



ASA COUNCIL MEMBER Candidate Pack

Dear candidate,

This is an exciting time to be joining our Council as we implement the first year of our soon-to-be published 2024-2028 strategy: *AI-assisted, collective ad regulation*.

We are changing to deal with the challenges posed by regulating online ads at pace and scale. In recent years, we have rebalanced our regulation away from reactive complaints casework towards proactive, tech-assisted intelligence-gathering, complaint handling, monitoring and enforcement. Building our in-house data science capability has been key to that. We forecast that we will process three million ads/potential ads through our Active Ad Monitoring system in 2023. That deployment of AI helps our compliance experts identify and swiftly act against irresponsible online ads. In the years ahead, we plan to substantially increase that number, provide more comprehensive reporting on compliance levels in the areas we monitor and report on significantly greater numbers of irresponsible online ads amended or withdrawn.

Our new strategy also covers how we will complement that by championing, on the back of our world-first Intermediary and Platform Principles Pilot, how we think the regulatory framework should develop to help meet the challenges we face in regulating online ads, bringing greater transparency and broader accountability to that important area. Our projects in areas like online ad targeting, body image and climate change are at the forefront of our proactive response to vital societal issues.

As the UK's independent frontline regulator of ads, we deliver value both to the public and to responsible businesses. That is why the ASA system is widely respected both here and abroad. There are challenges and opportunities ahead. Trust in advertising is improving, but low. The pace of digital change is extremely high, hence the focus of our new strategy.

We are proud of our role protecting people, but we need to do even more. And a strong, dynamic and diverse ASA Council is fundamental to our future success.

If you have the passion and drive to help us achieve our goal of **making sure every UK ad is a responsible ad**, please do consider applying. I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D A Currie', with a horizontal line underneath.

David Currie
Lord Currie of Marylebone
Chair, ASA



Vacant position

We have one **Advertiser Background Member** vacancy from April 2024, arising from an existing Council member finishing his term.

To qualify as an **Advertiser Background Member**, you must have client-side experience of advertising in a business that uses advertising. Those with only agency- or media-side experience will not qualify.

Although you will have client-side experience, you will serve in an individual capacity. We want you to bring your experience to bear in our work, not represent advertisers. You will likely be conflicted on some of our work, which we will manage through our conflict of interests policy.

The ASA

We are the UK's independent frontline regulator of ads by legitimate businesses and other organisations in all media, including online. We are authoritative and influential on ad regulation; the centre of expertise.

The rules we administer and enforce are contained in the UK Advertising Codes, written by the industry Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP).

To help maintain our independence from the industry that funds us, we are primarily funded at arm's length by the Advertising Standards Boards of Finance (Asbof). That funding comes from advertisers, primarily through a 0.1% levy on display advertising space and airtime, and platforms.

Together, the ASA, CAP and Asbof make up the ASA system. The ASA system is a mixture of self-regulation for non-broadcast advertising and co-regulation (with Ofcom) for broadcast, video-on-demand and video-sharing-platform advertising.

Our purpose, ambition and values

Our purpose is to make sure ads are responsible. Our ambition is to make sure every UK ad is a responsible ad.

Our values are to be proactive, collaborative, accountable, transparent and decisive. We want external stakeholders to find us to be: independent in administering the Codes; evidence-based, proportionate, targeted and consistent; and reflective of society, not a social engineer.

What we do is important

We are passionate about what we do because responsible ads are good for people, good for society and good for business. They entertain and inform us, helping us to choose products and services. They fund the media, sport and culture we all enjoy. They can be a force for social good, encouraging us to contribute to good causes, make more responsible choices and stay safe. And they help deliver competition and power the economy.

By making sure ads are responsible, we protect people from being misled, harmed or offended, helping them feel more confident in the ads they see and hear.

How we regulate

We put people first. Protecting them from irresponsible ads sits at the heart of what we do.

We mainly focus on online ads. That is because: people, particularly children, spend so much time online; businesses advertise online more than anywhere else; our experience of regulating ads in all media tells us there are relatively more problems with online ads; and the online environment is vast, diverse, often subject to few or no media gatekeepers and is subject to rapid innovation. But we do not take our eye off the important task of making sure ads are responsible in other media too.

We use technology, including data science, to enhance our effectiveness and efficiency and we invest as much in preventative and proactive regulation as we do in reactive regulation. However, knowing what ads the public and others complain to us about remains important, as does acting on complaints that identify breaches of the Codes.

We have been responsible for regulating non-broadcast advertising since 1962, when the ASA was established by the advertising industry. Our success led Ofcom to contract-out to us the regulation of broadcast advertising in 2004. That move was approved by Parliament and created a 'one-stop shop' for advertising regulation. The ASA system expanded again in 2011, when we began regulating companies' own advertising claims on their own websites and social media channels.

We have always worked with the wider advertising industry, which depends on trust in advertising. We strive to make sure advertisers play by the same rules, helping to create trusted media environments in which their responsible ads can flourish. We rely on their arm's-length funding, and the support, buy-in and, in some cases, funding of all parties involved in the preparation and publication of ads. We attach great importance to the benefits of working with the world class UK advertising industry, which supports the self-/co regulation independently administered by the ASA. Indeed, our system is evidence of the considerable commitment by the advertising industry to uphold standards in their profession. All parts of that industry – advertisers, agencies, media and platforms – coming together to commit to ads being legal, decent, honest and truthful.

But that support is coupled with our robust and independent decision-making to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for people, who remain our priority. We are independent of the businesses who pay for what we do, independent of government and independent of special interest groups.

Our partnering with other regulators is crucial too. Our frontline ad regulation often complements their activities, or even frees them up entirely to concentrate on their other duties. And they are sometimes able to tackle ad-related problems that we cannot.

We call our model of partnering with businesses and other regulators 'collective ad regulation'. Our independence and the buy-in and support we receive through collective ad regulation delivers faster, more flexible, more joined-up and proportionate regulation.

The ASA system is recognised by the Government and the Courts as being the established means for regulating UK ads.

What we cover

The Advertising Codes cover the following:

- Print and press ads
- Outdoor ads
- Direct mail ads and direct marketing emails and messages
- Television, radio, video on demand and video sharing platform ads
- Sales promotions, e.g. competitions and special offers
- Online ads (e.g. online paid ads, influencer ads and companies' own claims on their own websites and social media channels)
- Teleshopping ads/output
- Cinema commercials

Where we are based and how we are structured

Based in Shoreditch, London, the ASA currently employs around 120 people working across the following functions:

- Complaints and investigations
- Compliance
- Copy Advice
- Regulatory Policy
- Data science
- Communications
- Corporate Services



Further reading

Further information about the ASA system, our current strategy and the work we do can be found at www.asa.org.uk. We will publish our new *AI-assisted, collective ad regulation* strategy on 28 November 2023.

Council set-up

The ASA Council is, in fact, two Councils: one for non-broadcast advertising serving the Advertising Standards Authority Ltd; and one for broadcast advertising serving the Advertising Standards Authority (Broadcast) Ltd. Each Council is chaired by the ASA Chair and has the same 12 members. Eight of the members are Independent Members and four are Advertising Industry Background Members. The Advertising Industry Background Members have experience of the advertising and media businesses but serve in an individual capacity.

Members fulfil two roles: they are the jury who adjudicate on formally investigated ads and oversee our proactive regulatory projects; and they are the Board of the ASA Ltd and ASA (Broadcast) Ltd.

The adjudicatory role

The core role involves a weekly online task of reviewing and commenting/ruling on recommendations from the ASA Executive about cases. Once established, a Council member might typically spend two to three hours a week on that task.

The Council meets monthly, except in August when there is no meeting. Council meetings are a mix of fully virtual, hybrid and face-to-face, the last typically at our London office but exceptionally at other locations in the UK. Council meetings usually take place on a Friday with dates notified at least six months ahead. Council meets from 09:30 or 10:30 and concludes no later than 15:00, often earlier.

The Board Director role

Council members are also Company Directors of the ASA Ltd and ASA (Broadcast) Ltd and therefore oversee the strategy and performance of those companies.

Council members will be asked to serve on one of the Council's sub-committees (e.g. the Risk and Audit Committee, the Appointments, Remuneration and People Committee or the Performance Review Committee) and/or attend meetings of CAP's advisory panels (the Industry Advisory Panel or the Promotional Marketing and Direct Response Panel). The Council committees generally meet on two or three occasions in the year and the CAP panels on up to four occasions. Again, meetings are a mix of fully virtual, hybrid and face-to-face.

On occasion, members will also be expected: to assist the Chair in entertaining visitors to the ASA; to take part in strategy sessions (either at the ASA's office or a location readily accessible from London); to attend one or two Council meetings or events a year in the nations and regions of the UK; and to take part in training.

Timings

One Advertiser Background Member will be appointed to serve from **26 April 2024**. Members of the Council typically serve a maximum of two terms of three years each.

Remuneration

Members are paid an honorarium of up to £19,000 per annum (the maximum being for those living at a distance from London), plus the reimbursement of reasonable expenses.

Diversity

It is important that the Council is widely representative, as far as possible reflecting the views of the UK public. We welcome candidates of any age, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief. We welcome candidates with disabilities. And we welcome candidates who live and/or work in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Recruitment process and power of appointment

Candidates are appointed only after a thorough process that assesses them against the requirements of the role. That process involves short-listing undertaken by the Chair, supported by the ASA Chief Executive, and interviews undertaken by the Chair, Council members and an independent person.

Appointments to the Council are made by the Chair, ratified by Council.

In choosing Council members, the Chair aims for complementarity of skills and background. There is no stereotype. All members of the Council are different and bring differing experience, knowledge and abilities.

The Chair's decision on appointments is final and no correspondence will be entered into once the decision is made.

Training

There is initial induction training for new Council members and Council is kept updated at their monthly meetings on developments in policy and regulation.

Register of Interests

The Council maintains a Register of Interests, which can be inspected on application to the Company Secretary.

Requirements of the role

Judgement and analysis of complex material

Candidates should be able to demonstrate analytical skills and sound judgement. A study of the ASA's published rulings shows that Council has to deal with complex issues and a mass of detail. So far as possible, Council has to maintain a consistent approach to similar cases.

Independence

Whilst we seek Council members from different backgrounds, we look for someone who is able to show a genuine independence of mind and approach. Candidates should, if possible, not be too prominently involved in day-to-day party politics (although political experience is not a barrier), nor in special interest or campaign groups that might prejudice their independent judgement in Council business.

Experience/knowledge

All-round experience and knowledge is better than narrow specialism. The most important quality is a critical approach to arguments and evidence. Council obtains external expert advice when it needs it, to assist all the members. That includes legal advice so legal qualifications are neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for Council membership.

Board experience is welcome, but not essential. Board Director training will be made available to those who need it, so Council members can properly discharge their legal duties as company directors.

Communication and listening skills

Candidates should be able to work effectively as a member of a deliberative Council. That means being able to put a case persuasively in a small meeting, while taking on board the perspectives of others.

Engagement with society

Council members should have reasonable day-to-day contact with the public or parts of it. Anyone too withdrawn from the community would be unlikely to reflect wider opinion.

Media literacy

Candidates should be typical consumers of TV, radio, non-broadcast and online media. They should be interested in ads in all media and the role advertising plays in UK society.

Advertising awareness

Candidates should be interested specifically in the work of the ASA, as opposed to generalised public service. Candidates should be able to demonstrate at least some awareness and understanding of advertising regulation and its purpose and provide some insight into current trends in the world of advertising, even if from an external perspective.

IT literacy

Candidates should be online-literate. Council's work is conducted online, rather than being paper-based. Successful applicants will have regular and reliable access to good-quality IT equipment, with at least a superfast broadband connection.

Availability/commitments

Candidates should have the time to devote to the task. They must be able to commit to the weekly obligation of reading, listening to or viewing ads on our Council Online application, considering complaints, consulting the Codes and any guidance material, assessing recommendations and comparing similar cases.

Health/resilience

Candidates should be likely to be able to serve for at least one three-year term.