

How to Establish a Tau Beta Pi chapter

We appreciate your interest in Tau Beta Pi, the honor society for all engineering students recognized for their distinguished scholarship and exemplary character.

The Executive Director, Curtis Gomulinski, is your contact for information on the process. Please contact him by email or letter, and furnish your email address and the name of your college or university.

A group of students of an institution may petition for a charter if the institution meets the recommended requirements:

1. A unified undergraduate engineering program accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), Two or three engineering programs all of which are accredited, OR Four or more engineering programs at least three of which are accredited.
2. Engineering programs are defined by TBP Constitution Article II Section 1(a). Engineering technology programs are ineligible for membership in Tau Beta Pi. International institutions should have at least three undergraduate engineering programs accredited by an ABET-approved or equivalent agency.
3. A minimum of 40 engineering graduates per year.
4. At least three faculty members should be members of Tau Beta Pi.

The first step is to organize a local engineering honor society with members selected from the top fifth of the senior class and the top eighth of the junior class from curricula meeting the requirements of TBP Constitution Article II Section 2(a). This society should govern itself and elect members exactly like a Tau Beta Pi chapter for at least two academic years before a preliminary petition may be submitted for consideration. The purpose of this requirement is to give the local people full opportunity to see how an organization of this type can serve its students and institution before becoming committed to national affiliation.

Our first recommendation is to review the Model Chapter Bylaws for a typical Tau Beta Pi chapter and to model your local society's bylaws after these. We would be pleased to review your bylaws after they are established. You may form your local society if you do not yet meet the requirements stated above. You may not, however, submit a preliminary petition until you do meet them. The time you operate prior to meeting the requirements to petition would count towards the two academic year operation requirement.

TBP Constitution Article VI, Sections 1 and 2 (see below), describes the petitioning process for new chapters. Essentially, an electronic copy of the preliminary petitions is to be sent to Headquarters when the basic requirements have been met. A sample preliminary petition will be sent to you when you are ready.

The Executive Council would review your preliminary petition and, if appropriate, direct that an inspection visit be made during the following fall.

If the recommendation of the inspecting team is favorable, Tau Beta Pi would ask you to prepare a final petition prior to June 1 for submission to that year's Convention.

You would be asked to send at your own expense at least two representatives, a student and an advisor, to the next Tau Beta Pi annual Convention in October. Only the Convention of Tau Beta Pi can grant new chapters.

Following Convention approval, the new chapter would be formally installed and its first members initiated on a mutually agreeable date the following winter or spring.

Our concept of Tau Beta Pi as an honor society is that we must be more than simply a key-hanging society in order to excel as broadly based engineers in our society. We believe that our members have been blessed with many gifts and that we have an obligation to give something back to our college, our campus and university, and our community. Therefore, our chapters are involved in a wide variety of projects.

Petitioning Process Flow Chart

September 2020	Begin operation
June 2022	Prepare and submit preliminary petition
July – Sept. 2022	Executive Council reviews preliminary petition and recommends inspection visit
Sept. – Dec. 2022	Conduct inspection visit
October 2023	Attend Convention; Petition committee reviews final petition
January - 2024	Install new chapter

Constitution Sections referring to the petitioning process:

Article VI

Collegiate Chapter Establishment

SECTION 1. Eligibility Requirements. (a) Any regionally accredited college or university is eligible for a collegiate chapter when the following criteria are met:

(1) All or at least three of the institution's undergraduate engineering programs meet the requirements of Const. Art. II, Sec. 1(a)(1).

(2) The institution confers at least 40 engineering bachelor's degrees each year from programs meeting the requirements of Const. Art. VI, Sec. 1(a)(1), and the number of graduates is stable or increasing.

(3) A group of students has organized and operated a local society patterned after an Association chapter for at least two full years after the local society's establishment and installation of charter members. These students shall meet the eligibility standards outlined in Const. Art. II, Secs. 2 or 3.

(4) At least three faculty members are members of the Association.

(5) A majority of the engineering faculty are members of their respective technical, professional, scientific, or honor societies.

(b) Chapters may be established at colleges or universities that do not meet all the requirements of Const. Art. VI, Sec. 1(a) by the Convention on the Council's recommendation.

SECTION 2. Petition for Chapter. (a) A petition to establish a collegiate chapter may be made by a group of students and graduates when the requirements of Const. Art. VI, Sec. 1(a) are met. In addition to documenting compliance with those requirements, a petition shall include:

(1) A letter of intent explaining their interest in establishing a chapter.

(2) A pledge of their willingness to subscribe to and obey the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.

(3) A statement welcoming the chapter's establishment by the institution's administration.

(4) A statement certified by the institution's administration that each of the petitioners meets the eligibility requirements specified in Const. Art. II.

(5) The institution's current admission requirements.

(6) The number of weeks required to be spent on academic classroom and laboratory work for a degree in engineering.

(7) The length of the institution's curriculum for a degree in engineering.

(8) The number of engineering students in each of the engineering classes and the names and number of the engineering degrees awarded in each program during the last five years.

(9) Descriptions of the programs and courses offered and any other materials as may be available to assist the Council in reaching its decision.

(b) The Council shall review the petition and determine if the institution is qualified for an inspection. An inspection shall assess the petitioning society's qualifications for a Tau Beta Pi Chapter. An Inspection Committee shall be led by a Council member and should include members from neighboring chapters and Association Officials (see Const. Art. XI, Sec. 1). The Council shall report to the next Convention if an institution is not qualified for an inspection. The Convention may sustain the action of the Council, or it may vote to request the Council to proceed with an inspection in accordance with the Constitution.

(c) The Council shall consider the Inspection Committee's report and recommendation. Based on this information, the Council shall approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove a petition. The Inspection Committee's recommendations and the Council's action shall be reported to the Convention following the inspection. If the Council disapproves, the Convention may approve the preliminary petition and request the petitioners to submit a formal petition in accordance with the Constitution, to be considered by the next Convention.

Article II
Eligibility

SECTION 1. Program Eligibility. (a) An engineering program is defined as one that

(1) Accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET or recognized by any engineering-accreditation successor(s) to ABET or recognized by an ABET mutual recognition agreement as equivalent to such programs that are accredited in the United States;

(2) Administered by a unit (a department, school, or college) of engineering and has the same name as any program accredited as described in criterion (1); or

(3) Administered by a unit of engineering and includes the noun 'engineering' in its name.

(4) Approved by Convention under the requirements of Const. Art. II, Sec. 1(b). Programs approved by Convention are specific to the appealing chapter.

(b) A chapter may appeal to the Convention the eligibility of programs that do not meet the criteria of subsections (1), (2), or (3) of Const. Art. II, Sec. 1(a), but meet all of the following: (1) Administered by a unit of engineering of the institution;

(2) Received the three-fourths favorable vote of the active chapter membership eligible to vote thereon (see Const. Art. VII, Sec. 1); and

(3) Received the five-sevenths favorable vote of the chapter's Advisory Board (see Const. Art. VII, Sec. 11).

(c) A chapter may decide for itself by a three-fourths majority vote, subject to the five-sevenths approval of its Advisory Board, to exclude from eligibility all students of a particular program that, in the opinion of the chapter, is not an engineering program. Programs satisfying criterion (1) of Const. Art. II, Sec. 1(a) may not be excluded.

SECTION 2. Eligibility of Undergraduates. (a) To be eligible for membership as an undergraduate, a student shall be pursuing an undergraduate engineering program of the institution. (b) Juniors who are scholastically in the upper eighth of all juniors of programs listed in the chapter's bylaws per Const. Art. II, Sec. 1 shall be eligible for membership.

(c) To be considered juniors, students shall be in the next-to-the-last year of their program or shall have completed the institution's requirements for junior standing. In institutions with a cooperative program, students may be regarded as juniors when fifty percent of the institution's specified undergraduate academic degree requirements have been completed.

(d) Seniors who are scholastically in the upper fifth of all seniors of programs listed in the chapter's bylaws per Const. Art. II, Sec. 1 shall be eligible for membership.

(e) To be considered seniors, students shall be in the last year of their program or shall have completed the institution's requirements for senior standing. In institutions with a cooperative program, students may be regarded as seniors when seventy-five percent of the institution's specified undergraduate academic degree requirements have been completed.

(f) A chapter may have a higher standard than that prescribed by the Constitution if the Council approves a petition for the amendment to the chapter's bylaws (see Const. Art. VII, Sec. 4).

(g) Only students who are pursuing a degree in an engineering program shall be counted in determining eligibility under subsections (b) and (d) above.

(h) Undergraduate students transferring from another institution shall not be eligible for membership until the third regular election (see Const. Art. III, Sec. 3) after their registration. Students subject to this subsection shall be eligible at the second regular election after their registration, provided the consent of five-sevenths of the Advisory Board is obtained and they meet the other requirements for election. Transfer students who are ineligible for membership should not be counted in determining the enrollment or the numbers of those who are eligible for membership.

(i) Students whose eligibility is in doubt because of irregular standing or curriculum in an engineering program shall be referred to the chapter's Advisory Board for the determination of the terms and times of eligibility.

Support Grants

Grants are available to support local honor societies during the petitioning process. Additional information and an application are available on the Petitioners Support Grants page.