



Governing Board Elected Member Candidate Statement

The Candidate Statement, your photograph and names of your nominators will be published on the Cochrane websites during the elections process, and the Candidate Statement and photograph will remain on the websites against the names of new members for the duration of their terms on the Board. For this reason, this Candidate Statement document template must be used; and full addresses, email addresses and/or unencrypted e-signatures excluded.

Please submit this Elected Member Candidate Statement in Word format by the stated deadline. It should be shared beforehand with your two nominators.

Family name (surname):	Ballout
First name(s):	Rami
Today's date:	October 4th, 2021
Are you a current member of the Governing Board standing for re-election?	No
Will you be 30 years old or younger on 29 November 2021?	Yes If yes, you will be asked to provide proof of your age following submission of your Candidate Statement

Questions 1-4: General experience and motivation

1. How and when did you first become involved in Cochrane and what has been your subsequent contribution to Cochrane's work (maximum 200 words)?

I first joined Cochrane as a medical student in training when I joined my ex-mentor's team working on systematic reviews to gain knowledge and experience with Cochrane reviews. Ever since, I have published 2 Cochrane reviews and currently finalizing a third one for publication soon.

2. What experience do you have serving as a member of a governing board, board of directors, management group or similar? This might be within a non-for-profit or charitable organization, or a hospital or university. Please include the roles you played and other relevant information (maximum 200 words).

I am a young physician currently employed as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda, MD, USA.

I therefore have relatively considerable experience in clinical and biomedical research and publishing and have a keen interest in pushing evidence-based medicine for use in establishing and guiding patient care in rare diseases and genetic syndromes, a field notable for relying on expert opinion and consensus rather than evidence synthesis to provide care for affected individuals.

3. Acting as a Board member requires a collaborative approach to decision-making, setting aside personal opinions and group affiliations and acting in the best interests of the organization as a whole. Please describe how you would fulfil this obligation, using examples from previous committee or other work (maximum 200 words).

As a postdoc fellow at a very diverse and international lab and institute, I have developed remarkable skills at becoming a tactful team player and collaborating with people of very different backgrounds, view angles, and opinions. I am capable of approximating the point of views of different parties to be able to reach a point of common interest that I can then use to guide a respectful and cooperative discussion. I believe, my training and continuous development of interpersonal skills, make me fit for this position.

4. What do you think would make you an effective member of the Cochrane Governing Board (maximum 200 words)?

My experience working on Cochrane reviews, having a clinical background and being actively and directly involved in biomedical and clinical research, including systematic reviews, having led and published several studies, being a young physician in training from an underrepresented background who can bring diversity and a fresh perspective to the board, and being excited and passionate about incorporating evidence-based medicine in the field of greatest interest to me: rare diseases and genetic syndromes.

Questions 5-11: Specific Skills

The Governing Board needs a range of experiences, knowledge and expertise amongst its membership. We do not expect any single Governing Board member to have all the necessary skills and experience; we are looking for diversity.

We do not expect you to answer “yes” to more than one or two of the questions below.

If you do answer “yes”, please provide at least one example which best demonstrates your skills or experience.

Desired skills and experience for this election:	Which means to you can:	Do you have skills and experience in this area? [YES/NO]	If YES, please provide an example:
5. Publishing and Open Access	Guide others through the complexities and opportunities for organizations in achieving Open Access to content and data	YES	I have led and published several studies, many of which were open access or made open access using my affiliation with NIH i.e., a government body.
6. Fundraising and business development	Develop and implement opportunities for income generation, build organizational relationships and connections, access donor and partner networks	NO	
7. Digital product development	Guide user-centred design, development and delivery of new digital products, understand informatics and structured data	NO but can easily learn it	
8. Financial management	Oversee an organization’s fiduciary, risk and audit duties, lead financial and investment planning	NO	
9. Advocacy	Act as an ambassador for an organization, influence and strengthen the commitment of public leaders or decision-makers to a cause, secure community support	YES	Active patient advocate for individuals with rare diseases and recently joined the NNPDP (a US-based charity organization for patients with Niemann-Pick Disease) as a member of their patient advocacy board.

<p>10. Science communications or public relations</p>	<p>Build organizational brand and profile online and in person, lead crisis management, design effective external and internal communications processes; OR</p> <p>Educate and raise awareness of science-related topics, design strategies for effectively communicating complex ideas to different audiences, or lead the transfer of knowledge into action</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>I am active on Twitter and constantly engaged in translating science to lay terms to make it more accessible to the public.</p>
<p>11. Making organizations more diverse and equitable</p>	<p>Guide equity, diversity and inclusion assessments and target-setting or provide lived experience of addressing issues of inequality</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>I myself do not “fit into a box” and have worked with people from different walks of life and always strive to diversify the workplace.</p>

12. Anything else you’d like to say in support of your nomination (maximum 200 words)?

Declarations:

To be eligible to stand for election, candidates must confirm the following by putting a 'tick' (✓) or their initials in the boxes below:

I hereby confirm that I:

1. Have accepted the Terms and Conditions of Cochrane Membership and have been a Cochrane Member for at least 30 days prior to the close of voting in this election	✓
2. Have read the following guidance produced by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in the UK: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a charity• What is a charity trustee?• What trustees must do• How trustees look after the charity	✓
3. Accept the Governing Board Charter	✓
4. Accept and will adhere to the Code of Conduct for Trustees	✓
5. Have completed the Cochrane 'Declaration of Interest' Statement (Annex 1 of this document)	✓
6. Have completed the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' required by the UK Charity Commission for all Trustees (Annex 2 of this document)	✓
NAME: Rami A. Ballout	
DATE: October 4th, 2021	

Annex 1: Cochrane Declaration of Interest Statement

Candidates must make a declaration of conflict of interest, including financial or non-financial relationships with other organizations, professional relationships to other members of the Board, and other Boards she/he may sit on. In writing this statement, candidates should refer to Cochrane’s [conflict of interest policy](#) (for Cochrane Groups) and the [declarations of existing members of the Board](#).

Please answer the following questions:

1. Financial interests In the last three years, have you:	YES/NO (If YES, please provide details)
a) Received funding: any grant, contract or gift, commissioned research, or fellowship from Cochrane or a related organization (i.e., any organization related to health care or medical research) to conduct research?	YES. I am an intramurally funded postdoctoral research trainee at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health.
b) Had paid consultancies: any paid work, consulting fees (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	NO
c) Received honoraria: one-time payments (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	NO
d) Served as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or held a position of management with a related organization?	NO
e) Possessed shareholdings, stock, stock options, equity with a related organization (excludes mutual funds or similar arrangements where the individual has no control over the selection of the shares)?	NO
f) Received personal gifts from a related organization?	NO
g) Had an outstanding loan with a related organization?	NO
h) Received royalty payments from a related organization?	NO
2. Do you have any other competing interests that could pose a conflict of interest that would reasonably appear to be related to the primary interest?	NO

Annex 2: Trustee Eligibility Declaration

As required by the [UK Charity Commission](#)

Please tick or initial in the boxes below to confirm the following:

I declare that I:

Am willing to act as a trustee of The Cochrane Collaboration	✓
Understand Cochrane's purposes (objects) and rules set out in its Articles of Association	✓
Am not prevented from acting as a trustee because I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences listed here • Have an Individual Voluntary Arrangement, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order • Have been removed as a trustee in England, Scotland or Wales (by the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) • Have been removed from being in the management or control of any organization in Scotland (under relevant legislation) • Have been disqualified by the Charity Commission • Am a disqualified company director • Am a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation • Am on the sex offenders register or equivalent in any country • Have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement • Have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission 	✓
Will provide true, complete and correct information to the Charity Commission if elected as a Board member	✓
Understand that it's an offence under section 60(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 (United Kingdom) to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information	✓
Comply with my responsibilities as a trustee that are set out in the Charity Commission guidance 'The essential trustee (CC3)'	✓