

Unit Elections Rules and Procedures

The definitive rules and procedures for unit elections are contained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*. In case of any conflict or ambiguity between items contained in the *Guide to Inductions* or the *Guide to Unit Elections* and items in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, always refer to the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* as the definitive document.

In Scouts BSA troops, Venturing crews, and Sea Scout ships, every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote in an Order of the Arrow unit election; this includes assistant Scoutmasters who are 18, 19 or 20 years old.

A Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, an assistant scoutmaster or crew or ship members away at college who participate in some unit activities when home, such as campouts, camporees, or occasional unit meetings, should be considered a registered active member.

A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Elections are only to be held in Scouts BSA troops, Venturing crews, and Sea Scout ships; elections are not to be held in Cub Scout packs.

Lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their units going to summer camp. This ensures that the maximum number of unit members can be present to vote in the election.

All elections must be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the unit is chartered. No unit may visit outside its council and hold an OA unit election under the auspices of the OA lodge of another council.

Call-outs should be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the unit is chartered. It is possible for a visiting unit to

have their elected candidates called out at an out-of-council summer camp if the lodge serving the camp is willing to conduct the call-out. The unit leader must present a letter from the home lodge chief and lodge adviser requesting the call-out and identifying the members to be called out. A signed copy of the home lodge's unit election report must accompany this request. Following the unit's return, the home lodge chief and lodge adviser must receive confirmation of the call-out.

Newly elected candidates for membership in the Order of the Arrow must complete the Ordeal and be inducted into the OA by the lodge that serves the council in which the unit is chartered. This allows the candidates to bond with their contemporaries as they go through the Ordeal and creates a positive leadership environment in which they can progress. Out-of-council Ordeals are not permitted except when religious custom and observance precludes attendance at the Ordeals of a Scout's home lodge (e.g., Sabbath-observant Jewish Scouts). In this special case, the region Order of the Arrow chair may be petitioned for an exception to permit the Scout to be inducted by another lodge.

Unit Election Rules

1. The lodge will determine the time of the year unit elections will be held and should inform unit leaders of this by mail well in advance. As stated above, lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their units going to summer camp. This insures that the maximum number of unit members can be present to vote in the election. For this reason and to avoid improper out-of-council unit requests, elections should not be conducted at summer camp.

2. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the scoutmaster, crew advisor, or skipper in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the elec-

tion. The Order of the Arrow should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All OA elections team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.

3. Only one election can be held in a unit each year. Before the election, the unit leader must verify to the OA unit elections team that at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present. If at least 50 percent is not present, an election cannot be held and the election should be rescheduled. The number of registered active members and the number present are entered in the spaces provided on the [Unit Election Report \(page 33\)](#). If the unit leader is a member of the Order, he or she may explain to the group the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the basis upon which candidates should be selected, and describe the method of election. If the unit leader is not a member of the Order, a member of the OA unit elections team should make this presentation with the unit leader's consent, demonstrating that election leadership is a cooperative effort of the unit leader and the OA unit elections team.

4. The unit leader provides a list of registered active members of the unit who meet all eligibility requirements, including attitude and participation. The names of these members are entered on the report form and the unit leader signs the certification. It is important that the list be complete, as only one election can be held in a unit each year.

5. The elections team leader explains the following to the unit leader:

- This is the current method of election approved by the national OA committee in use by the lodge.
- All eligible youths who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected. If no one is elected, a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of this vote will be final.

6. A voter may list on their ballot any combination of names, including all eligible candidates they believe are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow.

7. The OA unit elections team conducts the election. A unit election ceremony is contained in the resource section of the OA Website available at oa-bsa.org/resources/ucl-support/lodge-program-resource-videos. Stress the following points:

- Select the candidates who, in your opinion, have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.
- Vote only for those you believe will continue in unselfish service to your unit.
- If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in a blank ballot.
- If you are new in the unit and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all; this will not affect the final result.
- Youths eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.

8. When the voting is finished, the OA unit elections team counts the number of ballots turned in and enters the numbers on the Unit Election Report.

9. The OA unit elections team determines the minimum number of votes one must receive to be elected, as follows: If the number of ballots turned in was even (2, 4, 6, 8, etc.), divide this number by two. If the number was odd (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.), add one and then divide by two. The number of votes a youth must receive to be elected is entered on the Unit Election Report.

10. The elections team and the unit leader count the votes in private. All votes count equally. If at least one has been elected, the election result is final. The OA team places a check mark next to the names of those who have been elected.

11. If no one is elected, the OA team announces this fact and states that the unit will now be given the opportunity to vote again. Time is allowed for further explanation of the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the election procedures, and for any questions. No information about the votes received by candidates is to be revealed at any time. The second ballot is then held immediately, and if the unit still elects no one, this is the final result for this year's election.

Announcement of results. As soon as the election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of members who have been elected.

Names, mail and email addresses, and phone numbers of the newly elected candidates must be forwarded to the lodge membership committee immediately. Candidates will be called out at the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony.

Candidate status. After election, Scouts and adults remain candidates until completion of the Ordeal and Ordeal ceremony. If this period of candidacy exceeds one year, the candidate's name will be dropped. To become candidates again, they must be re-elected.

The executive committee of the lodge may extend the one-year limit between election and induction if a candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances.

If a candidate permanently relocates to a new BSA council prior to completing the Ordeal, the candidate should immediately join a unit in the new council. A copy of the election report must be presented to the new unit leader to arrange induction in the new lodge. The candidacy period is not restarted or extended.

Adult recommendations. Each year, upon holding a unit election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, to the lodge adult selection

committee for approval to be candidates for induction. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently-serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as they have served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months. The lodge should set up a system to transmit adult nominations to the lodge adult selection committee and the committee's decisions back to the lodge, chapter, and units. Adults may not be called out until the lodge adult selection committee recommends and the Scout executive approves them. Maintain the confidentiality of adult recommendations to avoid embarrassment if a nominated adult is not recommended by the lodge adult selection committee or is not approved by the Scout executive.

Membership requirements. Consult the [Guide for Officers and Advisers](#) for youth, adult and professional membership qualifications.

Honorary and life membership. Honorary or life membership in the Order of the Arrow are not allowed. See the [Guide for Officers and Advisers](#).