



# Honor Board Conversation Guide



Revised July 2020



**“The objects of this Fraternity shall be  
to foster high ideals of friendship among women,  
to promote their educational and cultural interests,  
to create in them a true sense of social responsibility,  
and to develop in them the best qualities of character.”**

**Article II of the Delta Gamma Constitution**



## Conversations About Member Statuses

There are many reasons why a member might seek Honor Board's guidance and assistance when it comes to understanding and applying for the various member statuses. A member's best option may not always be obvious, as her needs could potentially be addressed by more than one status. The questions and status recommendations outlined below are meant to assist Honor Board in determining her ideal member status options based on the information she provides. Once Honor Board has an idea of the potential member status options, please refer to the subsequent sections which outline in greater detail how Honor Board might engage in conversations with the member about her options.

### Questions for Honor Board's Consideration

- Have the member's circumstances changed recently in a way that would impact her ability to participate fully and meet membership requirements of the chapter?
  - If yes, then consider [Excused Status](#) or [Early Alumnae Status](#). [Resignation](#) may also be an option depending on the other circumstances outlined below.
  - If no, engage in additional conversations with the member to determine what the member is seeking or what concerns her. Honor Board should attempt to support the member and accommodate her need. Examples of accommodations outside of member statuses can be found in the [Other Accommodations](#) section.
- Are the member's circumstances likely to change within as many as three terms, to the extent that she would be able to participate fully and meet membership requirements of the chapter once more?
  - If yes, then consider [Excused Status](#).
  - If no, continue to consider [Early Alumnae Status](#) or [Resignation](#).
- Is there an opportunity for the chapter to support this member through flexible participation requirements or consideration of decreasing financial obligation?
  - If yes, then consider [Excused Status](#).
  - If no, continue to consider [Early Alumnae Status](#) or [Resignation](#).
- Has the member indicated a desire to remain a member and a willingness to find a solution?
  - If yes, consider [Excused Status](#) or [Early Alumnae Status](#).
  - If no, consider [Resignation](#).

### Other Member Statuses to Consider

The member status options that Honor Board oversees are only a few of the many options available to members. In order to ensure Honor Board is as successful as possible in accommodating a member's need, it is important to be aware of the other status options available. For more information and step-by-step instructions to complete the below status options, please refer to the [How to Update Your Anchorbase Roster resource](#).

### 5th Year Alumna Status

Collegiate chapter membership is typically for four years. A woman who is in school for a fifth year as an undergraduate and who has completed at least two years of membership in the Fraternity may assume alumna status with the approval of the Advisory Team Chairman (ATC). A woman who is entering her fifth year of school is not required to obtain Fifth Year Alumna Status if she wishes to remain a collegian.

This process is overseen by the vp: communications.

### Transfer

There are three scenarios for which a member might be considered a transfer. Each scenario impacts her status with the Fraternity differently. These scenarios include:

- The member is transferring to a new school, and that institution *does* have a Delta Gamma chapter.
- The member is transferring to a new school, and that institution *does not* have a Delta Gamma chapter.
- The member will no longer be enrolled in a college or university.

If the institution to which this member is transferring does not have a Delta Gamma chapter, or if the member withdraws from university entirely, she becomes an alumna. She is not able to join another NPC organization, but should become a collegiate member of her chapter of Initiation once again if she re-enrolls at the university.

If the member transfers to an institution with a chapter, she may affiliate with that chapter. Affiliation with a new chapter is a choice. In the event the member does not wish to affiliate with the chapter at her new institution, she is considered an unaffiliated transfer until her expected graduation date has passed, at which point she will become an alumna member of the Fraternity.

All transfer proceedings are overseen by the vp: communications.

### Reverse Affiliation

No two Delta Gamma chapters are the same. Therefore, if a woman affiliates with your chapter and realizes that the chapter is not a good fit, she may reverse her affiliation.

This process is overseen by the vp: social standards.

### Removal from Roster

Members may inexplicably be missing from chapter life and no longer respond to outreach from chapter officers or chapter members. If a woman has been missing from your chapter, she may only be removed from the roster via the Remove No Resignation Form roster change if:

- The member or new member has been missing from your chapter for at least one full academic term.
- Chapter members have made multiple documented attempts through various means of communication to contact this woman to fill out a

resignation form and she has consistently not responded.

This process is overseen by the vp: communications.

### Special Considerations for Member Conversations

Outlined in the subsequent sections are recommendations for talking points and questions to help Honor Board successfully engage in conversations about Excused Status, Early Alumnae Status and Voluntary Resignation of Membership. Although the topics of these conversations differ, the content of the conversations may look similar regardless of member status option.

For each of these statuses, there is an assumed demonstration of need and special accommodation due to a member's circumstances. These circumstances will likely include financial hardship, mental health concerns, examples of racism or prejudice and other significant challenges which may be *immensely* difficult for the member to discuss. It is essential that every member of Honor Board enters these conversations with open minds and the perspective of practicing our [Culture of Care](#). We hope that Honor Board will partner with members to acknowledge their hardship and the challenges they face to try and accommodate their need as best as possible. That being said, Honor Board members are not financial consultants, mental health experts or Title IX officers, and each member should be reminded of this as Honor Board navigates these conversations.

Additionally, these conversations may take an emotional toll on the members of Honor Board, so it is important to check in on one another to ensure each member's comfort and safety. An Honor Board member may be excused from the conversation if it is in her best interest to do so. There are additional resources pertaining to mental health on the Delta Gamma Library, which can be found by searching "mental health" in the search feature.

### Additional Resources for Challenging Topics

#### Mental Health

Honor Board cannot suggest that a member seek counseling. However, Honor Board can share with a member what possible resources are available on campus and offer to provide support in seeking those services. Please consult your chapter's Campus Resource Worksheet for a list of campus services. Additional resources pertaining to mental health are outlined in the [Mental Health Resource Guide](#).

#### Supporting Survivors

Honor Board has been empowered by Delta Gamma to offer diverse and creative accommodations to members, should they seek them. If a member is seeking accommodation around an act sexual violence, please consult the [Supporting Survivors Resource Guide](#).

#### Racial Harm

In the event a member discloses an experience with racism and discrimination within the chapter, Honor Board is responsible for addressing that concern and holding members accountable for actions that do not align with the principles of Delta Gamma. If you would like more information about how to address racism in

your chapter, consult the [Inclusion & Accountability: Addressing Racism in Honor Board](#) resource. If a member is seeking accommodations around racial harm, please consult the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion page](#) of the Delta Gamma website for information on how to support a sister who has experienced covert or overt racism.

### Other Accommodations

There are many reasons a member might seek Honor Board's guidance to address a personal challenge or concern, and a member status may not be the best way to accommodate and support her. We encourage Honor Boards to think creatively to help each member; a few ideas are outlined below to get you started.

- If a member shares that she has struggled with making connections...
  - Consider offering to pair her with a member of the chapter. This member may be a member of Honor Board or chapter officer, but can also be a member within the chapter who is particularly strong at making connections. Encourage these members to spend time together, perhaps by grabbing a quick bite to eat before chapter meeting or studying together in the library.
  - Honor Board can work with the programming team to encourage participation in sisterhood events and ensure that the sisterhood events are relevant to what chapter members are seeking or their interests.
  - Honor Board can also partner with the director of continuous recruitment and retention to share that connectivity among chapter members may be a barrier in retention efforts.
- If a member shares that she has had negative interactions with another member or is concerned about another member's behavior...
  - Encourage this member to share as much information as she is comfortable sharing so that Honor Board better understands the concern.
  - If Honor Board believes a formal hearing may be warranted given the information provided, encourage the member to complete a Statement of Obligation Review (SOR).
  - If she is not willing to submit an SOR, engage with the member to get a better understanding of what she thinks should be done. If accountability is a part of that conversation, remind her that submitting an SOR is the start of the accountability process in Honor Board.
  - If Honor Board believes a formal hearing is not necessary but recognizes the need for some sort of follow-up, encourage the member to have an individual conversation with the other member. Ideally, the first attempt to address a concern between two members is for the two members to have a conversation to try and resolve the issue amongst themselves.
- If a member discloses that she is a survivor of sexual violence ...
  - In the event the Honor Board Adviser (HBA) or Advisory Team Chairman (ATC) is a mandatory reporter for the university because of her adviser role or her position as a university staff member, ensure that this chapter member is aware of that reporting status before she goes

into detail.

- It is entirely up to the member as to whether she reports her experience to the university. Honor Board may offer to support her through the process of reporting, but by no means should Honor Board tell her she has to report her experience.
- Honor Board should work to support the member and pursue the accommodations as outlined in the [Support Survivors Resource Guide](#).

## Excused Status

A member may only apply for Excused Status one academic year following her Initiation and for a maximum of three (3) semesters or terms. These terms do not need to be consecutive. This status may be granted by Honor Board for any of the following reasons:

- *Financial Hardship*: To be granted in an emergency when a member is facing temporary financial hardship where her only other alternative would be resignation of membership.
- *Attendance*: To be granted to those needing to be excused from recurring chapter attendance requirements for a temporary period of time.
- *Non-Resident/Abroad*: To be granted to members studying abroad and/or in a program that takes them physically off-campus full-time for an entire academic term.
- *Academic/Professional*: To be granted to members participating in an academic/professional program that reduces their ability to participate in chapter/campus activities.
- *Special Circumstances*: To be granted for any scenario that is a combination of or does not fall into the above-mentioned categories, but merits consideration. A member experiencing a mental health challenge may be accommodated within the special circumstances reason.

### Preparing for Conversations with Members

While Excused Status is approved at the Honor Board level, no application or reason is automatically guaranteed approval. Because of this, an important part of supporting a member who submits a request for Excused Status is setting adequate expectations from the outset. This ensures each member is able to make an informed decision about whether Excused Status is the best option for her.

The first step for Honor Board in the Excused Status process is to determine whether the application should be denied or if it merits further discussion with the member. If Honor Board denies the application, the member will need to be alerted (see section: Honor Board determines Excused Status will not be granted). If further consideration is warranted, Honor Board will need to schedule a time to meet with the member to discuss her application.

When considering a member for Excused Status, Honor Board should be asking questions to determine the validity of the request and what accommodations the member needs. Below are a set of prompts that Honor Board can use to begin the conversation with a member seeking Excused Status. Since members' need for Excused Status can vary significantly, many of Honor Board's questions should reflect the member's specific circumstances.

Consider asking:

- What is impacting your ability to participate fully in the chapter?



- Tell us about the time commitment of your situation.
- Do you have any supporting documents that are important for us to consider?
- How long-term is your situation?
- Will you be able to fully participate again within three terms or less?

#### **Honor Board determines Excused Status will not be granted:**

If Honor Board believes a member's request does not meet the criteria outlined above, it is always appropriate to not approve the request. Honor Board should be prepared to discuss why Excused Status is not being granted and outline other accommodations the member may be able to seek.

When having that conversation with a member, please consider the following tips:

- Be honest and open with the member about this decision and how Honor Board came to this determination.
- Recognize that the member's circumstances may be challenging, but that Excused Status is not a realistic option for the member at this time.
- Re-emphasize that Honor Board is committed to supporting the member through this time and that there may be other more appropriate options.
- Determine if Early Alumnae Status is an option for her (see Early Alumnae Status section). If Honor Board believes this is an option, be prepared to discuss what Early Alumnae Status is, why it may better accommodate the member's needs and the process to apply.
- If the circumstances of the member's request are related to her transferring or not having enough time to dedicate to the chapter in her fifth year of undergraduate study, please refer to the previous section of this resource that outlines other member status options.
- If applicable, consider offering the member a point reduction.
- If applicable, suggest the member work with the vp: finance to set up a pay schedule.

#### **Honor Board determines Excused Status will be granted:**

If Honor Board decides that the member's request for Excused Status is merited, Honor Board will need to determine the member's status terms. Honor Board should work collaboratively with the member to define the scope of the terms. This can vary depending on the situation and Honor Board can be flexible and creative to accommodate the need. Please note that if Honor Board would like to give a member financial accommodation, the vp: finance must be consulted prior to approval. The vp: finance and CFA are consulted to ensure the chapter is able to afford a financial accommodation only; they should not be aware of the specific circumstances of members' requests, and are not consulted to determine the merit of a request.

Once the Excused Status terms have been decided, Honor Board must alert the member of the approval. Honor Board must clearly communicate the following to the member:

- The membership expectations determined for the member's Excused Status.

- The financial obligation determined for the member's Excused Status.
- The start date of the member's Excused Status.
- The end date of the member's Excused Status.
- The member's room agreement is still in effect.
- While on Excused Status, Honor Board action can still be taken if necessary.

## Early Alumnae Status

A member may apply for Early Alumnae Status (EAS) when she has experienced a significant, extreme circumstance that directly impacts her ability to meet the attendance and/or financial responsibilities of her Delta Gamma membership. Only Council may grant Early Alumnae Status. Examples of extreme circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- A member of the support system of the member requesting this status is diagnosed with a terminal or severe illness.
- A natural disaster directly impacts the member's personal ability to meet financial responsibilities.
- The member herself is diagnosed with a severe physical or mental illness.
- The member experiences significant financial hardship as a result of the loss of job or illness of a member of her support system, or the death of the member of her support system.
- A member is married or becomes pregnant.

*Note: Collegiate members who have children do not have to seek this status but may wish to do so.*

### Preparing for Conversations with Members

Requests for Early Alumnae Status pass through various levels of approval before finally being considered and voted on by Council. Because of this, an important part of supporting a member who submits a request for EAS is setting adequate expectations from the outset. This ensures each member is able to make an informed decision about whether EAS is the best option for her and that she is adequately prepared for the process.

#### Honor Board determines EAS is not likely an option:

Setting adequate expectations for members seeking EAS begins when the member first submits her request packet to Honor Board. It is important to remember that Honor Board serves as the first level of approval for EAS requests. If Honor Board believes a member's request does not meet the criteria outlined above, it is always appropriate to not approve the request. A member's request may outline hardship, but that does not guarantee that the request will be approved at a higher level. If Honor Board believes that the request does not merit EAS, the board needs to be prepared to have a conversation about why EAS is not a likely option and outline other accommodations the member may be able to seek. Although this can be a challenging conversation to navigate, it is ultimately in the best interest of the member to be upfront about the likelihood of her request not being approved than to get her hopes up only to be disappointed later on, potentially several weeks after beginning the process.

When having a conversation with a member whose request for EAS is not likely to be approved by Honor Board, please consider the following tips:

- Be honest and open with the member about this decision and how Honor Board came to this determination.

- Recognize that the member's circumstances may be challenging, but that EAS is not the best option for this member.
- Re-emphasize that Honor Board is committed to supporting the member through this time and that there may be other more appropriate options.
- Explain that the member may appeal this decision. Members must submit their written appeal to the RCS/CAC/NCC and vp: social standards within three (3) days of notice of Honor Board's decision.
- Determine if Excused Status is an option for her (see Excused Status section.) If Honor Board believes this is an option, be prepared to discuss what Excused Status is, why it may better accommodate the member's needs and the process to apply.
- If the circumstances of the member's request are related to her transferring or not having enough time to dedicate to the chapter in her fifth year of undergraduate study, please refer to the previous section of this resource that outlines other member status options.

#### **Honor Board determines EAS is a likely option:**

- Outlining adequate expectations for the EAS request process will be important in order to support the member seeking this status. Reinforce the following ideas:
  - The process can be lengthy.
  - It is not guaranteed, even if Honor Board believes the request merits EAS.
  - Honor Board will continue to work with the member to accommodate her needs as best as possible, but she is still expected to meet membership requirements while her request packet is being considered.
  - The member's financial obligation to the chapter is not altered until after EAS has been granted. If granted, the member's dues will be prorated through the month of application.
- If applicable, offer to assist the member in preparing her request packet and explanation of her circumstances.
- If the member's circumstances likely merit EAS but the member wishes to continue to participate in the chapter as a collegiate member, consider suggesting she apply for Excused Status. If Honor Board believes this is an option, be prepared to discuss what Excused Status is, why it may be able to similarly accommodate the member's needs, and the process to apply.

#### **Honor Board determines EAS is a likely option, but it is ultimately not granted:**

- Continued conversation with this member is necessary. Honor Board should be proactive in attempting to support this member.
- If not already provided, Honor Board may potentially seek input from the RCS/CAC/NCC for greater context about why the request was not approved.
- Determine if Excused Status is an option for her (see Excused Status section for more information). If Honor Board believes Excused Status is a realistic option for this member, be prepared to discuss what Excused Status is, why it may be able to accommodate the member's needs, and the process to apply.
- If the chapter is unable to reasonably accommodate the member's needs, or if member is not interested or able to meet requirements, consider resignation

(see Resignation section for more information). This should be a last resort.

## Voluntary Resignation of Membership

A member or new member may express interest in resigning for scholastic, financial, personal, housing, Honor Board or other reasoning that directly impacts her ability to meet the responsibilities of her Delta Gamma membership.

### Preparing for Conversations with Members

The exit interview is an important part of the resignation process. Honor Board will meet with the member to determine her reason(s) for wanting to terminate her membership and to advise her of possible alternatives to resignation. Honor Board should take great care when discussing a member's reasons for resigning; it is important for Honor Board to fully understand why the member wishes to resign. Understanding why she is resigning allows Honor Board to better support the member in the event her concerns can be addressed by the chapter to the extent that she feels she is able to remain a member. However, we recognize that not all member concerns can be addressed by the chapter, and that is okay.

### Member Exit Interview & Resignation Form:

During the exit interview, Honor Board will meet with the member to determine her reason(s) for wanting to terminate her membership and to advise her of possible alternatives to resignation.

Take great care to reinforce and consider the following points:

- Recognize that the member's circumstances may be challenging, but that resignation may not be the only option for this member.
- Re-emphasize that Honor Board is committed to supporting the member through this time and that there may be other more appropriate options.
- Determine if Excused Status is an option for her (see Excused Status section). If Honor Board believes this is an option, be prepared to discuss what Excused Status is, why it may better accommodate the member's needs and the process to apply.
- Determine if Early Alumnae Status is an option for her (see Early Alumnae Status section.) If Honor Board believes this is an option, be prepared to discuss what Early Alumnae Status is, why it may better accommodate the member's needs and the process to apply.
- If the circumstances of the member's request are related to her transferring or not having enough time to dedicate to the chapter in her fifth year of undergraduate study, please refer to the previous section of this resource that outlines other member status options.
- If the circumstances of the member's resignation are related to her experiences with or the conduct of other (new) members in the chapter, Honor Board should consider if additional accountability measures for any woman identified is appropriate.

If the member chooses not to resign her membership, Honor Board should assist her in implementing the alternatives discussed.

If the member still wishes to resign her membership, the member must complete the Resignation of Membership Form, including the Membership Experience Questionnaire section. Additionally, the following ramifications must be explained:

- She may never join another National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) organization.
- She is responsible for all chapter debts incurred by signing the yearly Dues and Fees contract. It is at Honor Board's discretion to forgive a portion or all of her debt, but the vp: finance should be consulted on this decision.
- She will no longer have the benefits of lifelong membership in Delta Gamma.
- This decision is likely irreversible.

Resigned members are removed from the Anchorbase roster only after a completed resignation form has been uploaded to Anchorbase and is reviewed and approved by a staff member at Executive Offices.

### Preparing for Conversations with New Members

As with initiated members, the exit interview is an important part of the resignation process for new members. Honor Board will meet with the new member to determine her reason(s) for wanting to terminate her pledge and advise her of possible alternatives to resignation. It is particularly important for Honor Board to exercise great care when discussing a new member's reasons for resigning because it is imperative Honor Board fully understands why the new member wishes to resign. Understanding why she is resigning allows Honor Board to better support the new member, but also ensures that Honor Board is aware of any larger concerns that may have impacted or influenced the new member's decision. While it is always preferable for the chapter to accommodate a member's concerns, we recognize that not all member concerns can be addressed by the chapter, and that is okay.

### New Member Exit Interview & Resignation Form

During the exit interview, Honor Board will meet with the new member to determine her reason(s) for wanting to resign and may advise her of possible alternatives to resignation.

Take great care to reinforce and consider the following points:

- Recognize that the new member's circumstances may be challenging, but that resignation may not be the only option for her.
- Re-emphasize that Honor Board is committed to supporting the new member through this time and that there may be other more appropriate options.
- If the circumstances of the new member's resignation are related to not meeting Initiation requirements, the chapter can consider a delay of Initiation until such time that the new member is able to meet all Initiation requirements. A request for delay of Initiation must be approved by the RCS/CAC/NCC.
- If the circumstances of the new member's resignation are related to her experiences with or the conduct of other (new) members in the chapter,

Honor Board should consider if additional accountability measures for any woman identified is appropriate.

If the new member decides not to resign, Honor Board should assist her in implementing the alternatives discussed.

If the new member still wishes to resign, the following ramifications should be explained:

- She may not rejoin Delta Gamma Fraternity without the extension of another Membership Recruitment Acceptance Binding Agreement (“MRABA” or “bid card”).
- Per NPC policy, she may not join another NPC organization on your campus for a period of one calendar year from the time she signed her MRABA or “bid card.” If the new member transfers to a new school, her MRABA with your campus is broken and she is eligible to join another NPC organization as soon as the opportunity presents itself.
- She is responsible for all chapter debts incurred by signing the yearly Dues and Fees contract minus the Initiation fee, per capita dues, web fees and house corporation fees. It is at Honor Board’s discretion to forgive a portion or all of her debt, but the vp: finance should be consulted on this decision.

A new member who has resigned may be re-extended a bid only if she has not joined another NPC organization. If the new member returns within one year from the date she received her original bid, her bid is still valid and she may rejoin the chapter without having to have a bid re-extended to her.

Resigned new members cannot be removed from your roster until a completed Resignation Form has been uploaded to Anchorbase and is reviewed and approved by a staff member at Executive Offices.