

How are candidates for OMT elected positions selected?

Nine Representatives-at-Large sit on the OMT Executive Committee (EC): three represent members in North America, three represent Europe, Israel, Australia and New Zealand, and three represent the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, the Middle-East and Africa. Every year, we renew three of these positions, one for each group.

Every year, we also elect a new Program Chair-Elect: s/he will be in charge of the PDW program the following year. S/he will then become Program Chair, Division Chair-Elect, Division Chair, and, finally, Past Division Chair, serving on the EC for a total of five years.

According to our bylaws, two candidates should be on each ballot. The candidates are decided collectively by the elected EC, and the process is coordinated by the Division Chair-Elect. Not many members, however, are familiar with the method we use to select those candidates. Here is how we do it.

Step 1. In January, we circulate a call for nominations to our members, through official AoM channels. We invite them to nominate other members that they believe would do well in the open positions, and to elaborate on why they think so. We also give the opportunity to members to nominate themselves for the various positions.

Step 2. On the day before the Midwinter Meeting of the EC – usually at the end of January – the Division Chair-Elect sends to all the members of the EC lists of all the nominations received for the open positions and invites them to reflect about possible additions to the lists.

Step 3. During the first day of the Midwinter Meeting, we review each list to make sure that all nominees fulfil the requirements for the role (e.g., they are OMT members, they are not officers in other divisions, they have not served on the EC during the past year) and remove those that are not eligible. We then invite all participants to the meeting to suggest additional names. At the end of this round, we usually have between 10 and 20 names for each position.

Step 4. Next, we spend some time sharing information about each nominee. Not everyone in the committee knows the nominees, so at this stage we review the information that accompanied nominations received by members, and EC members offer motivations for their own additional suggestions.

This is the time where we debate on whether we believe that each nominee possesses qualities that we believe are important for an OMT officer, such as, for instance:

- Are they **committed to OMT**? Have they served as reviewers for OMT in the past? Have they helped with OMT activities? Are they regular presenters/organizers/chairs at OMT events? Etc.

- Will they help assure **representativeness** of different genders, geographical areas, racial and ethnic backgrounds, or scholarly communities within OMT?
- Are they known to be **well-organized and reliable**? Helping to organize the Annual Conference is no small feat: there are multiple tasks and deadlines, times are tight, and we want to make sure that we continue to offer high-quality services to our members.
- Are they known as **collaborative and positive contributors**? The EC needs to work together effectively, and the goal here is to assure the person will work well with others. This does not mean “fitting in” but means stepping up, volunteering, and giving voice to a diverse set of opinions.
- Are they relatively **well-known and connected**? We can only put two names on the ballot, and we want to make sure that the candidates will be in a position to actually represent their constituents and good chances of being elected.
- We also look at what stage in their career nominees are (e.g. are they coming up for tenure soon? Have they just been appointed department chair?).

Step 5. After having debated each nominee, the EC moves to a confidential vote. We usually ask each elected member to indicate up to five preferences for each position. We then combine preferences to build a ranking of nominees. We occasionally resolve ties by re-voting. We debate on each position in sequence, moving on to the next position only after having voted on the previous one.

Step 6. Based on the rankings produced by the EC, the Division Chair-Elect will contact potential candidates for each position, starting with the two that received most votes. If one or both are unavailable, the Division Chair-Elect will continue to contact nominees down the rankings until i) two of them accept for each position, or ii) we reach a point when nominees had not gathered much support during the meeting. In this case, the EC would produce a new list and/or re-vote remotely until the vacant spots are filled.

How do we fill non-elected positions in the Executive Committee?

In the Executive Committee, some positions are not intended to represent our membership but to bring specialized skills to assist the work of the committee in specific task: Treasurer, Research Committee Chair; Membership Outreach Chair, Communications Chair, Social Media Chair, Data Analytics Officer, and Digital Strategy Officer. These members are not elected by members, but appointed by the EC. Their mandate is for three years with the possibility to be reappointed once.

Relevant qualifications obviously vary depending on the position, but generally combine possession of the relevant skills, motivation, and a collaborative attitude.

Some of these positions – Membership Outreach Chair, Research Committee Chair, Communications Chair, Social Media Chair – coordinate a network of volunteers. When the Chair steps down, we recruit the successor among the volunteers who have worked with the respective Chair. Other positions – Treasurer, Data Analytics Officer, Digital Strategy Officer – do not coordinate a network, but require a specific set of qualifications and interests. For these positions, scholars are either nominated by EC members, including the current holder of the position in question, or they nominate themselves by contacting a member of the EC.

For all non-elected positions, we aim at appointing the new officer one year ahead of actual replacement so that the appointee can shadow the current officer through one annual cycle. At the latest, we strive during the Midwinter Meeting to fill all appointed positions starting the following August. Only under exceptional circumstances do we nominate officers immediately prior to their taking office.

To offer all our members the opportunity to engage with OMT, we call for volunteers several times during the year, most prominently around the annual conference.

If you are interested in actively contributing to the development of OMT and in working with the Executive Committee of OMT, please [get in touch!](#)