

# Constitutional Referendum

The International Board of Directors (IBD) of Mensa is asking the membership to consider three specific changes to the Constitution of Mensa, all relating to the international elected officers. Each amendment is presented with the current and the proposed new version side by side. In addition, arguments for and against have been solicited from members and selected by the IBD, these are presented as well.

The Constitution of Mensa is the highest governing document of our organisation. Any change to it requires a referendum where all members are given a vote. To pass, more than half of the total number of votes must be in favour, and it must also be favoured by the voters in one third of all national Mensa groups.

The IBD comprises representatives of all national Mensa groups with more than 250 members, and is the highest governing body. The decision to propose these changes was made by majority vote, see minutes from the 2019 meeting in Kuala Lumpur for more details, available on the website mensa.org.

<b>AMENDMENT 1 – TERM LIMITS FOR ELECTED OFFICERS</b>	
<b>PROPOSAL:</b> Section IV.C.10 of the International Mensa Constitution is changed as described below.	
<b>CURRENT VERSION</b>	<b>PROPOSED NEW VERSION</b>
No International Elected Officer shall serve in the same international elected office for more than two consecutive terms.	No International Elected Officer shall serve in the same international elected office for more than two terms.
<p><b>EXPLANATION:</b> The word "consecutive" is removed in the new version. The Constitution currently does not limit the total number of terms that an officer may serve in the same office, only the number of terms in a row. This allows a candidate to switch back and forth between two offices and serve in the same office for three or more terms. This might have been fine in the past, when terms lasted two years, but since they have been lengthened to three years, nine or more years in the same office may lead to too much concentration of power in one person. Two terms in the same office should be enough. Also, as Mensa grows and there are more National Mensas, the number of possible well-qualified candidates with previous Mensa leadership experience also grows. The IBD also made a point to specify that <i>"terms served before the adoption of this amendment shall be counted towards the term limit"</i>. This means that members who have already served two terms in one position will not be eligible for the same position again, if this proposal passes.</p>	
<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>
It should not be possible to stay in an elected office forever, by switching positions. Now that terms are three years instead of two years, it is even more important to recruit new people instead of having the same people rotate between themselves.	If the members want a particular officer to come back to an office even if they have served in the same capacity before, we should not stop the members from deciding this.
When new people join ExComm, they often bring fresh ideas and new perspectives to the table, which is good. However, two terms of three years each should be enough to execute these ideas – and then step aside and let the next person take over the office.	Willing volunteers are among the organization's most scarce resources. If anything this change could make that resource even more scarce by limiting permanently the ability of such people to contribute to the organization through office positions.
In a perfect democracy, no limitations would be needed. In real life, term limits are safeguards against organisations getting stuck with the same old people. Organisations thrive when new blood arrives.	This motion is trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist. An effect of this motion will also be to drive officers from a post they are good in to one they are less suited for if they wish to continue serving.

**AMENDMENT 2 – HOW TO COUNT PARTIAL TERMS FOR ELECTED OFFICERS****PROPOSAL:** Section IV. D 9 of the International Mensa Constitution is changed as described below.

<b>CURRENT VERSION</b>	<b>PROPOSED NEW VERSION</b>
In the event of the death, resignation, or removal of an International Elected Officer, the vacancy shall be filled by the Board.	In the event of the death, resignation, or removal of an International Elected Officer, the Board shall appoint a member of Mensa to fill the vacancy. A partial term served shall count toward the term limits provided in Article IV, section C.10, except in the case when the time served by an International Elected Officer appointed by the Board to fill a vacancy is less than one half of a full term.
<b>EXPLANATION:</b> It can happen that an officer resigns voluntarily or is removed from office. What is not clear in the Constitution currently is how to count these partial terms, both for the person who did not serve the full term, but also for the volunteer who is appointed to fill the vacancy. Since there is a limit to how many terms one can serve, it is necessary to decide if partial terms count as one or zero. The proposal makes it clear that any term that is not completed counts as one regardless of length, but a vacancy filled counts as one only if longer than half a term, which is 18 months under current rules.	
<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>
It is good to have a clear rule for these cases to ensure fair and equal treatment based on a simple principle. The IBD is asking the members to clarify the matter by voting in favor of the amendment.	The IBD is competent to set down additional clarifying policy for how to interpret cases not explicitly mentioned in the constitution. Therefore this is an unnecessary amendment.

**AMENDMENT 3 – WHEN TO APPOINT THE ELECTION COMMITTEE****PROPOSAL:** Section X.A.2 of the International Mensa Constitution is changed as described below.

<b>CURRENT VERSION</b>	<b>PROPOSED NEW VERSION</b>
No later than May 1 of each even-numbered year the Board shall appoint an Election Committee	No later than May 1 preceding an election year the Board shall appoint an Election Committee
<b>Explanation:</b> This is a simple correction of an error. When the term of office was changed from two years to three years in the 2019 referendum, the term length for the election committee should have been changed as well. Not to change it would allow the inconsistency to remain and result in the election committee being appointed out of sequence with the timings of future elections.	
<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>
The election committee should obviously not be appointed more often than there are elections. This is a necessary correction of an error.	(No arguments against have been presented.)