

2024 International Election



Candidate for

Chairman

Jacek Cywinski

Mensa New Zealand

Campaign statement

Mensa should provide more value to members. This is how we grow faster.

We are all responsible for the future of Mensa. It is important to create a welcoming environment for new members and keep a positive and engaging atmosphere.

Mensa must also get better at keeping volunteers and encouraging their development; it is not a secret that Mensa relies on all our contributions. Get involved – please help us to make Mensa better, every hour of your time as a volunteer is needed now more than ever.

Mensa must remain a neutral organization, and not make any statements which could be perceived as political.

I offer extensive Mensa experience and current knowledge about Mensa International processes. This allows me to focus on opportunities, rather than learning the role. While I am an independent candidate, I work well in a team and my track record demonstrates this.

I would be grateful if you cast your vote for me. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

Jacek Cywinski

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Biography

I have been with Mensa for 19 years, having been actively involved at national and international levels:

2019 – present: International Treasurer, Mensa International

2014 – 2022: Board member, Mensa New Zealand

2017 – 2019: Executive Committee Member – Asia-Pacific Mensa Gathering 2019

2015 – 2020: Mensa Foundation International Scholarship judge

2011 – 2016: Member of Leadership Exchange Ambassador Program Committee, Vice-chair, Chair

2010 – 2012: Chair of Mensa Poland, IBD Member

2006 – 2010: Board member and Testing Co-ordinator, Mensa Poland

In my professional life, I am a public servant leading a team of tax specialists. I have 21 years of experience applying commercial and tax law regulation, fraud investigation, and following compliance framework at both national and international levels, gained at multinational companies, public service, and my own accounting practice. I have postgraduate degrees in psychology and finance & banking; and I am a Chartered Accountant.

Answers to IBD questions

1. What do you see as the most important aspect of the role for which you are standing?

Coordination of the work of the executive committee and the team of international volunteers. We need constructive discussions while avoiding groupthink. The Chairman needs to be available for international volunteers, and the international office; and be there for the good and not so good. It's essential to be empathetic and understand different viewpoints and volunteer styles; however, it is important to confidently call out counterproductive volunteer behaviours when necessary.

I believe the old Latin quote applies "Primum non nocere" – first, do no harm. Mensa must remain a place where intelligent people from all walks of life, cultures and ideologies feel welcome to meet, have fun, and exchange ideas.

Our members can be political, but the organisation must never be – the Chairman needs to be mindful of this. Overall, it is a full-on role requiring dedication and experience, and I am up for it.

2. Why have you volunteered for this role, and what in particular qualifies you for it?

I am a dedicated and experienced volunteer with a track record of meeting my commitments and taking my role seriously. I believe that my skills and experience will be beneficial, particularly when the majority of the current ExComm members are not eligible for re-election, and there are quite a few projects in progress.

For most of my professional life I have been a public servant, striving to be apolitical and neutral, which is essential while serving the public – this is beneficial for our organisation, as Mensa relies on not having opinions and being neutral, as the only thing which we all have in common is high IQ.

Mensa is part of my life – there has been no week without Mensa for 19 years. I have got so much from Mensa, which I feel compelled to give back. The future of Mensa is in my heart.

3. What do you see as the most important issues facing international Mensa at the present time and in the next few years?

I believe the main issues facing Mensa are member and volunteer retention, increasing transparency, enhanced use of our knowledge resources, improved intelligence testing, and taking advantage of new technology.

Member retention is an important issue facing Mensa International. We need to consider the role of technology plays in this (the last several years have demonstrated that we can all work and socialise in innovative ways).

Furthermore, it is essential to look at our cost structure as the increasing membership fees in many national Mensas are the main reasons for members not renewing their membership.

Additionally, it is crucial to continue working on greater transparency and visibility of Mensa International operations, allowing a wider audience to be involved. We should create a knowledge base, where we could share all of the fantastic resources from around the world, including materials on how to resolve the most common challenges members can face.

4. What do you wish to achieve during your term of office?

- Bringing to life the “Volunteer Development Committee” to work on the Volunteer Development Programme to increase volunteer retention and provide structured support to volunteers;
- Implementing Adaptive Testing, allowing widespread reliable, modern intelligence testing which utilises item-response theory (we have been waiting for this for so long due to a variety of obstacles and we cannot wait any longer). I will make it happen;
- Progressing implementation of worldwide membership database, so you can engage better with wider membership;
- Transforming Mensa International Office, to provide enhanced experience to national Mensas, volunteers and Direct International Members, and;
- Reconsider financing options of Mensa International to minimise the burden to members, while balancing development and strategic opportunities.