

A Plain-Language Guide to the APDA Bylaws

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Article I – Offices

Section 1.01 – Location

The physical location of APDA, the corporation, is 401 Lerner Hall at Columbia University. APDA's mailing address is One Whig Hall, Princeton University, Princeton NJ 08544. APDA can maintain additional offices if the Board wants to.

Article II – Members

Section 2.01 – Club Eligibility

Any speech or debate club/society/student org in the United States or Canada is eligible to be an APDA member. APDA members must pay dues and be approved by the Board. There can only be one APDA-sponsored debate org per school.

Section 2.02 – Transferability, Term, and Termination of Membership

Membership is not transferable. Member clubs can withdraw from APDA membership via written notice to the VP Ops; the withdrawal is effective as soon as the VP Ops receives it, or whenever the withdrawing member specifies. Member clubs can be removed or suspended by a two-thirds vote of the body, and can be reinstated by a majority vote of the body.

Section 2.03 – Dues

- A. Annual dues – The body sets the amount of annual dues.
- B. Payment of dues – Dues are due by elections. Dues for new members are not prorated. Members can request a dues waiver from the VP Finance; the trustees can overrule the VP Finance's decision on whether or not to grant a dues waiver.
- C. Default – Member schools with unpaid dues after elections cannot vote at APDA meetings, including elections, and cannot compete at Nats. If a member school does not pay dues by November 1, the Board can remove it from APDA; the member school will be reinstated once dues are paid.

Section 2.04 – Annual Meeting and Elections

APDA holds an Annual Meeting each year to elect a new trustee (this is also a regular APDA meeting). APDA also holds a meeting prior to the Annual Meeting to elect the APDA Board (this is also a regular APDA meeting). The body decides the date for the Annual Meeting and Elections. The term of office for Board Members and Trustees starts after the Trustee election at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2.05 – Special Meetings

The Board or the President can call an APDA meeting. Ten percent of the voting membership of APDA can also call for an APDA meeting by making a written request to the VP Ops or by making a forum post, specifying the date of the proposed meeting at least two weeks in advance. The VP Ops then notifies the body of the APDA meeting. If the VP Ops doesn't notify the body within ten business days of receiving the request, one of the requesting schools can instead. APDA is required to hold at least three APDA meetings in the fall semester and two APDA meetings in the spring semester. An APDA meeting notice should contain the purpose of the meeting (the agenda) and who is calling for the meeting.

Annotation 2.05

As of Fall 2021, APDA meetings are most often scheduled in advance at the same time as the tournament schedule is voted on. This usually happens at an APDA meeting during the spring semester. APDA meetings typically take place at unopposed tournaments. Historically, Board elections have taken place at the Princeton tournament, and Trustee elections have taken place at Nats.

Section 2.06 – Record Date and Other Actions

The Board can set a date between ten and thirty days before an APDA meeting that counts as the date on which voting eligibility for that APDA meeting (aka, dues payment) is determined.

Section 2.07 – Notice of Meetings

The VP Ops must notify APDA members of the date, time, and place of all APDA meetings, including the purpose of the meeting for non-elections meetings. The notice goes out by mail, email, or on the forum, between ten and fifty days before the meeting.

Annotation 2.07

When an APDA meeting is coming up, the VP Ops will normally post a call for agenda items on the forum, and will post the agenda prior to the meeting.

Section 2.08 – Waivers of Notice

Member schools can opt out of receiving notice by submitting a waiver. A member school that attends a meeting can't claim that it did not know about the meeting.

Section 2.09 – Meeting Attendance

The VP Ops must provide a list of all members eligible to vote as of the record date if a school indicates at least ten days before an APDA meeting that it intends to ask for such a list. If there is a dispute over whether a member school is eligible to vote, the person presiding over the meeting should ask for that list.

Section 2.10 – Quorum

One third of APDA's voting members constitutes a quorum. A quorum is necessary to start an APDA meeting. If a quorum is not present at the start of a meeting, the members who are there can postpone the meeting.

Section 2.11 – Presiding Officer and Secretary

If no Board members are going to be present at an APDA meeting, the Board can appoint someone to be the presiding officer. If no Board members are present and they have not designated a presiding officer, the voting members present can appoint a presiding officer. The VP Ops is the secretary of any APDA meeting; if they aren't present, or are presiding, the presiding officer appoints a secretary.

Section 2.12 – Proxies

If a voting member isn't present at an APDA meeting, they can authorize someone who will be there to act on their behalf; this person is their "proxy." The voting member must notify the President or presiding officer in writing that it is proxying and who it is proxying to. If they don't, the proxy must show evidence that they are an authorized proxy to the presiding officer upon request.

There are two types of proxies. In the first type, the voting member gives the proxy explicit instructions on how to vote. In the second type, the voting member gives the proxy authority to act however they see fit. Proxy authorizations must be given by someone with the authority to sign on behalf of the voting member (usually a member of the club's e-board). Proxies can be revoked at any time prior to a vote. Only proxies that comply with this section are allowed.

Only a Board member can be a proxy for elections, and they can only be the first type of proxy (given specific instructions on how to vote). In that scenario, the member who wants to proxy must notify the Trustees. The Trustees then pass along the proxy instructions to the President, VP Ops, and VP Finance. The Trustees must keep voting instructions confidential.

Section 2.13 – Inspectors of Meetings

The Board can appoint any number of inspectors for an APDA meeting. If no inspectors are appointed, the presiding officer of the meeting is entitled to appoint one. If a voting member at an APDA meeting requests an inspector, the presiding officer is required to appoint one. An inspector is not required unless a voting member specifically requests one. If an inspector doesn't show up or doesn't do their job, the Board can appoint someone new in advance, or the presiding officer can appoint someone new during the meeting. An inspector must take and sign an oath swearing that they will be a good and impartial inspector.

Inspectors are responsible for verifying the number of voting members at the meeting, whether a quorum exists, and the validity of proxies; counting votes; resolving disputes about voting eligibility; and doing anything else that facilitates a fair vote. On request, the inspector must make a written report about any dispute that they resolved.

Section 2.14 – Voting

Board members are elected by a simple majority of the votes cast at a meeting.

If there are more than two candidates for a single position, or if there are more candidates for an at-large position than there are seats (e.g., four candidates for three MAL seats), the winners are decided via [ranked-choice voting](#).

Ties are broken by a vote of the Board members present at the meeting, excluding any Board members who are candidates for the position in question. If that vote is tied, the highest-ranking member of the Board present breaks the tie. Blank votes and abstentions do not count as votes. If no one can be elected through these procedures, the Board must schedule a new election.

All election votes are conducted by secret ballot, and the ballots must be pre-distributed and identical so as to be anonymous.

Only a member's authorized voting representative can cast a ballot. The Board records the submission of each ballot. If more votes are cast than members present, the vote is thrown out and re-started.

Any other matters voted on at an APDA meeting, except bylaws changes, pass by a simple majority vote of the votes cast. Blank votes and abstentions do not count. Votes are open (public) unless a voting member requests a secret ballot, in which case the vote *must* be secret. Each APDA member club gets one vote. Ties are broken by a vote of the Board members present at the meeting; if that vote is also tied, the tie is broken by the highest-ranking Board member present.

Section 2.15 – Conduct of Meetings

Meetings must loosely follow Robert’s Rules of Order. The presiding officer decides any disputes over parliamentary procedure, unless the Board specifically appoints a parliamentarian for that purpose. The presiding officer can impose time limits on debate and on individual statements; the members can override those limits by a majority vote, and that vote must happen immediately upon a motion to vote and cannot be debated.

Section 2.16 – Observers

Meetings are ordinarily open to any and all observers, but the members can choose to close the meeting to non-members by majority vote. No member can be excluded from a meeting or prevented from speaking at a meeting, except in accordance with the time limits provided for in the previous section.

Section 2.17 – Action by Members Without a Meeting

APDA members can vote on matters outside of an APDA meeting by a written or electronic two-thirds vote of all eligible voting members.

Section 2.18 – Voting Eligibility

- A. Generally – APDA members are eligible to vote if they have sent at least two debaters to at least three APDA-sanctioned tournaments during the current academic year. During the first two APDA meetings of the season, voting eligibility is determined by tournament attendance in the previous academic year.

** As a result of COVID-19, all members in good standing as of April 1, 2020, are considered eligible to vote in the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 seasons. Any club that became an APDA member after April 1, 2020, but before September 1, 2022, is also eligible to vote.

- B. Elections – APDA members must tell the Board who their authorized voting representative will be. If a club can’t decide, they can’t vote until they sort it out, or until someone provides proof of seniority to the presiding officer.

Article III – Board

Section 3.01 – Authority and Qualification

The Board manages APDA’s operations. Board members and Trustees must be over eighteen.

Section 3.02 – Number of Board Members and Trustees

There are eight (six Board members and two Trustees). The number can be changed by an amendment of the bylaws, but it can never be less than six or more than eight, and changing the number does not shorten the term of any incumbent Board member.

Section 3.03 – Election and Term

Election to the Board is by a vote of the members.

- A. Officers – The President, VP Ops, VP Finance, and three Members-At-Large (MALs) are members of the Board.
- B. Trustees – There are two APDA Trustees, who are elected for offset two-year terms (i.e., a new trustee is elected each year). A trustee elected to fill a vacancy prior to the completion of a

term is only elected for the length of that term. No trustee can be elected more than once unless the first election was to fill a vacancy left by a trustee prior to completing their term.

- C. Officers' and Trustees' terms end when they die, resign, are removed from office, or at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.
- D. Trustees cannot compete for an APDA member school, participate in any APDA-sanctioned tournament, or coach any member school. If a trustee violates these rules, they can be removed by a unanimous vote of the Board and the other trustee. A trustee removed in this manner can appeal their removal to the membership at any APDA meeting.

Annotation 3.03

The legal language in the bylaws refers to the Officers and Trustees together as the "Board of Trustees." Class A and Class B Trustees are the people commonly referred to as Trustees, usually APDA alumni. The Officers, commonly referred to as the Board, are *ex officio* trustees, meaning they are trustees of APDA by virtue of their positions as Officers. You will almost never hear any of this language used in real life—we just say "the Board" to refer to the elected Officers, who are current APDA debaters, and "the Trustees" to refer to the Class A and B Trustees, who are APDA alumni.

Section 3.04 – Newly Created Trusteeships and Vacancies

If APDA increases the number of Board members or if an Officer or Trustee leaves before their term is complete, the body can elect a new one to serve in that position until the Annual Meeting.

Section 3.05 – Resignation

Any Board member or Trustee can resign at any time through written notice to the VP Ops or, if necessary, another Board member.

Section 3.06 – Removal

Any Board member or Trustee can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the members.

Section 3.07 – Board Meetings

The Board should meet sometimes. The President can call a meeting at any time. If half or more of the Board is in the same place at the same time, they can convene a Board meeting.

Section 3.08 – Online Stuff, Because APDA Was Incorporated In 2000

The Board can take action by written consent or electronic approval (e.g., they can make decisions over group chat).

Group phone and video calls are acceptable formats for Board and Committee meetings.

Section 3.09 – Committees

The Board, by a majority vote, can create an Executive Committee and other committees consisting of at least three trustees. These types of committees can act on behalf of APDA.

The Board can create special committees whose members are appointed by the President with the support of the majority of the Board. These types of committees only have the powers specifically given to them by the Board.

The Board must appoint members to at least three standing committees before September 1 each year. These members are appointed by the President with the support of the majority of the Board.

These committees include the Novice Mentor Committee, Equal Opportunity Facilitator Committee, and the Expansion Committee. These types of committees only have the powers specifically given to them by the Board.

Section 3.10 – Compensation

Board members and Trustees may not be paid for their services.

Section 3.11 – Annual Report

The Board must present a report its financials to the body at an APDA meeting each fiscal year. The report must be verified by the President and VP Finance, a majority of the Board, or an accountant.

Section 3.12 – Real Property

APDA is not a real estate company.

Article IV – Officers, Agents, and Employees

Section 4.01 – General

Any APDA debater with no more than three years of eligibility left and who will be enrolled at an APDA member school the following year can run for Board (i.e., no incoming novices, and no outgoing seniors). Candidates must declare their candidacy to the Board at least thirty days before Elections.

Section 4.02 – Term, Vacancies, and Removal

Officers are elected by the members. Terms end at the Annual Meeting as long as there is a successor, unless a Board member is removed prior to the end of their term. One person cannot hold more than one position.

Section 4.03 – Duties

E. President

- a. Serve as CEO of APDA
- b. Preside over Board meetings and break ties
- c. Preside over APDA meetings
- d. Supervise and control all affairs of APDA in accordance with Board policies
- e. Appoint someone to maintain APDAWeb
- f. Represent the United States on the WUDC Council or appoint a replacement, who must be affiliated with an APDA member school
- g. Manage APDA's correspondence with other debate organizations

F. VP Ops

- a. Perform the duties of the President if they are absent, or unable or unwilling to act.
- b. Keep track of SOTY, TOTY, and COTY standings
- c. Coordinate trophy purchases for SOTY, TOTY, and COTY
- d. Take notes at Board meetings
- e. Distribute notices, including notices of APDA meetings
- f. Perform all duties customary to the office of Secretary
- g. Ensure that the Chris Porcaro Memorial Award and Jeff Williams Award are distributed each year, and oversee the choice of awardee
- h. Serve on the Distinguished Service Award Committee and oversee the appointment of the other committee members
- i. Other duties, if necessary and directed by the Board or the President

G. VP Finance

- a. Perform the duties of the President if they and the VP Ops are absent, or unable or unwilling to act
- b. Responsible for all of APDA's funds
- c. Keep a complete and accurate accounting of APDA's finances
- d. Keep track of dues payments and move to admit new members who have paid dues
- e. Render a statement of accounts whenever required by the Board
- f. Other duties, if necessary and directed by the Board or the President

H. Members-at-Large

- a. Assist with organizing Nats
- b. Assist with organizing NorthAms when APDA hosts it
- c. Assist with organizing novice tournaments
- d. Oversee committees
- e. Collect recordings of APDA rounds and preserve other materials relevant to APDA's history
- f. Prepare and distribute APDA's newsletter
- g. Other duties, if necessary and directed by the Board or the President.

All Board members must, at least once during their term, ProAm with a novice from a different team than their own, who is not a cisgender man and/or is not white, and is not from a top 5 COTY school. If a Board member does not do so, they cannot receive -OTY awards or be elected to Board the next year.

Section 4.04 – Agents and Employees

The Board can appoint and remove agents and employees to perform duties that they prescribe.

Section 4.05 – Compensation

Board members may not be compensated for their services, but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while performing their duties in amounts approved by a majority vote of the Board.

The Board determines how much to pay any APDA employees, but it can delegate that determination to any officer or employee.

Article V – Miscellaneous

Section 5.01 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year begins on June 1 and ends on May 31.

Section 5.02 – Corporate Seal

The APDA seal is a circle and contains the name of APDA, the words "Corporate Seal" and "New York," and the year 1981.

Section 5.03 – Checks, Notes, and Contracts

The Board can determine who has authority to sign checks or other monetary obligations, to enter into contracts, and to execute other documents or instruments on behalf of APDA.

Section 5.04 – Books and Records

APDA must maintain a complete financial accounting, minutes of all proceedings, and a current list of the members, trustees, and officers.

Section 5.05 – Amendments to the Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws

[This](#) is how APDA can amend the Certificate of Incorporation.

APDA can amend, repeal, and adopt bylaws by a two-thirds vote of the present voting members at any APDA meeting. Changes affecting elections must be reflected in the announcement of the elections meeting that year.

Section 5.06 – Indemnification and Insurance

APDA can protect Board members and trustees from legal liability for their actions on behalf of APDA. APDA can pay a Board member or trustee’s legal fees if they are involved in legal action related to their actions on behalf of APDA. APDA can buy insurance to do so. APDA cannot reimburse or waive taxes. If APDA is ever deemed to be a “private foundation,” then it may not make any payments that would be considered “self-dealing” or a taxable expenditure. If this section is ever found to be invalid, it does not invalidate the rest of the bylaws.

Section 5.07 – Loans

APDA is not a bank.

Section 5.08 – Tournaments

- A. Sanctioning – To be considered “APDA-sanctioned,” tournaments must be approved by a majority vote of the body. Tournaments are scheduled in advance as either online, hybrid, or in-person tournaments. A vote of the body approving the schedule sanctions all of the tournaments on the schedule. Sanctioned tournaments must make their competitors aware of their tab procedures, judging procedures, and format. Tournaments must pledge to provide safe accommodations if they are offering them. Only APDA-sanctioned tournaments can award points for TOTY, SOTY, and COTY.
- B. Sanctioning criteria –
 - a. Best Practices – APDA maintains a “Best Practices” document with guidelines for how tournaments should be run. The Best Practices can be amended by a two-thirds vote at any APDA meeting. Tournaments are not **required** to adhere to the Best Practices; however, they must make certain disclosures about their adherence to the Best Practices in order to remain sanctioned. See “Disclosures.”
 - b. Disclosures – Schools that want to host a sanctioned tournament must answer the following questions about their most recent sanctioned tournament **on the forum** at least two weeks before the APDA meeting at which the tournament will be voted on:
 - i. Did the tournament violate any Best Practices?
 - ii. If so, why, and what steps are being taken to prevent future violations?And must provide the following information **to the Board** at least two weeks before the APDA meeting at which the tournament will be voted on:
 - iii. Number of competing teams
 - iv. Number of novice debatersThe Board may grant extensions for these disclosures on a case-by-case basis. Each sanctioned tournament must provide the Board a list of every competitor who attended and every school that sent at least one team.
 - c. Directions –
 - i. Tournament invites must clearly indicate whether they plan to impose late fees or other penalties for late payment of reg.

- ii. Tournaments cannot tell judges that anything other than a 25 constitutes average speaks; teams that violate this rule will be fined the average cost of registration at their tournament.
 - iii. Tournaments that allow debaters who are not eligible to compete at Nats (i.e., debaters without eligibility or unaffiliated debaters) must announce this policy at least one week before their tournament; teams that violate this rule will be fined the average cost of registration at their tournament.
 - iv. If the Board appoints a Tab Observer, the tournament must let the TO monitor the tab room and give the TO access to all tab information. Tab Observers can only be appointed by a unanimous vote of the Board.
 - v. An unopposed tournament (one that is the only APDA-sanctioned tournament on a given weekend) must pay APDA a fee of \$7 for each team competing above sixty teams. This fee must be paid less than three months after the tournament, and before Nats. Teams that don't pay have their voting rights suspended until they do. The unopposed fee does not apply to Nats or Northams.
 - vi. Tournaments must pay a size tax to the APDA board. The tax is calculated as follows: $(N-3r-55)*X$, where N is the number of teams, R is the complete dollar amount of reg breaks given, and X is the cost of registration minus 115. Discrepancies about this fee are decided by a majority vote of the body.
 - vii. Tournaments that will require prepayment must say so at scheduling or in their bid.
- d. Meals –
- i. Friday-Saturday tournaments must provide dinner on Friday and breakfast and lunch on Saturday at no cost. If they don't provide lunch and/or dinner, they will be fined \$10 per team per meal not provided. If they don't provide breakfast, they will be fined \$5 per team. These fines are earmarked for financial assistance to individuals who cannot afford meals at tournaments that don't provide them and are distributed through the EOF committee.
 - ii. Tournaments can appeal to the Board for an exemption from the fee at least one week before their tournament. If the Board approves an exemption, they can be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the body. If the Board denies an exemption, they can be overruled by a majority vote of the body.
 - iii. Tournaments must ask teams for any dietary restrictions their competitors, observers, and judges have, via their registration forms. Teams can also communicate dietary restrictions to tournament hosts through other means at least 24 hours before the tournament starts.
 - iv. If a tournament does not accommodate a dietary restriction that was timely disclosed, it must provide a stipend to affected individuals. Affected individuals are not responsible for reaching out to the host school; the host school must proactively distribute the stipend prior to meals. Teams that don't will be fined the average cost of reg at their tournament. The fine is earmarked for financial assistance to individuals who cannot afford meals at tournaments that don't provide them.
- e. Other tournaments
- i. Novice tournament – held in the fall semester; host is determined by a majority vote of the members.
 - ii. ProAm tournaments – held in the fall semester (and optionally in the spring semester); host is determined by a majority vote of the members.

- f. Online tournaments
 - i. There can only be one sanctioned online tournament per weekend.
 - ii. Sanctioned online tournaments must have at least eight teams compete in more than half of the in-rounds.
 - iii. Online tournaments must be held on Discord or Zoom.
 - iv. Online tournaments cannot charge more than \$30 in reg.
 - v. Online tournaments do not need to require meals or meal stipends.

Annotation 5.08C

Unlike Best Practices, the directions in Section 5.08C are mandatory for sanctioned tournaments. In some cases, the penalty is laid out in the bylaws (*see, e.g.*, the “unopposed tax”). In other cases, there is no specific penalty. A possible penalty that has been discussed is “desanctioning” a tournament, i.e. removing its ability to count for -OTY points. As far as I know, a tournament has never actually been desanctioned and there is no formal mechanism for doing so, but the idea is discussed frequently enough that it merits inclusion.

Section 5.09 – Nats

- A. The host and location of Nats is determined by a majority vote of the members. APDA establishes the tabulation and judging procedures and appoints a Tab Observer. The Trustees choose the tab staff based on an application process, and a majority vote of the body confirms the tab staff. Tab staff are not compensated, and if they are, they are fired from tab.
- B. Eligibility and Affiliation –
 - a. Only debaters sponsored by an APDA member can compete.
 - b. In order to be sponsored by an APDA member, a debater must be **both** seeking a degree at and taking the majority of their classes at that member school. Only classes that meet at least once per week for at least 8 weeks between September 1 to December 31 or January 1 to June 1 count as classes taken for the purposes of affiliation. The board can grant exemptions to these date requirements by a unanimous vote.
 - c. Eligibility –
 - i. “Eligibility” refers to the number of remaining semesters a debater is allowed to compete.
 - ii. Eligibility is “burned,” or used, in one of two ways:
 - 1. A semester of eligibility is used when a debater competes at two or more APDA tournaments in that semester.
 - 2. Two semesters of eligibility are used when a debater competes at Nats (if they haven’t already used the previous two semesters).
 - iii. Debaters get eight semesters of eligibility.
 - iv. Debaters lose all eligibility six years after they use their first semester.
 - v. Debaters may not compete at Nats more than four times.
 - vi. Debaters can compete at Nats if they ran out of eligibility in the same academic year, subject to the regular affiliation requirements.
 - vii. Debaters who graduate before the end of the academic year can compete at Nats with the school they graduated from, unless they’re otherwise ineligible.
 - d. No hybrids allowed.

e. Exemptions –

- i. The Board can grant exemptions to allow debaters to compete for schools they don't attend by a secret two-thirds vote.
 1. Usually, this happens when a debater requests to compete for a different school while still attending a member school. This is called re-affiliation. As of July 22, 2022, debaters who are not enrolled at an APDA member school are not eligible to be sponsored by any APDA member school.
- ii. Debaters who are temporarily and exclusively taking classes at an institution as part of a study-abroad program remain affiliated with their primary institution.
- iii. The Board can grant exemptions to allow debaters to compete for schools at which they are only temporarily taking classes.
- iv. Denied exemption requests can be appealed to the body, which can overturn the denial by a two-thirds secret vote.
- v. The President must notify the body of any approved exemption within one week of approval.
- vi. Debaters may continue debating for the school at which they were most recently enrolled while on a leave of absence. They must notify the Board and submit proof of leave status, and can remain affiliated with their school for one year.

Annotation 5.09.B

The rules for Nats eligibility and affiliation are usually used at regular-season tournaments as well. Individual schools can use different rules to determine eligibility to compete at their tournaments—some schools, for example, allow alumni (debaters who have used all of their eligibility or who are more than six years past their first semester) or unaffiliated debaters (debaters with eligibility who are not attending a member school or who are not on their school's team) to compete. While tournaments have a wide latitude to *increase* the scope of eligibility, there are narrow restrictions for when Nats-qualifying tournaments can *exclude* competitors. See the section below on the criteria for Nats-qualifying tournaments.

C. Qualification –

- a. An individual can qualify for Nats in the following ways:
 - i. Gaining at least as many “qual points” as the 140th-highest number of qual points earned in the previous season. Qual points are the equivalent number of TOTY points a team would earn for its performance at a qualifying tournament*, regardless of whether the team was a hybrid.
 - ii. Breaking to quarters at NorthAms
 - iii. Being one of the two highest-ranking teams from the United States at NorthAms
 - iv. Breaking in the open bracket at Worlds
 - v. Breaking to ESL or EFL finals at Worlds
 - vi. Breaking to finals at NAUDC
 - vii. Being one of the two highest-ranking teams from the United States at NAUDC
 - viii. Breaking to semis at the Yale IV
 - ix. Winning an APDA Tournament hosted by a school that has hosted a tournament in the last two years, has not hosted a tournament with more than 32 teams in the last year, and has fewer than five other active APDA members within 175 driving miles.

Annotation 5.09.C.a

A qualification for Nats obtained by meeting the criteria in bullets ii–ix is usually called an “auto-qual.” Tournaments that meet the criteria in bullet ix, and the qualifications earned at them, are usually called an “expansion auto-qual.”

*A qualifying tournament meets the following criteria:

- (1) APDA-sanctioned parliamentary debate tournament
- (2) Takes place in the US or Canada
- (3) Permits all individuals to compete, except those excluded for the following reasons:
 - Not affiliated with an APDA member school
 - Debt to the host school
 - Recommended for exclusion by the Board
 - Excluded by the host school’s administration
 - Excluded by the tournament’s Equity Officer for violations at the tournament

*Note: host tournaments are not **required** to exclude these individuals—this provision just means that tournaments that do exclude them can still be sanctioned.*

- (4) Consists of at least four in-rounds and at least two out-rounds
- (5) Is attended by at least eight teams
- (6) Is attended by at least four member schools, not including the host school

Annotation – Qualifying Tournament Criteria

A tournament can be APDA-sanctioned without being a “qualifying tournament” whose results count toward Nats qualification and -OTY points. Examples include the annual novice tournament, which is APDA-sanctioned but does not allow varsity debaters to compete, and therefore cannot be considered a “qualifying tournament.”

- b. Individuals earn qual points separately while they are affiliated with different institutions. In order to count as a qualified debater and be sponsored to attend Nats by a certain school, an individual needs to have earned enough qual points **while affiliated with that school**. A school can still sponsor an individual who has not qualified, but they count against the school’s free seed allocation, even if the individual qualified while affiliated with a different school.
- c. Member schools with no qualified individuals can consider one individual from their school as qualified as long as they have enough qual points to have qualified five seasons before. If more than one individual from a school qualifies under this standard, the debater with more qual points is qualified. If they are tied, the Trustees determine who is qualified by random chance.
- d. If a qualified debater chooses not to compete at Nats, an unqualified debater from their school can take their place. Schools can do this kind of “qual transfer” once with no restrictions. Further qual transfers must be approved by an application to the Board and a majority vote of the Board. These qual transfers are approved on the basis of whether the debater dropping out of Nats is doing so because it would “put them at significant personal, emotional, or academic risk.” Qual transfer applications must be made between one day and one month prior to the start of Nats.
- e. Schools can sponsor unqualified debaters to compete at Nats. Teams with four or fewer qualified debaters can sponsor up to three unqualified debaters. Schools with five or more qualified debaters can sponsor up to two unqualified debaters. Unqualified debaters competing via qual transfer do not count against this limit.

Annotation 5.09.C.d

Unqualified debaters sponsored to compete at Nats are sometimes called a Nats “free seed,” especially a team of two unqualified debaters, because seeding at Nats is determined by the number of qualified debaters on a team. The below table shows the number of unqualified debaters that a school can sponsor to Nats based on the number of qualified debaters it has. There are no requirements that qualified debaters must compete together, so schools can pair their debaters up for Nats however they choose.

# of qualled debaters	# of unqualified debaters who may compete	# of teams sent to Nats
1	3	2
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	2	3
5	1	3
6	2	4
7	1	4
8	2	5
9	1	5

A helpful way to understand the Nats free seed:

- *Teams with ≤ 4 qualled debaters:* can fill out any incomplete teams if there are an odd number of debaters qualled, and send one additional team.
- *Teams with > 4 qualled debaters:* can fill out any incomplete team if there are an odd number of debaters qualled, but cannot send an additional team on top of that; if there are an even number of debaters qualled, they can send one additional team.

*This is only a conceptual exercise—there is no requirement that unqualified debaters debate together or with the school’s most-recently-qualified debater.

f. 2023 Nats

- An individual qualifies for Nats by earning a total of ten individual TOTY points.
- An individual can also “auto-qual” for 2022 Nats the same as in regular seasons, except for the “expansion auto-qual.”

D. Under-represented Group Tournaments

- A gender minority tournament is a tournament that doesn’t allow cisgender men to compete.
- A people of color tournament is a tournament that doesn’t allow white debaters to compete.
- Eligibility to compete is based on competitors’ self-identification.
- An under-represented group tournament that meets the “qualifying tournament” criteria (except the one about letting all individuals compete) counts toward COTY, but only if the host publicly discloses their intent to host an under-represented group tournament at least one week before the body votes on sanctioning the tournament.

E. Expelled Competitors

- a. The President and the Chair of the EOF Committee keep a list of debaters who have been banned or expelled from member clubs. This information is provided by the clubs, who can disclose the name of the banned debater, but not the reasons for their ban.
- b. Tournament hosts can request this list. Tournaments can, but are not required to, exclude individuals on the list from competing.
- c. Tournaments can, but are not required to, exclude individuals who do not belong to a member club from competing.

Section 5.10 – SOTY, TOTY, and COTY

Only individuals and teams who are eligible to compete at Nats are eligible for -OTYs.

A. Speaker of the Year (SOTY)

- a. SOTY is awarded to the individual debater who accumulates the largest number of SOTY points over their six highest-scoring tournaments. [APDA Calc](#) provides the number of SOTY points earned for a speaker award based on the number of teams at a tournament.

B. Team of the Year (TOTY)

- a. TOTY is awarded to a team composed of two debaters from the same school that accumulates the most TOTY points over its five highest-scoring tournaments. [APDA Calc](#) provides the number of TOTY points earned for a tournament finish based on the number of teams at a tournament.

C. Club of the Year (COTY)

- a. COTY is awarded to the member club whose debaters accumulate the most qual points over the entire season, with the following caveats:
 - i. Members earn an additional six COTY points for each debater who qualifies for Nats
 - ii. Individuals can contribute a maximum of 60 COTY points for their school, not including the six-point “qual bonus”

D. Exceptions

- a. BP tournaments, Northams, and Nats do not count toward -OTYs.

E. Number of participants

- a. The number of teams at a tournament, for the purposes of -OTY calculation, is the number of teams that compete in more than half of the tournament’s in-rounds. This can include a maximum of one swing team (a team sponsored by the host school), and the swing team must be allowed to win rounds and move normally through the bracket.
- b. Ironpeople/mavericks count as half a team.
- c. If the number of teams at a tournament is not a whole number, it should be rounded up (e.g., a tournament with 50 full teams and one ironperson has 51 teams for the purposes of -OTY calculations).

Section 5.11 – The Chris Porcaro Memorial Award

This award goes to the debater in their final year of competition with the greatest number of first-place varsity speaker awards at APDA-sanctioned tournaments over the course of their career. Only Nats-eligible debaters can receive it. Any debater can give notice that they waive all future eligibility in order to be eligible for the award, but this waiver is binding and irrevocable and must be made at least 30 days before Nats.

Section 5.12 – The Jeff Williams Award

This award goes to the debater in their final year of competition with the greatest number of top-ten SOTY, TOTY, and NOTY finishes during their APDA career. Only Nats-eligible debaters can receive it. Any debater can give notice that they waive all future eligibility in order to be eligible for the award, but this waiver is binding and irrevocable and must be made at least 30 days before Nats.

Section 5.13 – Distinguished Service Awards

- A. Award – These awards recognize individuals who have given outstanding contributions to APDA, parliamentary debate, or to the facilitation of public discourse, characterized by devotion to APDA above and beyond the expectations of someone in the individual’s position.
- B. Committee – The Board appoints a committee to decide who receives Distinguished Service Awards. The committee consists of the VP Ops, 1–4 members of the general body, and one additional Board member. The VP Ops chairs the committee. All committee members must be involved in the committee’s decision, unless a committee member is nominated for the award, in which case they must recuse themselves from discussions about their own nomination.
- C. Selection – Any member of the APDA community can nominate someone directly to the VP Ops, allowing “ample time” to review nominations and choose winners.
- D. Eligibility – All current and former APDA members are eligible. Unaffiliated individuals and groups are also eligible if their actions merit particular recognition by APDA.
- E. Presentation – The recipients of the DSA are honored publicly, usually at the Nats banquet.

Section 5.14 – Exceptions

Exceptions to the bylaws must be approved by the body in a unanimous, or unanimous minus one, vote of those present.

Section 5.15 – The Kyle Bean Award

This award recognizes individuals who have changed the league by contributing to a culture of friendliness and amicability among debaters. It is not based on competitive success, but rather is given to someone who has made the league a better place by debating for the enjoyment of the activity. The selection process for the Kyle Bean Award follows the same procedures as the process for selecting DSA awardees, except that the VP Finance chairs the committee rather than the VP Ops.