



Frequently asked questions about Club Officer Training (COT)

<https://d53tm.org/wp-content/uploads/D53-COT-FAQ.pdf>

Toastmasters International sets guidelines for Club Officer Training, but the expectations and rules for COT execution are defined by each individual district. The FAQ listed below represent how District 53 conducts COT and may not be applicable in other districts.

1. **Who should attend COT?**

COT attendance is open to any Toastmasters member who wants to know more about club officer roles. However, it is specifically targeted to current club officers.

2. **Why should I attend COT?**

Serving as a club officer is living the Toastmasters leadership program. Besides helping you to become effective in your role more quickly, there are many immediate and long term benefits of participating such as broadening your leadership knowledge, networking with other club officers, and saving you time in the long run.

3. **When is COT**

There are two COT session each year. The summer session runs from June 1st through August 31st and the winter session runs from December 1st through the last day in February. Several COT events are scheduled during each training session to give you flexibility. All COT events in either session contain the same content and you only need to attend one event to get training credit. You may attend multiple events if you'd like.

4. **What's the difference between the summer and winter COT seasons?**

The summer session is tailored as jump-start learning for officers new to their roles, so is more prescriptive. The winter session is tailored as an exchange of knowledge between officers who have now gained from on-the-job experience. Although the June COT events occur in the outgoing program year, they are for the incoming officers whose role begins on July 1.

5. **My officer role changes on July 1. If I attend COT in June, which role will my club get credit for?**

Summer session COT attendance applies to the incoming program year, so summer session attendees will get credit for your role(s) beginning on July 1st.

6. **Is there a deadline for attending COT?**

The summer session deadline is August 31st and the winter session deadline is February 28th (29th in leap years).

7. **How can I find out about COT events?**

Information about COT events is available via all of the District's communications channels. Our primary channels are the District 53 website (<https://d53tm.org/>), the semi-monthly D53 newsletters emailed to all members, and our administrative support team (Division and Area Directors). You can always find the latest COT information on the D53

COT webpage by navigating to it from the home page (Training tab, select Club Officer Training Schedule), or use this direct link: <https://d53tm.org/club-officer-training-schedule/>. District 53 also uses Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to distribute event information.

8. How do I register to attend a COT event?

Go to the COT webpage (<https://d53tm.org/club-officer-training-schedule/>), find the COT event that you want to attend, and click the registration link. On the registration form, you will be asked to select your event date, enter your name and your home club (used for identification purposes only).

9. How will I know if I registered successfully?

Registrations are confirmed via email each weekend for the previous week's registrations. Registered attendees will also get a reminder email 1-2 days prior to the event (unless you registered just 1-2 days before the event).

10. How is COT related to the Toastmasters Distinguished Club Program (DCP)?

DCP point 9 is all about club officer training. To earn point 9, a club must have at least 4 of the 7 officers attend in the summer session and at least 4 attend in the winter session. Although 4 is the minimum for the DCP point, the most effective clubs get all 7 officers trained in each session, so this should be your club's goal.

11. Are COT events online or in person?

Prior to the COVID19 pandemic, all COT events were required to be in-person only. The pandemic changed the way the world, including Toastmasters, looks at conducting business. During the pandemic, ALL Toastmasters meetings in the United States, including COT events, went online. Like other organizations, Toastmasters found benefits to the online platform, beyond enabling the continuation of business during a pandemic. Although we lost the advantages of direct, in-person communications, we gained in the elimination of travel time, making it easier for you to participate and more efficient for the district training staff to plan and present each event. Although many Toastmasters yearn for in-person events, District 53 COT events will likely remain online unless Toastmasters International returns the policy to requiring COT events to be in-person.

12. How do I get the Zoom link?

The Zoom link is included in the registration confirmation and reminder emails.

13. How long is each COT event?

D53 COT events are typically 150 or 180 minutes long. All COT events for a session are the same length for consistency and continuity.

14. Do I have to attend the entire COT event?

Although you should attend the entire event, sometimes things beyond your control prevent it. We need to be fair about this, but don't want to penalize you when life happens. Therefore District 53 has defined a policy for minimum attendance to qualify as "trained" for DCP credit. The policy defines the minimum attendance to 75% of a 180 minute event (135 minutes) or 80% of a 150 minute event (120 minutes). The minimum duration must be attended at a single event – you can't accumulate the time over multiple events.

15. What is the format and content of each COT event?

Every COT event includes breakout classes for officer-specific training, which typically run

for 40-60 minutes. The rest of the event consists of training common to all officer positions. Sometimes the format includes a 2nd set of breakout sessions offering a choice of electives. All COT events in any session offer the same content, for consistent training experience through the session.

16. How does Toastmasters know that I attended a COT event?

The Zoom attendance records are used to determine attendance at each COT event. These records indicate who attended and for how long. We can't give you credit for attending if we don't know who you are, so it's critical that you set your Zoom screen name to your first and last name. Do not include any prefixes or suffixes, such as your club name/number, your officer role, or your educational designations, as these interfere with name validation. Participants will be reminded of this during each COT event, and our ZoomMasters monitor screen names and will change it for you if they know who you are, or will send you a private chat to ask you to change it if they don't.

17. How will my club get credit for my role as trained?

Each participant's training credit is validated as follows.

- a. Verify that we have the participant's first and last name.
- b. Verify that you attended for at least the minimum duration.
- c. Verify that you are a District 53 member, according to the Toastmasters International membership database.
- d. Verify all officer roles that you hold in District 53 clubs, according to the Toastmasters International club officers database.

Validation for club credit requires all of the above to be satisfied. Once validated, your club is credited for your role(s) as trained at Toastmasters International.

18. When will my club get credit for my role as trained?

Training validation is typically completed within 3 days of each event. Note that training validation for summer session events can't start until Toastmasters International updates its database and systems for the new program year. This typically takes a few weeks after the July 1 year start, so summer session validations won't start until the 3rd or 4th week in July.

19. How will I find out if my officer role(s) were credited as trained?

Validations are confirmed via email after completed. If you attended but your training could not be validated, you will also be notified via email. If we couldn't figure out who you are, your training can't be validated and you won't get an email.

20. How can I verify that my club got credit for my training attendance?

The current training status for all clubs is posted on the D53 website. Navigate to this report from the D53 home page (<https://d53tm.org/>), (Training tab, select Club Officer Training Schedule, select the Report of Trained Officers link), or use this direct link: <https://d53tm.org/wp-content/uploads/D53-COT-TI-Report.pdf>.

21. Who validates COT attendance?

COT attendance validation is the responsibility of the D53 Program Quality Manager and is delegated to the D53 District Services Manager.

22. I have more than one officer position in one or multiple clubs. Do I have to attend a separate COT event for each of my officer roles?

No. Attending any COT event will qualify you as "trained" for all officer roles that you hold

in one or multiple clubs. Obviously you can only attend one officer-specific breakout session at the COT event. But because most officers with multiple roles already have experience in at least one of those roles, and since districts are prohibited from maintaining officer training transcripts for its members, D53 credits you for all roles held in any club after attending just one event. If you want to attend another event to get the officer specific training for another role, you are more than welcomed to do so.

23. Do I have to attend COT in this Toastmasters district (District 53)?

No, you can attend COT in any district and get credit for your training in District53 (our district). Towards the end of each training period, several compatible COT opportunities in other districts are listed on the District 53 COT webpage for your convenience. But be sure to log your outside-district training in the outside-district training log at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AlternateCOT>. Logging your outside district training is how we find out that you took training elsewhere so that we can seek validation of your attendance from the alternate district.

24. I attended COT. Why isn't my role credited as trained for my club?

There are several possible reasons for this, as listed below. If this happens to you, you will get an email explaining why credit was withheld. If your training doesn't get credited, and none of the below reasons apply, contact DSM@d53tm.org and ask for a review. Such queries are typically responded to within 48 hours.

- Your club has not assigned officer roles in Club Central on the Toastmasters International website yet. Training credit can only be given for officer assignments listed in the Toastmasters database. Look in Club Central to verify if officer roles have been posted. If you can't access Club Central, then your role has not been posted. Have another officer verify that the roles have been posted and are correct for the current program year.
- Your specific officer role is not posted in Club Central. If your role is not posted, we can't post your role as trained. If this happens to you, have another club officer assign the officer position to you in Club Central, then email DSM@d53tm.org that the officer list has been updated so that credit can be applied.
- Although you attended training, you did not attend for the minimum duration to earn the training credit.
- Summer COT completions can't be recorded at Toastmasters International until Toastmasters WHQ updates the database and portal for the new program year. This is usually complete by late in July. So if you attend a June or early July COT, you will get an email confirming your attendance, but you won't see your club credited for your training until the end of July. Once credited, you will get a confirmation email.
- If you attend COT in another district, your role won't be credited until just after the training deadline. This is because out-of-district trainings are not processed until the end of each training period so that they can be handled with each other district as a group, rather than one at a time. Be sure to log your outside-district training in the outside-district training log at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AlternateCOT>. When we verify District 53 officers trained in other districts, this is the list of participants that we work to verify attendance with the other districts. Once verified, you will get a confirmation email.

25. What if I'm a club officer in a different district?

Only your own district can validate and post your completed training at Toastmasters International. But members can attend training in any district and get credit for their clubs in any other district.

If you are a club officer in another district, be sure to enter your district number in the space provided on the D53 COT registration form. At the end of the COT season (summer or winter), we'll send a list of the officers from your district trained in D53 to your district's Program Quality Director who will process your validation and post your training attendance at Toastmasters International. You will get an attendance confirmation, but not a validation email from D53. Feel free to send the attendance confirmation to your PQD if you desire earlier posting than the end of the season.

If you are a club officer in D53 and also in another district, please send an email to DSM@d53tm.org to let us know so that we can properly credit your training in both districts. If you don't know what district your club is in, talk with your Club President or your Area Director to find out.

26. My club just chartered this year. Can we still get credit for DCP point 9?

Yes. A special DCP rule applies for new clubs. For any club that charts after the summer training deadline (August 31), attending the winter session only will qualify you for DCP point 9. If your club charts after the winter session deadline (last day in February), you can still earn DCP point 9 if the district holds and you attend a special, new clubs COT event before June 30. At least 4 of your club officers must attend to get the DCP training credit. If you attend a special new clubs COT event, remember that this training credit only applies to the current program year. Your club officers will still have to attend a regular summer COT event and a winter COT event to get training credit for the next program year.

For other questions about registration or training validation, contact DSM@d53tm.org.
For other questions about COT schedule or content, contact PQD@d53tm.org.

Document Change Log

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