

# Accredited Speaker Program Handbook

For Accredited Speakers and applicants



TOASTMASTERS  
INTERNATIONAL

AS  
ACCREDITED  
SPEAKER



## Accredited Speaker Program

The Toastmasters International Accredited Speaker Program is designed for professional speakers who combine expert knowledge in a particular subject with mastery of the spoken word, making them sought-after experts in their respective fields.

**TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL**  
[toastmasters.org](https://toastmasters.org)

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# For Applicants



## Before you apply

Before applying to become an Accredited Speaker, it's important to understand the requirements and make sure you're equipped for a successful application process.

Keep in mind that the Accredited Speaker Program recognizes speakers who have already reached professional-level status in their careers. It is not designed to recognize or provide support and publicity for those who are working toward becoming professional-level speakers. If you are working toward professional-level status, we recommend connecting with one of the current Accredited Speakers who offer mentoring services.



## Eligibility

Review the list below and ensure that you have met all basic eligibility requirements. To be eligible for the Accredited Speaker Program, you must:

- ▶ Be a member of a club in good standing
- ▶ Have completed one of the following educational requirements:
  - Completed all levels in a single path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience
  - Earned Advanced Toastmaster Bronze
  - Earned Advanced Communicator Bronze
- ▶ Have presented a minimum of 25 professional-level speaking engagements to non-Toastmasters audiences within the past three years (from the date of application).
- ▶ Have received payment for at least 15 of the 25 professional-level speaking engagements submitted as part of your application.
- ▶ Have a professional-level video of a presentation that is 20 to 60 minutes in length, spoken in English, and recorded before a live, non-Toastmasters audience. (All references to "live audience" and "live presentation" include both on-premise and virtual events in which the audience is present in real time.)

- ▶ Have five different clients complete the official **Accredited Speaker Program Recommendation Form** and submit it to World Headquarters on your behalf (forms must be submitted by clients from whom you received payment).

Please note that international officers or directors, candidates for international officer or director, region advisors, and applicants for region advisor are not eligible to participate in the Accredited Speaker Program.

## How is a professional-level speaking engagement defined?

For the purpose of the Accredited Speaker Program application, qualifying speaking engagements include, but are not limited to, educational presentations, training sessions, corporate lectures, and motivational speeches. Regardless of the type of presentation, all speeches submitted as part of your application must meet the following criteria:

- ▶ There must be 20 or more audience members in attendance.
- ▶ Speeches must be a minimum of 20 minutes in length.

- ▶ Speeches must be presented for a live audience; virtual presentations qualify, as long as the audience of 20 or more viewed the presentation in real time.
- ▶ The speaker must be the principal author/owner of a substantial portion of the content used.
  - Content owned by an outside source and used as the major portion of a presentation does not qualify.
  - Speeches must not be presented as part of the speaker's regular employment, unless self-employed.

### What qualifies as a paid speech?

- ▶ Any speech or presentation for which the speaker was directly compensated a pre-arranged fee
- ▶ Speeches or presentations for which the speaker received reimbursement, per-diem, or a gift/donation qualify for a limited number of paid speeches

### What does not qualify as a paid speech?

- ▶ Any speech presented as part of the speaker's regular employment

### What about reimbursements, gifts, or donations?

- ▶ Speeches for which the speaker only received an expense reimbursement (e.g., travel, food, or lodging), a per diem, or a monetary gift/donation will qualify toward a maximum of seven of the 15 paid speaking engagements.
- ▶ At least eight of the paid speaking engagements must be speeches or presentations for which the speaker was directly compensated a pre-arranged fee.

### What are the requirements for my video submission?

- ▶ Must be recorded using a professional-level method
- ▶ Must be spoken in English in front of a live, non-Toastmasters audience
- ▶ Must include your entire speech, including the person who introduces you
- ▶ Must include a speech that is no longer than 60 minutes and no shorter than 20 minutes

- Your professional introduction does not count toward the time limit.
- ▶ Speech or presentation must have a clearly defined opening, body, and closing.

### What would disqualify my video submission?

- ▶ Poor audio or video quality
- ▶ Does not include a professional introduction
- ▶ Does not include a complete presentation
- ▶ Is edited in any way (Editing includes but is not limited to: adding prerecorded or introduction music, adding graphics at any point in the video—including as an introductory slide—using multiple cameras, making lighting or audio enhancements, cutting out portions of the presentation, or ending the video before the presentation concludes to ensure it meets the time requirement. Editing does not include cutting out extra footage that occurs before the speaker's introduction or after the clearly defined ending of the speaker's presentation).



## How to apply

Applications for the Accredited Speaker Program are accepted by World Headquarters in January each year. All materials listed here must be received by 5 p.m. Mountain Time, January 31; there are no exceptions past the January 31 due date.

If you plan to apply in the upcoming year, it's a good idea to review the eligibility requirements in the previous section and start getting your application materials ready now.

To apply, complete and submit the official **Accredited Speaker Program Application**.

**The application will require that you include:**

 <p>Basic information about yourself</p>	 <p>Information about your professional background and area of expertise</p>	 <p>A list of 25 eligible speaking engagements (see <b>Eligibility</b>)</p>	 <p>A link to a qualified video presentation (see <b>Eligibility</b>)</p>	 <p>Links to your professional website and/or social media profiles, should you have them*</p>
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\*You cannot be denied from the program solely because you do not have a professional website and/or social media profiles.

In addition to the completed application form and video link, you must also ensure that World Headquarters receives the following three items:

1. Recommendations from five different clients for paid speaking engagements
  - The **Accredited Speaker Program Recommendation Form** must be used.
  - The form must be completed and submitted to **accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org** by the client providing the recommendation.
  - Accredited Speaker applicants must not submit their own recommendation forms.
  - Client recommendation forms can be submitted at any time during the year and will be kept on file for five years (all other applications materials are not accepted prior to January 1; recommendation forms received after January 31 can only be counted toward an application for the following year).
2. A \$100 Level 1 application fee
  - This fee is nonrefundable and must be submitted after your application materials are received by World Headquarters.
  - If your application materials are submitted on January 31, you will have three additional business days to submit the Level 1 payment.
  - For information on how to submit your application fee, contact **accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org**.
3. A copy of any presentation slides included in your video submission, if applicable. (Please note that there is no requirement for your presentation to include slides.)

## Process to receive designation

The Accredited Speaker Program includes two levels. Once you submit application materials as outlined in the **How to Apply** section, your application will be reviewed to ensure it meets all requirements.

- ▶ If any portion of your application and/or your submitted video does not meet the outlined requirements, you will be notified and permitted one opportunity to submit a corrected application and/or another qualified video submission. You will have seven days to resubmit.
  - The corrected application and/or qualified video submission must be provided within seven days from the date of request.
  - Speaking engagements listed on your corrected/revised application must be before the original January 31 application deadline.
  - The video submitted as part of a corrected/revised application must be from a presentation that occurred before the original January 31 deadline.
  - If your second application and/or video submission does not qualify or is not submitted within seven days, you will not progress to Level 1.

If your application and/or video submission meet all requirements, you will progress to Level 1 of the Accredited Speaker Program.

### If I don't progress to Level 1, will my fee be refunded?

Your \$100 Level 1 application fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable. Should you not progress to Level 1, this fee will not be returned. If you decide to apply during a new application cycle, you must pay a new \$100 fee with your Level 1 application.

## Level 1

During Level 1 of the Accredited Speaker Program, applications and video submissions are reviewed by a panel of judges.

Judges are provided with access to the candidate's entire application, including recommendation forms, the list of speaking engagements, video presentation,

and presentation slides if used. All elements of the candidate's application are reviewed and taken into consideration by judges when determining if the candidate is to proceed to Level 2.

### Who are the judges and how are they selected?

Judges are members of the Accredited Speaker Program Council, appointed by the council chairs, with the approval of the Toastmasters International First Vice President.

Council members are experienced professional speakers who are qualified to serve as judges based on meeting all **outlined requirements**.

### What are judges looking for?

Judges will review your entire application and judge your video presentation to determine if you have reached a professional status as a speaker. Elements that could be helpful in demonstrating this include:

- ▶ Ensuring recommendations are positive and current
  - If you have applied to level 1 within the previous five years, your prior recommendation forms will still be on file. However, you may want to consider updating them to reflect current clients and presentations.
- ▶ Including the best possible examples of your work in your list of 25 speaking engagements
  - If there is something that makes a presentation specifically unique, note this for the judges. For example, a presentation for a smaller audience or minor fee may be significant because of the setting, client, or individuals who were in attendance. Note this on the application to ensure the judges are aware.
- ▶ If you have a professional website or social media profiles, ensure that all are updated and accurately represent you.
- ▶ Submitting a video that strongly reflects your style and ability as a professional speaker
  - While it's important to ensure your video meets all **technical requirements** for a professional-level video, you'll also want to consider the content



## How will my video and application be scored?

When viewing your video presentation, judges will use the Accredited Speaker Program **Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 1** to provide you with a score out of 100. Categories that judges will consider include:

- ▶ Content (accounts for 45 percent of score)
- ▶ Delivery (accounts for 35 percent of score)
- ▶ Language (accounts for 20 percent of score)

See the Accredited Speaker Program Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 1 for additional details on each category. Judges may take your entire application into consideration when finalizing your score.

The image shows a sample of the Accredited Speaker Program Judge's Guide and Ballot for Level 1. It is a structured table with columns for Criteria, Performance (with sub-categories: OUTSTANDING, EXCELLENT, GOOD, POOR), and Score. The table is divided into three main sections: Content (45%), Delivery (35%), and Language (20%). Each section contains several criteria with corresponding performance levels and scores. For example, under Content, 'Personal or Audience Response' has a score of 12-30 for Outstanding, 10-16 for Excellent, 8-12 for Good, and 6-8 for Poor. The total score for each section is indicated at the bottom of each section, and the overall total is 100.

and ensure it's a positive reflection of your skills as a speaker and your command of your subject of expertise.

- If presentation slides are used within the video submitted with your application, it is helpful (but not required) for the judges if slides are also visible in the video presentation.

## What score do I need to progress to Level 2?

To progress to Level 2, you must receive a score of 80 or above from four out of five judges.

## What happens if I don't pass Level 1?

If a candidate does not pass Level 1, they will not proceed to the next level of the Accredited Speaker Program. However, all candidates are welcome to apply again during a new application cycle.

Candidates will receive written feedback from judges that can be applied to help improve future presentations and contribute to a stronger application.

## When will I know if I am progressing?

Judging for Level 1 begins near the end of March and results will be shared with all candidates in May.

Candidates who receive a score of 80 or above from four out of five Level 1 judges will be invited to progress to Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program.

## What happens after I find out I've passed Level 1?

Once you have been notified that you passed Level 1, World Headquarters will provide you with additional information about the Level 2 program, including where and when it will take place. You will be given approximately seven days to confirm your participation in Level 2.

## Level 2

Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program takes place at the Toastmasters International Convention, held in August each year. Candidates will be invited to present in front of a live audience and panel of five judges and one chief judge during this level of the Accredited Speaker Program.

Should there be a significant number of Level 2 candidates, this part of the Accredited Speaker Program may be held in multiple groups. Each group will have its own panel of five judges and one chief judge.

## What is required for Level 2?

Once you confirm that you will be competing in Level 2 at the Toastmasters International Convention, you must also:

- ▶ Submit a \$150 Level 2 application fee.
- ▶ Secure your own travel and accommodations for the International Convention.\*

► Prepare your Level 2 presentation and let World Headquarters know of any audio-visual needs.

\* Accredited Speaker Level 2 candidates are not required to register for the International Convention. You will receive free admission for yourself and up to two guests to the Accredited Speaker Program.

### **What are the requirements for my Level 2 presentation?**

Your Level 2 presentation must be between 15 to 18 minutes in length, be spoken in English, and demonstrate your skill as a speaker as well as your mastery in your area of expertise.

You may use PowerPoint slides or other audio-visual elements during this presentation. World Headquarters will coordinate with you in July to determine any specific needs for your presentation.

### **How does judging work at Level 2?**

Judging for Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program is similar to the judging process and requirements for Level 1. Level 2 judges score your live presentation using the Accredited Speaker Program **Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 2**.

Judges at Level 2 will be provided with your basic information and context regarding your area of expertise as submitted on your application. Level 2 judges will not be provided with any additional information from your application.

Candidates who present at Level 2 the same year they applied to Level 1 are not permitted to submit an updated application between Level 1 and Level 2.

### **How am I scored at Level 2?**

Scoring at Level 2 is the same as at Level 1. Each judge will provide you a score out of 100 and you must receive a score of 80 or above from four out of five judges to pass Level 2 and receive the Accredited Speaker designation.



### **What if I can't make it to the International Convention?**

To participate in Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program, you must present in person during the live program.

However, if you pass Level 1 of the program and are unable to participate in the International Convention that same year, you are welcome to participate in Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker program in a future year (must be within three years of passing Level 1).

To ensure you will be included in the program, you must contact World Headquarters at [accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org](mailto:accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org) by May 1 of the year you plan to participate.

Should you decide to participate in Level 2 a different year than that in which you applied to Level 1, you are encouraged to submit an updated list of speaking engagements. This does not need to be a completely new list, but adding recent engagements will demonstrate to judges that you have remained an active professional speaker in the year(s) between your original Level 1 application and the time you indicate to World Headquarters that you plan to participate in Level 2. This updated list must be submitted within two weeks after you inform World Headquarters that you plan to participate in Level 2.

### How many candidates can progress each year?

There is no limit to the number of candidates who can progress to Level 2 each year. Nor is there a limit to the number of candidates who can receive the Accredited Speaker designation.

Unlike in a speech contest, Accredited Speaker candidates are not scored in comparison to other candidates; they are rated on their own skill and expertise as a professional speaker.

Should four out of five Level 1 judges determine that all candidates should progress to Level 2, then all candidates will progress. Similarly, if four out of five judges in each group give all Level 2 candidates a score of 80 or above, all candidates will receive the Accredited Speaker designation.

### What happens if I don't pass Level 2?

If you don't pass Level 2 the first year you participate, you will have two additional opportunities to return to the International Convention and present during the Accredited Speaker Program.

Each time you return at Level 2, you must submit an additional nonrefundable Level 2 application fee and are encouraged to submit an updated list of 25 recent speaking engagements. This does not need to be a completely new list, but adding recent engagements will demonstrate to judges that you have remained an active professional speaker.

If you do not pass Level 2 after a total of three attempts,

you must re-apply at Level 1, submitting a complete application and Level 1 application fee.

### What happens if I pass Level 2?

Once you pass Level 2, you receive the prestigious Accredited Speaker designation, which gives you a competitive edge and sets you apart from other professional speakers. Having this designation means that your talent and ability have been recognized by Toastmasters International, a world leader in communication and leadership development.

Additionally, you will receive recognition and support from World Headquarters and the Accredited Speaker Program Council. Recognition includes the following:

- ▶ Presentation of an official Accredited Speaker badge, pin, and plaque at the International Convention
- ▶ Letter of commendation from the Toastmasters International Chief Executive Officer
- ▶ News release sent to selected publications
- ▶ Acknowledgment in the *Toastmaster* magazine
- ▶ Opportunity to have your profile, professional speaking services, and contact information included on the Toastmasters International website
- ▶ Ability to use the Accredited Speaker logo as you build your professional marketing and brand.

For more information about the support and acknowledgment you receive as an Accredited Speaker, see the **For Accredited Speakers** section of this handbook.



# For Accredited Speakers

## Support from World Headquarters

As soon as you receive the Accredited Speaker designation, you can begin placing this title next to your name along with any other designations or credentials you may have.

When using this designation, you are representing Toastmasters International, and we want you to succeed in your career as a public speaker. To assist you in this, World Headquarters provides ongoing support for Accredited Speakers and asks that you partner with us in keeping the Accredited Speaker Program brand strong.



### Accredited Speaker Orientation

In the first few months after you receive the designation, you will be invited to attend a virtual Accredited Speaker orientation, where you can hear advice from other Accredited Speakers, learn how to make the most of the designation, and discover additional speaking opportunities that are open to you now that you have the designation.

The orientation will be conducted by the Accredited Speaker Program Council co-chairs with support from World Headquarters.

Topics covered in this orientation will include:

- ▶ Use of the Accredited Speaker logo and brand guidelines
- ▶ Speaking at Toastmasters clubs, conferences, and events
- ▶ Speaking about the Accredited Speaker Program to non-Toastmasters audiences
- ▶ Ensuring your website and personal brand remain strong and relevant

## Accredited Speaker Profile

As a world leader in communication and leadership development, Toastmasters International is trusted by individuals, Districts, and companies to endorse and promote quality speakers.

Those who come to Toastmasters seeking a professional-level speaker are directed to the Accredited Speaker profiles, where they can **view all Accredited Speakers who have chosen to have a profile** and contact you for their speaking engagement.

After you have received the designation, Toastmasters International will work with you to gather information and write a professional profile that highlights your expertise and skill as a speaker. Once you have approved your profile, it will be posted on the website along with your contact information.

Any time you would like your profile updated, simply email [accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org](mailto:accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org) with the information you would like to change.

## Creating your brand as an Accredited Speaker

As a professional speaker, you understand the importance of representing yourself in a professional manner and building a strong personal brand.

Similarly, it's important to ensure you are representing the Accredited Speaker Program well and helping to keep the brand strong.

The guidelines outlined here are designed to support you in creating your brand, incorporating the Accredited Speaker branding into your professional marketing materials, and ensuring that you have strong professional representation across all platforms you use.



### Using the Accredited Speaker logo

The Accredited Speaker logo is a visual representation and identification of the Accredited Speaker Program and brand.

The logo strengthens the credibility of the program and supports you in promoting yourself as a professional speaker.

Toastmasters will provide you with access to Accredited Speaker logo art that can be uploaded to websites and used in other applications.

You are encouraged to use the logo, as it shows your affiliation with Toastmasters International and your Accredited Speaker designation.

### Where should I include the logo?

Toastmasters who hold the Accredited Speaker designation are welcome and encouraged to use this logo in the following places:

- ▶ On your professional website
- ▶ In presentation slides
- ▶ On your speaker one-sheet
- ▶ On your social media profiles
- ▶ On stationery
- ▶ Email signatures
- ▶ On the back of your business card

When using the Accredited Speaker logo on your own website, you must link the logo to the Toastmasters International **Accredited Speaker page**. Linking to this page will allow visitors to your site to quickly see what this designation means and the credibility that it lends you.

### Where should I not include the logo?

Accredited Speakers are not permitted to use the Accredited Speaker logo in any of the following applications:

- ▶ On the front of business cards
  - Accredited Speakers may include the Accredited Speaker designation along with their name on the front of business cards. Inclusion of the logo on the front of business cards could detract from personal branding and imply that speakers are conducting business on behalf of the program or the Toastmasters International organization.
- ▶ As a Toastmasters club logo or a visual representation for a club, including clubs that specifically support members who strive to achieve the Accredited Speaker designation
- ▶ On articles such as trophies, ribbons, banners, certificates, clothing, or other items, except with specific written approval and authorization from the Toastmasters International Chief Executive Officer

### Giving presentations about Toastmasters-related topics

Accredited Speakers are often invited to speak at Toastmasters events, such as District conferences.

Please keep in mind that you are not permitted to accept a speaking fee from Districts. However, Districts may provide reasonable travel, meals, lodging, and event registration expenses.

Additionally, you may be asked to speak to non-Toastmasters audiences about the Accredited Speaker Program or other Toastmasters programs.

When presenting at Toastmasters events or about Toastmasters, materials used in presentations must accurately reflect the Accredited Speaker Program and the Toastmasters International brand.

Following your Accredited Speaker orientation, the Accredited Speaker Program Council will provide you with a presentation and talking points designed for speaking about the Accredited Speaker Program. Use these to ensure you are accurately representing the program and providing the most current information.

When presenting at or attending conferences, you must not damage the Toastmasters International brand in any way.

### **Maintaining a professional website**

As an Accredited Speaker, you are strongly encouraged to have a professional website, or active social media profiles, as these can be great ways to promote your services and inform potential clients of the expertise you provide.

When you apply to the Accredited Speaker Program, your professional website and/or social media profiles (should you have them) are reviewed by judges.

Once you've received the designation, it's important to ensure that your website and profiles continue to meet current professional standards and are regularly updated.

### **How often should I update my website?**

This will vary for each individual, as websites should be updated any time you have a new accomplishment or detail to add.

However, it's a good idea to check your website a few times a year and make sure everything is up to date.

If it's been a few years since you've refreshed the look of your website, it might be time to research current professional standards and make sure that look is modern and relevant.

Keep your eye on the following details to make sure they don't become out of date:

- ▶ Your photo: In addition to ensuring your photo is of professional quality, you'll want to make sure it reflects your current image.
- ▶ Your list of accomplishments: If you've done something new and exciting, make sure you let visitors to your website know.

- ▶ Your contact information: Make it easy for clients to reach you by ensuring your contact information stays up to date.
- ▶ Details about your services: If you include pricing or scheduling information on your website, you'll want to keep this updated regularly.

If you have social media profiles, you'll want to keep these current and up-to-date as well, and you should review your basic information any time you update your website. You'll also want to make sure you post on these profiles regularly. New content will keep your followers engaged and help your brand stay relevant.

### **Presenting yourself professionally**

When you market yourself as an Accredited Speaker, you are representing the Toastmasters International brand. The way you present yourself reflects on your personal brand, as well as the Toastmasters and Accredited Speaker brands.

### **Attire**

Whether you are speaking to a Toastmasters or non-Toastmasters audience, it's important that your attire demonstrates your professionalism and reflects positively on your status as an Accredited Speaker.

When considering attire for each presentation you give, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- ▶ Dress according to the audience for whom you will be speaking.
- ▶ Ensure your clothes and shoes are clean and neat.
- ▶ Ask yourself how you would view a professional speaker in the attire you plan to wear.
- ▶ It is recommended that you wear your Accredited Speaker pin, especially when speaking at Toastmasters events. This will lend credibility and help identify you as an Accredited Speaker.

## Presentations

As a professional speaker—and a Toastmaster—you understand the importance of words. Part of crafting a strong presentation is ensuring that your message, whether motivational, inspirational, or informative, is clearly expressed and well received.

Messages that are off-putting to your audience, for any reason, will not be well received. What's more, they can damage your personal brand and any brands that you represent.

When giving presentations, take care to avoid:

- ▶ Disparaging remarks
- ▶ Derogatory comments
- ▶ Offensive language

Keep in mind that what is considered disparaging or offensive can be different for each audience. That's why it's important to know your audience and craft your message accordingly.

## Maintaining the designation

The Accredited Speaker designation is a prestigious title that you can use to support your professional speaking career.

In order to ensure you maintain this designation and retain the right to use this title, you must do the following:

- ▶ Adhere to all branding guidelines in the **Creating your brand as an Accredited Speaker** section of this handbook.
- ▶ Abide by Toastmasters International **Policy 3.0: Ethics and Conduct** and adhere to all specific expectations outlined for Accredited Speakers in Policy 3.0, Section 1.L: World Champions of Public Speaking and Accredited Speakers.

## Mentoring and coaching

Toastmasters members working to achieve the Accredited Speaker designation will look to you for guidance and advice. Your position as a polished professional who has successfully completed the process to become an Accredited Speaker makes you

uniquely suited to support others on this journey. Many Accredited Speakers consider mentoring and coaching as a way to give back, by supporting upcoming Accredited Speakers.

As outlined in Policy 6.1: Accredited Speaker Program, Accredited Speakers must not charge fees for assisting Toastmasters members in pursuing the Accredited Speaker designation. However, if an Accredited Speaker offers other professional services as part of their business, and a Toastmasters member pursuing the Accredited Speaker designation wishes to utilize that service, the Accredited Speaker may charge the corresponding fee for the service.

## Being invited to serve on the Accredited Speaker Program Council

As an Accredited Speaker, you may be invited to serve on the Accredited Speaker Program Council for either Level 1 or Level 2 of the program.

While Accredited Speakers are not required to serve on the council, it is a great opportunity to support the program and help new Accredited Speakers reach the designation by serving as a judge.

Should you accept an invitation to serve on the Accredited Speaker Program Council, you are expected to meet all requested deadlines, communicate openly with the council chairs and Toastmasters International World Headquarters, and adhere to all expectations outlined in the Accredited Speaker Program Council Overview section of this rulebook.



# Program Structure

## Accredited Speaker Program Council Overview

The Accredited Speaker Program Council is a group of Toastmasters members with a demonstrated proficiency in professional-level speaking. The purpose of the council is to work in conjunction with World Headquarters to provide a seamless onboarding experience for new Accredited Speakers, support existing Accredited Speakers, serve as judges for Level 1 and Level 2 of the program, and suggest potential program improvements to World Headquarters.

Members of the Accredited Speaker Program Council serve a one-year term. Council members may be appointed for subsequent terms. Council chairs serve 26-month, staggered terms. One new chair will be appointed each year. The council chair term starts on September 1 and continues through October 31 of the second program year.

### The Accredited Speaker Program Council consists of:

- ▶ Two council chairs
- ▶ A minimum of 10 council members
  - Five council members for every eight (8) Level 1 applicants in a given year
  - An additional five council members for each Accredited Speaker Program segment that will be held at the Toastmasters International Convention in a given year

### Responsibilities of a council chair

- ▶ Select and invite council members, using the list provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Conduct a virtual judge's briefing for Level 1 council members.
- ▶ Conduct a live judge's briefing for Level 2 council members.
- ▶ Ensure that all council members sign the Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics before serving as a judge for either level of the program

- ▶ Review results from Level 1 of the Accredited Speaker Program to ensure accuracy, and share results with candidates.
- ▶ Be willing and available to serve as the chief judge for Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program at the Toastmasters International Convention.
  - Council chairs must be physically present for the Accredited Speaker Program at the International Convention; no travel allowances will be provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Conduct virtual orientation(s) for new Accredited Speakers using materials approved by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Be available to answer questions from existing Accredited Speakers.
- ▶ Direct Accredited Speakers to World Headquarters for additional support and questions that council chairs are unable to address.
- ▶ Provide feedback on their experience as a council chair to World Headquarters.
- ▶ Report any known violations of conduct regarding an Accredited Speaker to World Headquarters.

### Requirements to be a council chair

- ▶ Be a current Accredited Speaker and a member of a club in good standing.
- ▶ Be appointed by the Toastmasters International First Vice President, subject to ratification by the Executive Committee.
  - Current Accredited Speakers may nominate individuals who meet all requirements to serve as council chair by emailing [accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org](mailto:accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org).
- ▶ Possess a strong understanding of the Accredited Speaker eligibility requirements, judging criteria, and application process.

- ▶ Be willing and available to perform all council chair responsibilities.
- ▶ Agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the Toastmasters Code of Conduct and maintain the confidentiality of the council's work.

### Responsibilities of a council member

- ▶ Serve as a judge for either Level 1 or Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program.
  - When council members are appointed, they will be notified of which level they are asked to judge; council members who agree to judge Level 2 must be physically present for the Accredited Speaker Program at the International Convention. No travel allowances will be provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Assist council chairs with orientation and support for new Accredited Speakers, upon request.
- ▶ Provide feedback on their experience to World Headquarters.
- ▶ Report any known violations of conduct regarding an Accredited Speaker to World Headquarters

### Requirements to be a council member

- ▶ Be a member of a club in good standing who also meets at least one of the following criteria (preference will be given in the order listed here):
  1. Accredited Speaker
  2. World Champion of Public Speaking
  3. Past International President
  4. Past International Director
  5. Served as an educational or keynote speaker at the Toastmasters International Convention
- ▶ Be appointed by the council chairs with approval of the First Vice President, subject to ratification by the Executive Committee.
- ▶ Be willing and available to perform all council member responsibilities.
- ▶ Disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including mentoring and coaching relationships with candidates, before serving as a judge.
- ▶ Agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the Toastmasters **Code of Conduct**, uphold the Ethics and Conduct standards as outlined for Accredited Speakers in Policy 3.0: Ethics and Conduct, 1.J., and maintain the confidentiality of the council's work.



# Accredited Speaker Program Council Timeline

Because the Accredited Speaker Program Council is designed to support the Accredited Speaker Program at both Levels 1 and 2, there is a specific annual timeline for council activities, beginning in January of each year.

## January

- ▶ World Headquarters provides council chairs with a list of potential Level 1 council members, as approved by the First Vice President (no later than the third week).

## February

- ▶ World Headquarters notifies council chairs of the number of individuals whose applications were submitted by the deadline (first full week of the month).
- ▶ World Headquarters reviews Accredited Speaker Program applications (ongoing throughout the month).
- ▶ Council chairs select the required number of council members from the list approved by the First Vice President (second full week of the month).
- ▶ Number of council members is based on the number of Level 1 applicants.
- ▶ Invitations are provided to council members.
- ▶ Confirmed council members receive invitation to orientation.
- ▶ Council chairs conduct orientation for council members with support from World Headquarters (once all judges are confirmed; ideally last week of the month).
- ▶ The orientation includes an overview of the role and a thorough judge's briefing.

## March

- ▶ Council chairs conduct orientation for council members with support from World Headquarters (if all judges not confirmed in February; no later than first week of month).
- ▶ The orientation includes an overview of the role and a thorough judge's briefing.
- ▶ World Headquarters provides council chairs with the final number of eligible Level 1 applicants (first full week of the month).
- ▶ Council members receive access to review and judge Level 1 applications (no later than the third full week of the month).
- ▶ Council members judge Level 1 applications in accordance with the Accredited Speaker Program **Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 1** (judges have four weeks from the date they receive access to applications).

## April

- ▶ Council members submit results from Level 1 to World Headquarters and council chairs (no later than the last week of the month).

## May

- ▶ Council chairs review Level 1 judging results and submit the list of candidates who passed to World Headquarters (no later than first week of the month).
- ▶ World Headquarters verifies results provided by council chairs and reviews feedback from council members (no later than second week of the month).
- ▶ World Headquarters compiles feedback from council members for candidates and provides to council chairs.
- ▶ Council chairs work with World Headquarters to announce results and share feedback with candidates.

## June

- ▶ World Headquarters provides council chairs with a list of potential Level 2 council members, as approved by the First Vice President.
- ▶ World Headquarters sends council chairs a final list and number of candidates who have confirmed their Level 2 participation so that council chairs can determine the number of Level 2 council members needed.
- ▶ Council chairs select the required number of Level 2 council members from the approved list.

## July

- ▶ No later than the first week in July, council chairs send invitations to Level 2 council members, using messaging provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Throughout July, council chairs work to secure the required number of council members for Level 2.
- ▶ Council chairs share updates with World Headquarters regarding council members and ensure council members have all information needed for judging Level 2.

## August

- ▶ The new council chair is appointed by the First Vice President no later than August for the term beginning September of that year.
- ▶ Council chairs and council members attend the Toastmasters International Convention.
- ▶ Ahead of the Accredited Speaker Program, council chairs conduct a live judge's briefing for council members, using resources provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Council chairs and council members attend Level 2 of the Accredited Speaker Program at Convention.
- ▶ Council members serve as judges for the Accredited Speaker Program, using the Accredited Speaker Program **Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 2** to judge speeches.
- ▶ Council chairs serve as chief judges for the Accredited Speaker Program, which includes reviewing the scores provided by each judge, confirming the results for each contestant, and meeting with contestants to let them know if they received the designation.

## September

- ▶ The newly appointed council chair begins their term on September 1.
- ▶ Council chairs conduct a virtual Accredited Speaker orientation, using materials provided by World Headquarters.
- ▶ Council members from Level 1 or Level 2 assist with the orientation if requested to do so by council chairs.
- ▶ Council chairs and council members provide feedback on their experience to World Headquarters, via a survey.

## October and November

- ▶ The outgoing council chair concludes their term on October 31.
- ▶ Council chairs support new and existing Accredited Speakers by answering questions and referring them to World Headquarters when necessary.

## December

- ▶ Council chairs submit any notes or details that would be useful for incoming council chairs to World Headquarters.

# Accredited Speaker Program Resources

**Accredited Speaker Program Application**

**Accredited Speaker Program Recommendation Form**

**Accredited Speaker Program Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 1**

**Accredited Speaker Program Judge's Guide and Ballot: Level 2**



[toastmasters.org](https://toastmasters.org)