

Seeking British Cardiovascular Society (BCS) Endorsement: A Guide for External Bodies

The British Cardiovascular Society (BCS) periodically considers requests to endorse guidelines, policies, or position statements produced by other societies and professional bodies. Endorsement by the BCS is a formal expression of support, indicating broad agreement with the ethos of your document and its major recommendations.

This guide outlines the principles of BCS endorsement and provides a step-by-step process for any external body seeking to submit a document for consideration.

Benefits of BCS Endorsement

- The BCS is the oldest professional cardiology society in the world, founded in 1922, and is the voice for all those working in cardiovascular care and research in the UK. As such, endorsement from the BCS provides additional assurance of the quality and validity of your document.
- The BCS can provide expert input to your document from experienced cardiologists elected to the Clinical Standards and Guidelines & Practice committees. This can be with advice at the inception of a project, active participation throughout, as well as review of the final work.
- If you would like to seek specific cardiology expertise to support your guideline or document development, then the BCS may be able to help nominate suitable UK cardiologists from our membership and 21 affiliated societies.
- Once endorsed, the BCS will advertise your work to our membership and offer to host a link on our website to aid dissemination.
- An endorsed document can have the BCS logo attached and agreement to use this with associated publication and communications.

Key Principles for Endorsement

- **Evidence-Based:** The BCS will generally endorse documents that are supported by robust evidence, consistent with accepted good practice, or promote enhanced clinical practice.
- **Clinical Application:** The BCS does not endorse individual technologies, treatments, or interventions in isolation, but rather considers how they should be applied within clinical cardiology practice.
- **Alignment with Standards:** Documents will not be endorsed if they are incompatible with evidence-based practice, are poorly written, or conflict significantly with European Society of Cardiology (ESC) guidelines.

How to Apply for BCS Endorsement: Step-by-Step Guide

Step 1: Involve the BCS Early Wherever possible, groups intending to seek endorsement should involve the BCS early during the document's development. This helps ensure agreement on principles and recommendations that the BCS can support. Late applications are less likely to achieve a favourable outcome.

Step 2: Submit Your Document To initiate the formal process, forward your document for attention of the **BCS Vice President (VP) for Clinical Standards** at enquiries@bcs.com. Alongside the document, you must clearly describe your writing process, list all contributing authors, and declare any conflicts of interests.

Step 3: The Review Process Depending on the topic, the VP for Clinical Standards will assign the document to the Clinical Standards Committee, the Guidelines & Practice (G&P) Committee, or both. The BCS may also seek opinions from additional members with specific expertise. Please note that the BCS treats all submitted documents as strictly confidential.

Step 4: The Decision Committees decide on endorsement via consensus or a clear majority guided by the BCS endorsement policy. If a majority cannot be reached, the decision is escalated to the BCS Operational Executive or the BCS President. You will be informed of the outcome via a formal letter or email from the VP for Clinical Standards.

Step 5: Feedback and Resubmission Regardless of the decision, the BCS will offer constructive feedback aimed at improving the document. If endorsement is not granted, you will receive an explanation and suggestions for changes that could make the document endorsable upon resubmission.

Step 6: Post-Endorsement Actions Once endorsed, you should include the BCS logo and a statement confirming BCS endorsement on the document. A copy of the published document must be sent to the VP Clinical Standards and the administrative team at executivepa@bcs.com.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Does endorsement mean the BCS agrees with every single detail in our document? No, endorsement indicates broad agreement with the ethos and major recommendations of the document, but it does not necessarily mean the BCS agrees with every minor aspect. Endorsement also does not imply that the BCS shares co-authorship, ownership, or responsibility for subsequent modifications without prior agreement.

Will the BCS endorse documents that have industry involvement? Documents initiated by medical industry companies fall outside of the BCS endorsement criteria, even if BCS representatives contributed to them. However, these documents may include a pre-approved sentence acknowledging that the BCS contributed to discussions during development, while explicitly stating that it has not formally endorsed the content. Documents initiated by other organisations but with industry involvement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Can we use the BCS logo and endorsement in our marketing materials? BCS endorsement must **not** be used in promotional material or marketing communications unless you have explicit, written agreement from the BCS Executive. The BCS logo itself cannot be used without formal endorsement and explicit prior consent.

Will the BCS endorse our research proposal? In general, the BCS does not endorse research proposals before they have received full funding and ethics approval. The Society may choose to endorse selected clinical research trials if they feature significant British researcher involvement, impact British cardiological practice, and are of interest to BCS members.

What happens if we publish our endorsed document in a medical journal? If published, it is expected that any BCS members who contributed significantly will be listed as co-authors (per ICMJE criteria), and a statement regarding BCS involvement must be included. The published version of the manuscript should be forwarded to the BCS administrative team (executivepa@bcs.com). The BCS may also choose to highlight your publication on their website or in a membership bulletin.