance of the USMS National Office, shall conduct the election as follows:
 - 1. The election ballots shall be distributed electronically to all eligible delegates via the voting platform selected by the National Office.
 - 2. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be the winner.
 - 3. If no candidate for a position receives a majority (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote shall be held between the two candidates receiving the most votes.
 - 4. If a run-off vote is necessary, the name(s) of the run-off candidate(s) and the position(s) shall be announced. A new electronic ballot shall be sent to all eligible delegates.
 - 5. Election results shall be announced to the HOD promptly.
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PART THREE: ELECTION PROCEDURES

I. USMS Website

- A. The Elections page shall contain:
 - 1. Announcements regarding the opening of nominations, the candidate qualification criteria, and other pertinent information-
 - 2. Information updates about election activities being held in conjunction with and during the annual meeting as the information becomes available.
 - 3. The Instructions to Candidates (EOG, Appendix B), a link to the Candidate Application, a link to the nomination/reference form, and a link to the EOG.
 - 4. A link to the description of officers in the USMS rule book, article 505, and of the Board of Directors in article 506.
 - 5. Validated Candidate Application and recommendation forms, once available.

II. Candidate Applications

- A. Candidate Applications may be accessed from the [Elections page of the USMS website](#) or can be requested from the Elections Committee chair via email, elections@usmastersswimming.org.

III. Ballots

- A. An electronic ballot shall be prepared by the USMS National Office.
 - 1. All contested offices and candidates shall appear on the ballot.
 - 2. Officers shall appear in the following order: president, VP of administration, VP of community services, VP of local operations, VP of programs, secretary, and treasurer.
 - 3. Directors shall appear in alphabetical order by the title of the zone (Breadbasket, Colonies, Great Lakes, Northwest, Oceana, South Central, Southeast, and Southwest).
 - 4. Candidates within each office category shall appear in alphabetical order by last name.
- B. In order to receive a ballot, certified delegates must provide a current email address before the annual meeting begins.

IV. Voting

- A. Each election poll shall be open for 30 minutes (general and run-off elections).

V. Elections Committee Report

- A. The annual meeting information shall contain the report of the Elections Committee.
- B. The Elections Committee report shall contain:
 - 1. A report on the election process.
 - 2. A report about floor nominations.
 - 3. A schedule of the annual meeting election activities.
 - 4. Information about the Meet the Candidates session(s).

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

I. Prior to the Election Cycle	Date(s)
Elections Committee members are appointed.	After the annual meeting
Committee reviews and may propose amendments to the EOG.	Prior to March 1
Committee considers any proposed amendments to the EOG.	Prior to March 1
II. During the Election Cycle	
Committee submits information about the election and nominations to the USMS National Office for publication. It shall be published using appropriate communication media and updated regularly.	March 1
Deadline to post election information on the USMS website Elections page.	April 1
Candidate application submission period, including nomination and recommendation letters. The chair shall acknowledge receipt of the Candidate Application for each nominee.	May 1–June 20
If there are no eligible nominees for a position, the chair shall notify the USMS National Office. The National Office shall publicize that the nomination window has reopened for that/those position(s).	June 25
If necessary, the committee shall accept Candidate Applications, including nomination and recommendation letters, for the reopened position(s).	July 1–July 20
Committee submits for publication by the National Office, at minimum, a list of the names and positions of the candidates who are currently slated.	By July 1
Committee reviews Candidate Applications to determine if a nominee is validated to be slated. The chair shall notify each nominee of the outcome of the review process.	By July 25
Candidates should contact the National Office to schedule an online Meet the Candidates video interview.	As soon as slated, no later than July 25
Committee submits the applications and recommendation information for all the slated candidates to the USMS National Office for publication on the Election web page.	No later than Aug 1
Candidates should complete their Meet the Candidate video.	August 15
Meet the Candidates session—Virtual presentation	USMS Town Hall meeting (see the annual meeting schedule)
Floor nominations shall be taken for all positions.	Town Hall meeting (see the annual meeting schedule)
Floor nominees shall electronically submit their completed Candidate Application and ensure that their recommendation letters are submitted.	As soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the close of floor nominations.
Committee reviews floor nomination application(s) to determine if the nominee is validated to be slated. Slated candidates shall have their application and recommendation letter information submitted for publication on the USMS	As soon as possible after

Elections web page.	receipt.
Floor nominee candidates complete their Meet the Candidates video interview.	Within 72 hours following the close of floor nominations.
Meet the Candidates session—annual meeting (in-person or virtual). All candidates shall participate.	See the annual meeting schedule
Voting	See the annual meeting schedule

APPENDIX B: DIRECTIONS TO NOMINEES

We appreciate your willingness to serve USMS as an officer or at-large director. USMS is honored to have members like you willing to volunteer their time to make USMS the best possible organization it can be.

You can find all updates and news related to the election on the Elections page of the USMS website, along with the detailed Election Operating Guidelines. Below is a brief summary of the election process to give you an idea of what to expect.

The elections take place during the USMS annual meeting. You need to follow these steps to get your name on the ballot:

- 1) Review the candidate qualification criteria (EOG, Part Two, III).
- 2) Choose two people to write recommendation letters on your behalf. The first person must be a member of USMS and will act as your nominator. If you are applying for a director position, this person must also belong to your zone. The second person can be anyone other than a family member.
- 3) Complete the online application by the due date (EOG, Appendix A). The application will ask you to provide information regarding your involvement with USMS, as well as to answer several questions that will help the delegates learn more about you. For a preview of the Candidate Application, please refer to the Election Operating Guidelines, Appendix C.
 - a. Not all fields are required; required fields will be designated for you on the form.
 - b. Your USMS profile page will provide you with a summary of your service at the national level. Your page is located at: <https://www.usms.org/people/xxxxx> (xxxxx = your USMS permanent ID (last 5 alpha-numeric characters of your USMS number)).
- 4) Follow up with those writing your recommendations to ensure the letters are submitted on time. Your application will not be considered complete until both recommendations are received.

Once your application is complete, the Elections Committee will review it to ensure that you meet all the nomination criteria. When it is certified that you meet the criteria, you will be added to the list of official candidates.

As an official candidate, you will be asked to do the following:

- 1) Review the campaign policies (EOG, Part Two, VI) and your responsibilities as a candidate.
- 2) Schedule an appointment with the National Office to make your Meet the Candidates video (optional but strongly encouraged).
- 3) Record your video by the due date found in the EOG, Appendix A. The National Office will send instructions separately.
- 4) Participate in the scheduled Meet the Candidates session(s). The EOG, Appendix D, provides a description of these activities and Appendix A provides the timeline.

If you miss the regular nomination deadline, you can still be nominated through the floor nomination process. To do this, you will need to attend the Town Hall meeting held before the annual meeting. The EOG (Part Two, IV E) provides more details on this process. Feel free to contact the Elections Committee chair for assistance.

If you have any questions or need some help with the nomination and election process, don't hesitate to reach out to the chair of the Elections Committee. The chair will be happy to provide advice, support, and encouragement whenever you need it. elections@usmastersswimming.org

APPENDIX C: CANDIDATE APPLICATION

[SECTION 1: CANDIDATE INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION 2: QUALIFICATION QUESTIONS](#)

[SECTION 3: NOMINATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

[SECTION 4: USMS BACKGROUND](#)

[SECTION 5: GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR ALL CANDIDATES](#)

[SECTION 6: POSITION-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS](#)

[SECTION 7: AGREEMENTS AND SUBMISSION](#)

SECTION 1: CANDIDATE INFORMATION

- Board position that are you running for
- Candidate name (as on USMS registration card)
- Preferred name (if different from your legal name)
- Preferred pronouns
- Phone number
- Email
- Address
- Street address
- Street address line 2
- City
- State/province
- Postal/ZIP Code
- LinkedIn profile URL (optional, if applicable and up to date) **We are not using LinkedIn to do a social media background check. We are simply providing an opportunity for candidates to include their professional public profile, if applicable.*
- Profile photo upload (drag and drop the file)
 - Photo should be from the shoulders up (like a passport photo) with no other person in the frame. No sunglasses or hats. This image will be shared publicly with the membership. Only jpg, jpeg, and png files accepted.

SECTION 2: QUALIFICATION QUESTIONS

Please indicate yes or no to the following qualification questions.

- I am a current USMS member in good standing in this election year. (yes) (no)
- I have attended one or more annual meetings in the past five years. (yes) (no)
USMS annual meetings attended in the last five years. (field to fill in)
- I plan to attend the annual meeting this year. (yes) (no)
- I plan to attend all annual meetings, Board of Directors meetings, and other assigned meetings during my tenure. (yes) (no)
- I have the technological capability to fully participate in USMS videoconference meetings. (yes) (no)
- For at-large director positions: I am a member of an LMSC within my zone of candidacy. (yes) (no) (N/A)

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If the candidate does not meet the qualifications for the position, the candidate will not be able to proceed. A message will appear to ask the candidate to contact the Elections Committee chair (elections@usmastersswimming.org).

If qualifications are met, the candidate will be able to continue.

SECTION 3: NOMINATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each candidate needs one USMS member for both nomination and recommendation and one additional recommendation. The people you include below will be invited to upload a nomination/recommendation letter via a separate process. Please advise your recommenders on when they should be checking their email for an invitation. This will be no sooner than when you click "Submit."

First Nominator and Recommender

Must be a current USMS member. If an at-large candidate, this person must be from your zone.

Recommender 1: First name, last name
Recommender 1: Phone number
Recommender 1: Email
Recommender 1: LMSC

Second Recommender

A person of your choosing, not a family member by marriage or otherwise.

Recommender 2: First name, last name
Recommender 2: Phone number
Recommender 2: Email
Recommender 2: LMSC or N/A

SECTION 4: USMS BACKGROUND

- Permanent USMS member number (the last five characters of your USMS registration number)
- Current LMSC
- USMS profile URL:
 - *The permanent member number you enter above will automatically be populated in this field.*
 - *You may review this URL to help you with the rest of your application.*
- Years as a USMS member

Service at the LMSC Level:

- How many years have you served your LMSC? 0 1 - 5 6 - 10 10+
- LMSC Position/Committee (space for answer) Length of service (years):
Additional lines can be added as needed.

Service at the Zone Level:

- How many years have you served at the zone level? 0 1 - 5 6 - 10 10+
- Zone Position or committee: (space for answer) Length of service (years)
Additional lines can be added as needed.

Service at the National Level:

- How many years have you served at the national level? 0 1 - 5 6 - 10 10+
- National position/committee: (space for answer) Length of service (years)
Additional lines can be added as needed.

SECTION 5: GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR ALL CANDIDATES

The limit for questions will be 250 words.

1. Please state why you are interested in serving on the USMS Board of Directors.
2. What does USMS's mission mean to you? Please share a personal story.
3. What do you consider to be USMS's greatest opportunities for the next 2 to 4 years? How would you advocate for these opportunities on the national board level?

SECTION 6: POSITION-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

The limit for questions will be 250 words.

President

4. What makes you a good candidate for USMS president? What skills, experiences, and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS?
5. Describe an experience where you've communicated with and motivated a team of diverse individuals with varying skill sets and backgrounds.

Treasurer

4. What makes you a good candidate for USMS treasurer? What education, training, or certifications in the financial sector do you have? What other skills, experiences, and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS? (this question will have an increased word limit)
5. Describe an experience where you've served in a strategic financial role and/or how you've provided oversight in managing a budget for an organization.

Secretary

4. What makes you a good candidate for USMS secretary? What skills, experiences, and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS?
5. Describe a time when you communicated within an organization, ensuring that all members received unbiased and accurate information.

Vice Presidents

4. What makes you a good candidate for a USMS vice president? What skills, experiences, and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS?
5. Describe your experiences within and outside of USMS that would help you act as a liaison to the standing committees overseen by this position.

At-Large Directors

4. What makes you a good candidate for a USMS at-large director? What skills, experiences, and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS?

5. Describe a situation where you had to balance your own perspective with input from individuals representing various viewpoints, and how you ensured that all perspectives were considered.

SECTION 7: AGREEMENTS AND SUBMISSION

Election Operating Guidelines

I have reviewed the Election Operating Guidelines and agree to abide by them, including the Campaign Policies (EOG, Part Two, Section VI).

Board Standards

I have reviewed the [Standards for the Board of Directors](#), and agree to abide by them during my tenure.

Conflict of Interest Policy and Questionnaire

I have reviewed the Conflict of Interest Policy and Questionnaire [policy_confofinterest.pdf \(azurefd.net\)](#) and acknowledge that serving on the USMS Board of Directors would require me to complete this questionnaire and abide by the Conflict of Interest policy.

Code of Conduct

I have reviewed the USMS [Code of Conduct.pdf \(azurefd.net\)](#), and agree to abide by it.

Unsporting Conduct

I certify that I have not engaged in any unsporting conduct listed in Part 4, [article 402.4 of the U.S. Masters Swimming Rule Book](#).

Attestation

I hereby attest that everything on and attached to this form is correct, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge and is made in good faith. I realize that failure to answer truthfully may disqualify me as a candidate.

Consent to Publish

I consent for my photo and the information that I have provided to be published to the membership.

Consent to Run

By submitting this form, I give my consent to run for the position I have indicated.

Signature

Date Signed

APPENDIX D: MEET THE CANDIDATES PROCEDURE

I. Meet the Candidates Session(s)

- A. One or more Meet the Candidates session(s) shall be held in conjunction with and/or during the annual meeting. The session(s) shall be held prior to voting.
- B. All candidates, for contested and uncontested offices, shall participate. Attendance by a candidate may be in person or virtually.
- C. The Elections Committee is the host for the MTC session(s) and shall determine the format of the sessions.
- D. MTC sessions may be held live or virtually. The format for the MTC session(s) may include a virtual presentation of information, questions to candidates, or any other format chosen by the Elections Committee. Questions for candidates may be prepared in advance by the committee and/or submitted by certified delegates. The committee may require questions from delegates to be submitted in advance. The submitted questions shall be directed to a particular office, not to a specific candidate, and may or may not be asked of or answered by every candidate.

II. Meet the Candidates Video Interviews

- A. All candidates should record a Meet The Candidate video interview. The candidates should contact the National Office to schedule a video recording session for the MTC video as soon as possible after being notified that they have been slated, but no later than the date given in Appendix A: Schedule.
- B. The video length shall be approximately five minutes. The videos shall be posted on the Elections page of the USMS website.
- C. The format of the videos may generally be the following:
 - 1. Candidates will begin the video with an introduction providing some background information about themselves. The introduction should be limited to one minute.
 - 2. The candidate may choose two questions from a list of questions provided by the Elections Committee. The answer for each question should be limited to approximately two minutes.

Possible interview questions:

Pick two out of the following questions. Limit your answer to two minutes per question.

1. Why are you a good candidate? What skills, experiences and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS?

2. What about USMS has kept you an active member and motivated you to run for a national leadership position?

3. Acting as a liaison and/or mentor is an important part of being a USMS Board member. Have you ever served as a coach or mentor to anyone, whether officially or unofficially? How did you provide them with guidance?

4. An at-large director is expected to represent all USMS members, not just their zone constituency. How would you balance the expectations and needs of your zone versus representing the best interest of all UMS members?