



## **international debate education association**

### **Club Accreditation Standards**

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Speech and debate clubs can exist at schools, universities, youth organizations, and community centers. When established at a school, a club will likely take the form of an extracurricular activity. At a community or youth center, it may function as one of the educational programs offered by that institution.

A club should offer its members a physical setting for regular meetings. Students should have access to this space (with special provisions made for disabled members if necessary) at pre-determined times (i.e., on specific days and during specific hours), either with or without the supervision of a coach. The space should allow for undisturbed discussion so that students can prepare for events, conduct research, take notes, and perform related activities. Clubs should be furnished with basic equipment, such as chairs and tables.

#### **I. At a minimum, to become locally accredited a club should**

- have at least 12 active members entered into [DebateTracker](#)
- provide its members the opportunity to meet regularly (at least once a week for a minimum of 2 academic hours or 90 minutes of training activity)
- ensure members take part at a minimum in 2 public debate events a year, which are recorded into [DebateTracker](#)
- ensure members participate at minimum of 3 competitions per year that are recorded into [DebateTracker](#)
- ensure all members of the club should participate at either tournaments or other speech and debate related activities
- have all the documentation required by the local association
- advertise its work and the individual performance of its members within the community

#### **II. The establishment and maintenance of speech and debate clubs should be governed by a set of principles, such as those suggested below.**

- A. A club should provide its members with the opportunity to meet regularly.

Speech and debate are educational activities that require preparation, teamwork, and consistent effort. Accordingly, club members should be encouraged to meet regularly (weekly or bi-weekly) and not be limited to a few, *ad hoc* gatherings just prior to a competition. The focus of a club's meetings can range from preparation (i.e., instruction, research, the brainstorming of ideas, etc.), to practice rounds, to social gatherings.

- B. A club should foster participation, involvement and the individual growth of the participants.

A club should focus on enlisting participants who exhibit different levels of experience across many activities. The club should offer different roles for its members, and should promote peer assistance and support. More experienced students should be encouraged to assist those less experienced, and should have the opportunity to serve as coaches' assistants. Furthermore, a club should make every effort to retain its members.

- C. A club should provide its members with an opportunity to participate in events.

The activities of a club should not be limited simply to practice sessions, but should also provide an opportunity for members to participate in activities outside of the club. These activities should include events with other clubs, tournaments (on local, regional, and national levels), public events, and forums. Clubs should take the initiative to promote the organization of events (i.e., by inviting other clubs for debates and/or by organizing local tournaments).

- D. A club should ensure that educational resources are available to all and not just an elite few.

IDEA believes that speech and debate education are crucial for the establishment and growth of democracy, and consequently feels that all youth, as future participants in political life, should have equal access to that resource. Speech and debate clubs should thus bear the spirit of democracy in mind and make their organizations, activities, and educational resources available to all interested youth, regardless of their background. Likewise, success in competitive activities should not determine participation.

For local accreditation, a club should have 750 points entered in [DebateTracker](#), the IDEA online database in one academic year. Clubs can become inactive and/or lose accreditation because of inactivity. Inactivity will be determined based on data entered into [DebateTracker](#). A club will lose accreditation if, at the end of an academic year three students have not received seals of excellence. Otherwise, the club's accreditation will be automatically renewed.

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