

British Medical Acupuncture Society

Education Policy



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BMAS Education Policy

Aims

The aims of education provided by the BMAS are set out in the BMAS mission statement:

The BMAS is a registered charity established to stimulate and promote the use and scientific understanding of acupuncture as part of the practice of medicine for the public benefit. It seeks to enhance the education and training of suitably qualified practitioners, and to promote high standards of working practices in acupuncture among such practitioners, by means of tests, examinations, and accreditation procedures.[1]

The educational focus is on Western Medical Acupuncture (WMA) as defined by White *et al* in 'Western medical acupuncture: a definition'.[2] Traditional Chinese Acupuncture (TA) is also discussed in order to understand traditional concepts and language but participants will not be taught how to practice TA as a result of BMAS training.

Delegates

BMAS education is available to health professionals in the UK who are either:

- subject to statutory regulation or
- subject to voluntary regulation which is overseen by the Professional Standards Authority and have undergone degree level training in a patient-facing healthcare discipline that includes clinical touch, with no regional anatomic restrictions.

Health professionals from overseas may also apply for BMAS courses and will need to provide details of the regulatory body in the country in which they practice.

Delegates living with HIV, hepatitis C, or any other blood borne virus have a legal and ethical duty to protect the health and safety of themselves, their fellow delegates, their teachers, and their patients. The BMAS complies with the ['Integrated guidance on health clearance of healthcare workers and the management of healthcare workers living with bloodborne viruses \(hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV\)'](#) and requires delegates also to do so.

All practitioners applying for courses which involve practical needling must provide proof of hepatitis B immunisation showing antibody levels greater than 10mIU/mL or provide results of a recent blood screen for Hepatitis B antigens. See appendix 1 regarding Hepatitis B requirements.

Delegates are expected to work within their scope of practice – ie using an appropriate assessment process to reach a conventional diagnosis and to use acupuncture as an additional option within the usual range of treatments available in their practice. Delegates should have professional indemnity that covers their acupuncture practice. Acupuncture should be provided with the agreement of their employer or line manager and with adequate clinical governance arrangements in place. These aspects of practice are highlighted on the courses, but it is the responsibility of the individual practitioner to ensure that they follow these recommendations.

Types of education

The following types of courses and meetings are available:

- Foundation Courses (FCs) – consisting of a modular online course and two days of face-to-face practical sessions. These are introductory courses which cover the basic concepts of WMA. Safe needling of selected points is covered in lectures and practical sessions. Clinical application is covered in interactive group discussions of point selection exercises.
- Foundation refresher course – this is designed to refresh the practical skills learnt on the Foundation Course

- Supplementary days currently including but not limited to Palliative Care, Electroacupuncture, Women's Health, Back Pain, Headache, Acupuncture in Pregnancy & Childbirth, Acupuncture in Mental Health
- Scientific Meetings – these focus on the science and evidence base relevant to acupuncture with invited international speakers and opportunity for poster presentations by attendees. Most of these meetings are recorded and available to view on the webcast section of the BMAS website
- Teaching Clinics – BMAS members may book to attend a teaching clinic to observe patients being assessed and treated with WMA techniques. It may be possible for BMAS members in training to run their own clinics within these environments
- Regional Groups – these are local groups which provide a forum for discussion and for continuing development of acupuncture skills.

The list is not exhaustive and additional forms of education and courses may be arranged from time to time.

Process

BMAS education incorporates a number of elements, some or all of which may be included in courses and study days:

- Lectures cover practical and academic aspects of the subject. The evidence base for use of acupuncture and scientific understanding of mechanisms of acupuncture are presented where relevant
- Detailed notes are provided to delegates
- Further self-study is encouraged
- Useful resources are highlighted for delegates to access
- Needling and examination techniques are demonstrated and practised by delegates under supervision in small groups
- Small group discussion eg point selection exercises are used to apply information learned to clinical scenarios
- Groups for the practical sessions usually have a maximum of 10 participants, each led by an experienced BMAS teacher.

Safety

There is a very strong emphasis on safe needling on all BMAS courses. This is highlighted by the use of a Safety Questionnaire and delegates are strongly encouraged to apply for the Certificate of Medical Acupuncture (CMA), which is designed to demonstrate the use of safe acupuncture in practice. Practical needling on courses is in small groups and only under supervision. Sharps boxes are available for disposal of needles and delegates are given specific instructions regarding needle-handling and disposal of sharps in the practical sessions. The procedure for needlestick injury is set out in the BMAS Needlestick Policy. The BMAS has insurance covering all aspects of its educational activities.

Scope of practice after training

This is discussed in a position paper, available on the BMAS website.[3]

Awards

BMAS Accreditation is a two-stage process starting with the Certificate of Medical Acupuncture (CMA),[4] followed by the Diploma of Medical Acupuncture (DipMedAc or Diploma).[5] Details of the requirements for the CMA and Diploma are set out in separate documents.[4,5] Competence is not formally assessed on FCs although selected points with safety issues are observed and evidence of this is a requirement for the CMA. Individual

practitioners are encouraged to use their professional judgment regarding their own competencies.

On-line resources

A number of educational resources are available on-line:

- Points resource (BMAS members only) – a series of video demonstrations of examination and needling techniques presented together with diagrams and explanatory notes
- Webcasts of Scientific Meetings (available free to members and academic associates who attended the meeting, and to others for a fee – all are free after 2 years from the relevant meeting)
- What's The Point (available free to members or on subscription) – a series of short videos featuring points and protocols
- BMASclips on YouTube – eg Thomas Lundeberg's lecture about the neurophysiological model underpinning Western Medical Acupuncture www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBWmzXfyGHs
- Useful BMAS documents (available free) – eg consent form, patient information leaflet, body diagrams, symptom diary template, case record sheets and continuation sheets
- Forums (BMAS members only) – for on-line discussion and peer support
- *Acupuncture in Medicine* – a Medline-listed and indexed Journal with an impact factor of 2.637 (2019) is available free online to members
- BMAS Blog Webinars (BMAS members only) – these are held via Zoom on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month and discuss the 2 most recent BMAS Blogs.

Some of these resources are available to Academic Associates of the BMAS. Details of academic associateship can be found on-line at:

www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk/Default.aspx?tabid=160

Equality and diversity

This is dealt with in the Equality and Diversity policy in relation to delegates attending Foundation Courses.

Practical group sessions

Delegates attending Foundation Courses and other courses with a practical element need to be prepared to participate in needling and to be needled. If this is not possible for any reason, they may bring a friend to act as a 'needling partner' for the practical sessions. Delegates are needled with their consent and may withdraw consent at any time, for instance if they are experiencing unpleasant pain due to needling. If this occurs, group leaders will advise delegates regarding needling technique and make suitable arrangements in order to enable practical sessions to continue.

Pregnancy

There is no evidence that acupuncture is harmful in pregnancy. It is recommended to delegates who are or suspect they may be pregnant, that they should bring this to the attention of the teaching staff as it may affect how much needling they receive in the practical sessions.

Lecturers

BMAS members are eligible to join the team of lecturers for Foundation Courses. Lecturers must fulfil the criteria set out in the BMAS Lecturing Terms policy and provide evidence of

Hepatitis B immunisation. Lecturing teams are made up of members who are experienced in WMA with at least the CMA. The performance of lecturers and group leaders is critically assessed to maintain a high standard. Feedback is obtained from delegates attending educational courses, which is fed back to course organisers and to individual lecturers where relevant. There is opportunity for lecturers to receive peer feedback from colleagues during teaching and a proforma is available for use. Lecturers are invited to reflect on their teaching experiences and record this in the Lecturers' Portfolio, which may then be discussed further at their annual appraisal.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Certificates of attendance are provided for all BMAS courses and study days, and CPD hours for these are automatically recorded on members' online training record. Submission of reflective learning may be required for some online or recorded events.

For other events and learning opportunities, CPD can be claimed via submission of reflective learning. This is submitted online via the BMAS website under [Training and Education > Reflective Learning](#).

CPD can be earned through:

- Participation learning – attendance at courses, meetings and clinics
- Distance learning – online courses and meetings webcasts and webinars (submission of reflective learning may be required)
- Preparation learning – presenting, lecturing, publishing an article, involvement in research and audit activity
- Related medical learning – specific learning in related subjects, such as neurophysiology, pain management, sports medicine.

Students

Undergraduate students in their final year from the UK and Republic of Ireland who are in a profession eligible for BMAS membership, are able to attend FCs. Students in other disciplines may be admitted to FCs in the future as determined by the BMAS Council. A student discount is applied to the course fee. Discounted places for students on the foundation course are available to students undertaking their first degree only and are not available to anyone who is already a regulated health professional in a profession relevant to acupuncture. It is expected that students should have access to patients in order to practice acupuncture following the course and should provide evidence that they have the agreement of their clinical supervisor for this to take place.

Related Policies

- BMAS Needlestick Policy
- BMAS Equality and Diversity Policy
- BMAS Lecturing Terms Policy
- BMAS Hepatitis B immunisation or screening requirement

References

1. Memorandum of Association of the British Medical Acupuncture Society incorporated August 1996.
2. White A, Editorial Board of Acupuncture in Medicine. Western medical acupuncture: a definition. *Acupunct Med* 2009;27:33–5. doi:10.1136/aim.2008.000372
3. Scope of Practice in WMA a position paper from the BMAS. <https://www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk/Portals/0/Scope%20of%20practice%20in%20WMA.pdf> (accessed March 2020)

4. Certificate of Medical Acupuncture (CMA) British Medical Acupuncture Society. May 2017. <http://www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk/Portals/0/CMA%20Guidelines%20Dec%202018.pdf> (accessed March 2020)
5. Diploma of Medical Acupuncture (DipMedAc) British Medical Acupuncture Society. May 2017. www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk/Portals/0/Diploma%20Guidelines%20May%202017.pdf (accessed March 2020)

Appendix 1

BMAS Hepatitis B immunisation or screening requirement

All participants of practical courses **MUST** either:

**PROVIDE PROOF OF HEPATITIS B IMMUNISATION SHOWING
ANTIBODY LEVELS >10mIU/mL**

This implies you are unlikely to be a carrier of Hepatitis B; however, it does not necessarily confirm adequate immunity for protection if exposed to body fluids of carriers. If you demonstrate that you have had a level of immunity of $\geq 100\text{mIU/ml}$ at any time in the past, then further immunisation is not required for participation on practical courses run by the BMAS.

OR

PROVIDE PROOF THAT YOU ARE NOT A CARRIER OF HEPATITIS B

You are required to provide the results of a recent blood screen for Hepatitis B surface and/or core antigens, taken within a month prior to the start date of the course you will be attending.

For those who have either not completed the course of immunisation or have insufficiently raised antibody levels. A negative result for surface and/or core antigens will allow attendance on a course. A positive result does not necessarily preclude a participant from attending a course, but special advice and/or precaution may be required.

The BMAS strongly recommends that all course participants have hepatitis B immunisation

Please note it can take up to 6 months to complete a course of vaccinations.