

Voting in Members

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Voting In New Members

The Toastmasters Club is a private association, and Club membership is by invitation. As provided in the Club Constitution, a prospective member, in order to become a member, must be elected to membership upon favorable vote of at least a majority of active members present and voting. As a chartered Club of Toastmasters International, your Club must vote in members in order to retain its charter. This is not an option; every Club must vote in its members.

Most of the time, your Club will accept every one who wants to join. However, occasionally, someone may wish to join your Club who will not be supportive and whose goals are not compatible with those of the Club. An established voting procedure gives your Club the opportunity to deny membership to such a person. Of course, denial of membership cannot be based on discrimination. Following is a procedure you may wish to follow, or your Club can create its own procedure:

- An Application for Membership (Form 400) is completed and signed. The prospective member is introduced to the Club (or new members may introduce themselves). The applicant may be excused from the room.
- The Vice President Membership states to the Club that the prospective member wishes to become a member of the Club, and ask for any discussion on the candidacy of the prospect.
- At the end of the discussion, the Vice President Membership calls for a vote by a show of hands. If the Club wishes, the vote may also be by secret ballot. The prospective member is elected by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any meeting.
- The Vice President Membership then informs the member of the Club's decision. It's customary to bring the applicant back into the room with a welcoming round of applause.
- International dues and fees are collected and promptly mailed to World Headquarters.
- The new member is informed of his/her obligations to the Club (see next section).
- Induction ceremony and orientation interviews are planned for the new member.
- A mentor is assigned.

Obligations

Once elected to membership, the new member is entitled to all rights and privileges of your Club, and new members, as well as all members, share in its responsibilities. Be sure new members are aware of their obligations, which are to:

- Support the Club's purposes

- Constructively contribute to its program and activities
- Share their knowledge and experience with fellow members
- Attend meetings regularly
- Prepare fully for each assignment
- Apply themselves to the program outlined in the Toastmasters manuals
- Participate in Club activities
- Evaluate others in a positive, constructive manner
- Build open, friendly relationships with fellow members
- Bring other new members into the Club so they can also gain the benefits of Toastmasters.

Termination of Membership

Occasionally a Club's positive and supportive environment may be disrupted by the actions of one of its members. Often when the disruption continues, the Club suffers. The positive, enjoyable environment disappears. Members' progress is slowed. Some members may even drop out. When this happens, your Club may wish to take action.

First, the Club President and/or other members of the Executive Committee should discuss the problem privately with the disruptive member and encourage him or her to help maintain the Club's positive atmosphere. The Club should try to rectify the situation before taking steps to terminate the membership of a member. If the member's behavior doesn't improve, your Club may wish to ask the person to resign or to proceed with disciplinary action, including terminating the person's membership.

The procedure can be handled by either the Club Executive Committee or by the entire Club membership. The Club Executive Committee should determine, by majority vote, if the disciplinary procedure will take place at the Club Executive Committee level or at the Club membership level.

If handled by the Club Executive Committee, this procedure should be followed:

- a. Recommendation of membership termination by a majority vote of the Club Executive Committee.
- b. Written notice of the proposed action and reason(s) therefore to the member.
- c. Opportunity for the member to respond, orally or in writing, to the charges within 15 days after notification. If requested by the member, the Club Executive Committee will give the member an opportunity to appear before the Committee to discuss the issue. If the member chooses to appear, he or she will be notified of the date and place of the meeting.
- d. Distribution of copies of the charges, and any response from the member, to the members of the Club Executive Committee.
- e. After the 15 day response time, a vote by the Club Executive Committee on the proposed termination with:
 1. Reasonable notice to the Club Executive Committee of the agenda item.
 2. A quorum present (majority).
 3. Two-thirds of those present and voting supporting termination.
- f. Notification to the Club member of the action being taken and the right of appeal to the Club within 15 days of date of notice.

- g. Notification to the entire Club membership of the action taken.

If the procedure takes place at the Club level, this procedure should be followed:

- a. Recommendation of membership termination to the Club members by a majority vote of the Club Executive Committee.
- b. Written notice of the proposed action and reason therefore to the member.
- c. Opportunity for the member to respond, orally or in writing, to the charges within 15 days after notification. If requested by the member, the Club will give the member an opportunity to appear before the Club to discuss the issue. If the member chooses to appear, he or she will be notified of the date and place of the meeting.
- d. Distribution of copies of the charges, and any response from the member, to the Club membership.
- e. After the 15 day response time, a vote by the Club membership on the proposed termination with:
 1. Reasonable notice to the membership of the agenda item;
 2. a quorum present (majority of active members); and
 3. two-thirds of those present and voting supporting termination.

If the member appeals the decision of the Executive Committee, the Club will follow the same procedure as outlined in c, d, and e above, with the understanding that the member's 15 day response time begins when he or she is notified of his or her right to appeal.

There is no appeal of the decision of the Club.

These procedures also apply to Club proceedings to not renew, suspend, or take other disciplinary action regarding the membership of an individual member.

To be fair and reasonable, here are some important things that you will want to consider:

- Because termination is a personal matter, through the entire process do the best you can to keep the issue confidential within the Club.
- Ordinarily, no person outside the Club should be involved or attend any meeting of the Club at which disciplinary action is discussed. It is best to excuse any guests or other people, such as District officers, from this portion of the meeting.
- Discussion leading up to the vote on termination or other disciplinary action should be limited to only those items which the member has been told are reasons for the proposed action.
- Any deviations from this process need to be justified by the circumstances, (e.g., threats to personal safety), and must be fair and reasonable. Each Club is ultimately responsible for making its own interpretation of these procedures.

Termination of someone's membership can be a sensitive and emotional event. If you have questions or need advice, contact the Policy Administration Department at World Headquarters, which has had more experience with these situations than District officers have had.