Guidelines for BOA Standards

December 2024

1. Introduction to BOASt / SpecS

The British Orthopaedic Association introduced the BOA Standards for Trauma (BOAST) in 2008. It was intended that these documents would drive improvements in patient care, set straightforward, auditable standards and eliminate unnecessary variation in practice.
The scope was broadened in 2020 to include essential planned care standards, and the acronym was modified to BOA Standards (BOASt) to reflect this change. It was recognised that, whilst containing high quality information, this expansion could potentially compromise the quality, and relevance of these documents to the general orthopaedic surgeon, who they were intended to serve. The process was, therefore, modified in 2022 to stratify the documents from a temporal perspective, with initial generic management applicable to the wider orthopaedic community addressed by a BOASt and subsequent/definitive management covered by Specialty Standards (SpecS).

2. Clinical Standards Committee

Since 2022 the commissioning, construction, and curation of BOASt / SpecS has been overseen by the BOA Clinical Standard Committee. This working group includes representatives from the BOA Trauma and Orthopaedic Committees and the BOA Executive. The Clinical Standards Committee members are selected based on their experience in writing and producing BOASt documents and have a remit to ensure the BOASt and SpecS brands are maintained to the highest standards.

3. BOA Standards (BOASt)

A BOASt is designed to offer guidance on the initial management of specific clinical scenarios or processes relevant to the practice of Trauma and Orthopaedics. This approach has successfully embedded BOASts in UK clinical practice, making them integral to routine care. Moreover, they serve as crucial reference tools for national monitoring and audit of key clinical conditions and pathways. A BOASt is presented as a single page executive summary, with a list of auditable standards in an easily recognisable format.

4. Specialty Standards (SpecS)

The purpose of SpecS is to concentrate on subsequent management of specific conditions, according to recommendations from experts in this field. Where feasible, this is based on extant consensus documents or published literature. They are also intended to provide an auditable set of standards but not act as a definitive description of management. SpecS follow a similar format but are typically longer, include references, and are colour- coded to distinguish them from a BOASt.

5. Curating a BOASt / SpecS

Proposals for a new BOASt or SpecS will be evaluated by the Clinical Standards Committee, which will then present suitable proposals to the BOA Executive Group. Proposals are encouraged from sources including members, Specialist Societies, BOA Committees, and the BOA Executive. Each proposal should include a working title, a statement outlining the proposed subject with inclusion and exclusion criteria, and a draft of the proposed standards.

Consideration for co-badging should be included, and agreement with all stakeholders should be secured at the initial stages before the first draft is submitted. These stakeholders include representatives from specialist societies and co-opted non-orthopaedic experts whose skills are relevant to the topic under consideration.

This structured approach to creating and updating standards ensures clarity and consistency across all documents, supporting continuous improvement of orthopaedic care in the UK. If you or your society are interested in proposing a document, please contact the BOA Policy and Programmes team at policy@boa.ac.uk

Once an initial draft is accepted, the Clinical Standards Committee, along with relevant specialists, will clarify the core clinical content. The second stage focuses on editing the document to ensure it is concise and consistent with the accepted style, with no contradiction of other policy documents.

Following approval by the BOA Executive, the document will be published on the BOA website. The lifespan of a BOASt / SpecS is four years, at which point it will be reviewed by the Clinical Standards Committee. The potential outcomes of the review include:

- Maintaining the BOASt / SpecS as current, which would keep it active on the BOA website with a footnote stating ‘Content reviewed [DATE]’ on both the PDF and web versions.
- Revising and republishing the BOASt / SpecS through the full standard process, potentially adding a footnote indicating a review is underway.
- Archiving the BOASt / SpecS.

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