

Medical Student Writing Prize 2025

(submissions not yet open)

Requirements

Reflective essays need to focus on and describe your own experiences of learning within your medical studies, usually focusing on significant interactions with one or more patients (i.e. the student-patient relationship). The essay needs to include critical reflection on the implications of this learning with respect to becoming a doctor.

Each essay should include:

- **Description:** A detailed presentation of a personal experience of learning such as a significant student-patient interaction or an ongoing clinical relationship.
- **Analysis:** Review or reflection on how you experienced the interaction or situation, either as part of the medical team or individually. Analysis should include your thoughts and feelings, your perception of the situation, the challenges faced and how you responded.
- **Implications or 'critical reflection':** The impact of this experience on your approach to clinical practice, your emerging ideas about becoming a doctor and/or consideration of ways in which medical training might enhance the capacity of students to engage thoughtfully and compassionately in patient care.

This essay competition also affords an opportunity to review and express your impressions and thoughts about the complex process of becoming a doctor, based on your own interactions with patients, colleagues and other staff.

Submission

Please submit essays to Tracy, the BSANZ secretary: admin@balintanz.org
All essays will then be anonymised to person and university, then sent to the competition organisers. Each essay is then reviewed by several reviewers over 3 rounds of reviewing, the process taking 2 months (July, August). Students will be notified at the completion of each round.

Winners will be advised in September and announced on this website.

Prizes

- The Lawrence Gilbert Memorial Prizes of A\$500 will be awarded to the two top essays.
- The top 2-3 essays will be submitted to relevant medical journals for possible publication.

- Winners or runners-up may be offered subsidised attendance at future BSANZ annual workshops in Australia or NZ.

Helpful tips

1. Essays must be in English, between 1000 and 2000 words.
2. Please include a short and accurate title that reflects the theme or content of the essay.
3. Please use 12-point font, 1.5 spacing, Word documents only, not PDF or Pages.
4. The essay should focus on the student-patient relationship and/or challenges to professional identity, rather than on ethical analysis.
5. Explain all abbreviations or acronyms.
6. Be mindful of patient confidentiality; ensure patients or staff cannot be identified and use pseudonyms rather than real initials.
7. Essays must be written solely for this competition and students from Australian and New Zealand universities only can submit entries.
8. Previously submitted course work must be carefully reworked to de-identify the university and the city.
9. Published work for medical theses or diplomas should not be submitted.
10. Previous essays are available for perusal on this website. Many of them have addressed student involvement in end-of-life care, but we welcome essays on all topics related to your involvement with patients.

Students entering the competition will also automatically receive the regular BSANZ email newsletter about the activities of the Society. There is an unsubscribe option at the bottom of every email to opt off at any time.

Students may also be notified about this competition through their medical schools' electronic notice boards as well as through relevant Facebook pages.

Competition organisers

Associate Professor Hamish Wilson, University of Otago, Dunedin, NZ and Alexa Gilbert-Obrart from Sydney, Australia and London, UK.

Contacts

hamish.wilson@otago.ac.nz
alexagilbertobart@gmail.com
admin@balintanz.org