

CRITERIA TO CHARTER A NEW ROTARACT CLUB IN DISTRICT 3300

1. there must be a list of at least 30 names complete with NRIC Nos, business or home addresses, occupations, handphone Nos and other contact details;
2. these 30 persons must be paid up members;
3. the sponsoring Rotary Club must have a minimum of 20 members;
4. the sponsoring Rotary Club must have paid its District dues;
5. the sponsoring Rotary Club must have been chartered for a minimum of 5 years;
6. the sponsoring Rotary Club must assign to the provisional Rotaract Club at least 2 Rotarian Advisors whose tenure must last at least one Rotary Year;
7. in the case of institution-based Rotaract Clubs, that Institution must offer courses that are at least 3 years in duration;
8. the Institution must have given its consent and permission in writing for the charter of the Rotaract Club and their use of its premises for their Club Meetings and Board Meetings;
9. there must have been at least 2 interest meetings organized by the sponsoring Rotary Club or the Rotaract District;
10. the provisional Rotaract Club must be proficient in conducting Club Meetings, Board Meetings, and familiar with the Standard Rotaract Constitution & Bye-Laws;
11. at least 50% of members of the Provisional Rotaract Club must have attended at least 1 District event besides the Rotaract Assembly and Rotaract Conference unless no such event is organized in the period under consideration;
12. the provisional Rotaract Club must have received the DRC and DRR at least once;
13. the DRC and DRR must have attended the Club Meeting of the intended sponsoring Rotary Club to give a talk on what is expected of them as well as discern if the members of that Rotary Club are generally in favour of sponsoring a new Rotaract Club; and
14. both the DRC and DRR give their consent in writing.

The DRC and DRR must satisfy themselves that items Nos. 1 to 13 have been complied with and advise the DG accordingly.

Explanatory notes to :

Item 1 : there must be a list of at least 30 names complete with NRIC Nos, business or home addresses, occupations, handphone Nos and other contact details;

RI's requirement of a minimum of 15 members is unrealistic as experience shows that most Rotary Clubs lose almost half of their charter members within the first 2 years. A minimum of 30 would give the Rotaract Club a better chance of survival. Further with only 15 members, at least 9 would be Board Members, leaving only 6 members. This number is insufficient to power the 5 Avenues of Service. With at least 30 members, each Avenue can have 4 non-Board members, with one left over who may possibly be the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Item 2 : these 30 persons must be paid up members;

It sometimes happens that people bring their friends who do not mind showing up just for the company or meal. These sporting friends may or may not eventually join the Club. Requiring them to pay is one way of testing their commitment.

Item 3 : the sponsoring Rotary Club must have a minimum of 20 members;

Again, with at least 9 Board Members, and assuming that there are 2 members in each of the 5 Avenues of Service, this leaves a somewhat healthy margin to ensure that there will always be at least 1 Rotarian Advisor attending to the Rotaract Club.

Item 4 : the sponsoring Rotary Club must have paid its District dues;

A Rotary Club that is not in good standing has no business chartering anything and cannot possibly be a good role model.

Item 5 : the sponsoring Rotary Club must have been chartered for a minimum of 5 years;

5 years may be arbitrary but the principle is that a Rotary Club which is too young, say only 2 or 3 years old, may still be finding its own feet and may not have imbibed enough of Rotary to have anything to pass on to the Rotaractors. A Rotary Club or Rotarian which/who has not attended a number of Rotary Conferences and Assemblies may be like the proverbial katak dibawah tempurung. In this age of Information Technology when the best informed is king, it would be a grave disservice if we foist ill-informed Rotarians on our Interactors or Rotaractors.

Item 6 : the sponsoring Rotary Club must assign to the provisional Rotaract Club at least 2 Rotarian Advisors whose tenure must last at least one Rotary Year;

Having at least 2 Rotarian Advisors not only ensures that should one be unable to attend, there will still be a back-up, but also impresses upon the Rotaractors how seriously they are taken by their sponsoring Rotary Club. Further in the unfortunate event that one of the Advisors is less than ideal, his/her partner may exert a moderating influence and keep the RAC on an even keel. In the event of there being only 1 Advisor and he is non-performing or not exerting the kind of benign influence that is desired upon the Rotaractors, the Rotaractors probably have no recourse. The young are very reluctant to go over the head of the Advisor from Hell and plead their cause with the Director of Service to New Generations. The situation is compounded when the Director is himself the Advisor to the RAC.

Item 7 : in the case of institution-based Rotaract Clubs, that Institution must offer courses that are at least 3 years in duration;

Save for the adventurous and courageous, many 1st year students may not join a RAC. Even if they do join, it is unlikely that they will hold office. Some institutions, like Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, Tronoh (UTP) do not allow foundation or 1st year students to hold office. Hence it is more probable that students will join the RAC in their 2nd year. Hence they may only hold office in their 2nd or 3rd years. In their final year, most students will be reluctant to hold office or be actively involved.

Thus it is probable that if an institution has 3 year courses, the students will be active for at least 1 year. Better still if they have 5 year courses like UTP. Institutions which have only 2 year courses mitigate against the RAC doing well or even surviving.

Item 8 : the Institution must have given its consent and permission in writing for the charter of the Rotaract Club and their use of its premises for their Club Meetings and Board Meetings;

It may happen that after a RAC has complied with all other requirements and has received its charter, that the Institution withholds its permission. This would be a complete waste of time. If no permission to use its premises is forthcoming, it would be insufferable for the RAC comprising of only impecunious students to pay to use a venue beyond their college walls.

Item 9 : there must have been at least 2 interest meetings organized by the sponsoring Rotary Club or the Rotaract District;

This would be the bare minimum. The more interest meetings and briefings are held, the better informed the potential Rotaractors would be. The best informed is king.

Although students are by nature like sponges, soaking up whatever information is fed to them, it would be unrealistic to expect them to be able to absorb everything about Rotaract at one sitting.

In District 3300, incoming Presidents and their officers attend not 1, not 2 but 3 training sessions before they take office, namely the Pre-PETS 1, Pre-PETS 2 and PETS at the Assembly. And yet we still come

across some who do not know when Dues should be paid, or when World Rotaract Week is, etc.

Item 10 : the provisional Rotaract Club must be proficient in conducting Club Meetings, Board Meetings, and familiar with the Standard Rotaract Constitution & Bye-Laws;

This is self-explanatory. A proficient President and Board of Directors will ensure that they touch down running, not fumbling. It cannot but be disheartening for new members to see the President and Secretary of their RAC groping around as in the dark during Club Meetings, or for Board Members during Board Meetings.

When the President or Chairman hums and haws, it makes the Meeting unattractive and boring. Members will be disinclined to attend Meetings and hence may not know what is going on in their RAC. Ignorance breeds apathy. Apathy breeds inactivity. Inactivity will breed the demise of the RAC.

Item 11 : at least 50% members of the Provisional Rotaract Club must have attended at least 1 District event besides the Rotaract Assembly and Rotaract Conference unless no such event is organized in the period under consideration;

Rotaract Clubs, like Rotary Clubs, do not exist in isolation. Although each Club is autonomous and takes sole control and responsibility over its activities within the Constitution and Bye-Laws, it co-exists with all other Clubs in the District.

The Rotaract District would be meaningless and defunct if it is not supported by the majority of the Rotaract Clubs in the District. Indeed there would be no quorum to hold the District Board Meetings or the District Exco Meetings. A fortiori when District events are organized – a lack of participation invariably leads to economic loss. More important than ringgit and sen is the loss of opportunity :

- (a) to interact and network with and get to know other Rotaractors in the District;
- (b) for personal development through exposure to one's contemporaries' ideas and different ways of seeing and doing things;
- (c) to give of oneself and test oneself against myriad other standards expected by people who appear to be of the same ilk;
- (d) to develop social skills and one's emotional quotient;
- (e) to form edifying and mutually beneficial friendships;
- (f) to discard complacency when one learns that what is socially acceptable in one's one club is abhorrent in other clubs; and
- (g) for those aspiring to higher office, to gain the requisite exposure that may win one crucial votes at the material time.

Item 12 : the provisional Rotaract Club must have received the DRC and DRR at least once;

There are RACs that despite repeated requests, will not invite the DRC or DRR to attend their Meetings. The reasons are unclear but definitely cannot be healthy, desirable or Rotary in spirit.

A Rotary Club can be terminated for refusing to receive the DG. The DRR is like unto the DG where RACs are concerned. The DRC is somewhere in-between.

Without visiting the provisional RAC, neither DRC nor DRR can satisfy themselves or report to DG on items 1, 2, 6, 9 & 10 above. During such visits, they will also have the opportunity of observing and gauging the Rotarian Advisor, the President, the Board of Directors and Members. Anything undesirable may also be reported to the President or Director of Service to New Generations of the sponsoring Rotary Club so that remedial steps may be taken.

It is not uncommon for Presidents of RACs to resign – this may be prevented by an observant and discerning DRC and DRR.

DG is required by RI to make his official visits to individual Rotary Clubs and we all know that whatever RI does is done with good reason distilled over many years of experience. This wholesome and desirable culture should be inculcated in the Rotaract District as well.

This would also give the DRC something constructive to do instead of just reporting that “all our RACs are doing well” and disseminating information about Rotaract and promoting the formation of new RACs.

If a provisional RAC will not receive the DRC or DRR, that is surely an inauspicious start.

Item 13 : the DRC and DRR must have attended the Club Meeting of the intended sponsoring Rotary Club to give a talk on what is expected of them as well as discern if the members of that Rotary Club are generally in favour of sponsoring a new Rotaract Club

It often happens that the idea of sponsoring a RAC is mooted by 1 enthusiastic Rotarian while the others in his/her Club are only vaguely aware that their Club is about to undertake something as onerous as sponsoring a RAC. It is imperative that such an onerous undertaking is borne not by 1 Rotarian but by the entire Rotary Club. Otherwise that Rotarian will bear the burden of caring for the RAC in perpetuity. I speak from experience. What will happen when that Rotarian leaves ?

Rotarians are generally aware of the pride and joy of being the sponsor of a RAC. Some may even call it prestige. However, just like raising children, others who see them once in a while are wont to remark how quickly and well they have grown. Similarly with RACs, Rotarians not involved may look and say, “Wow, what a good RAC you have there”.

The onlookers may not see the midnight feeding, the toil of changing diapers, the sitting up all night when the child has fever, the fretting and fussing etc.

Having the DRC and DRR give a talk on, not to put too fine a point on it, the burdens and responsibilities of guiding, advising and developing a RAC should leave no Rotarian in any doubt about the seriousness of the undertaking.

Item 14 : both the DRC and DRR give their consent in writing.

As both the DRR have visited the provisional RAC, they will know and understand the situation on the ground much more clearly.

The consent in writing emphasizes to the DRC and DRR that they must take their positions and responsibilities seriously and they must be answerable to the District (either at the Rotary Conference or at some other appropriate forum) should it be discovered later that the RAC has actually not fulfilled any one or more of the conditions.