

GENERAL EVALUATOR

GENERAL EVALUATOR TOP TIPS:

- ▶ Prepare your record cards before the meeting
- ▶ Give one commendation and one recommendation to everyone ▶ **Be very snappy!**
- ▶ Be focused during the entire length of the meeting
- ▶ Don't hesitate to provide further feedback after the meeting
- ▶ Don't hesitate to raise specific concerns to the club President after the meeting

“Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs”

Henry Ford

As the saying says, “In Toastmasters **everything** is evaluated”. Here comes the general evaluator that does just that! This is a very important role within the wider Toastmasters educational framework. Firstly, you'll help all meeting functionaries in raising their games and improving their skills. Secondly, you'll highlight what a club as a whole does well or could do better in the future.

Thirdly, you'll serve as a very important conduit for exchanging ideas between clubs. Finally, the role is a fantastic way to further raise your evaluation, facilitation and critical thinking skills!

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

The general evaluator role is a challenging role that will help you improve your skills in numerous areas. Just like other evaluation roles, your listening, critical thinking and observation skills will be boosted by this role. It's amazing what one can see by being very focused and observant on what happens in a meeting. The time limitations of the role will also help you learn to focus and communicate your ideas in a short space of time.

Lastly, the general evaluator role is great for observing the different styles and approaches other clubs may use to do things.

IN YOUR CLUB OR OUTSIDE OF YOUR CLUB?

Typically, general evaluators are exchanged between clubs through networks of contacts which can include area directors, club presidents, VPEs or chance encounters in various events. You can however contact a club directly and request to be general evaluator at a future meeting if you wish too. This is a very good approach to adopt in you are keen to experience the role fast.

Doing the role outside your home club brings a set of different challenges and experiences. It'll be a different audience to the one you are used to, the meeting format might be different and the meeting environment will differ significantly too. Gaining experience of speaking in different environments will be useful in your future speaking career and Toastmasters journey; it is consequently highly recommended that you do this role outside your home club.

It is fine if you want to do a “practice run” in your home club first, just contact your Vice-President of Education to make it happen!

You should feel confident about your own skills and abilities before attempting to do this role. Aim to have at least 5 speeches under your belt and to have done a few evaluations and the Toastmaster role too!

BEFORE THE MEETING

This role requires a bit of preparation in order to be done well and said preparation will also help you save time during the day.

- ▶ **Check the logistics of the meeting** if you are doing it in a different club.
- ▶ Look-up the club's social media & Internet presence to familiarise yourself with it and its activities.
- ▶ **Familiarise yourself with the meeting format & agenda** on easy-Speak a few days beforehand.
- ▶ Liaise with the club's Vice-President of Education as needed.

Some General Evaluators find it helpful to prepare their records cards and to format them before the meeting. Don't hesitate to do the same if you wish.

DURING THE MEETING

Arrive as early as you can before the meetings start, aim to be there at least 15mins and ideally 20mins before the meeting is due to start. Make yourself known when you arrive and ask where you'll sit. Clubs typically have a table at the back of the meeting for you to make extensive notes and observe things from. You can however sit, wherever you want amongst the audience.

Here are some guidelines to ask yourself for all the functionary roles you'll be evaluating:

- ▶ **Club President** – A Toastmasters meeting should be kicked off on a high note, so what was the Presidential introduction like? Was it motivating? Encouraging? Inspiring? Don't hesitate to comment on the delivery too.
- ▶ **Toastmaster of the Meeting** – What was time management of the meeting like? Was the Toastmaster prompt in introducing each speaker on stage? Was she/he encouraging and leading the applause?
- ▶ **Timekeeper** – Did the meeting start and finish on time? Were the reports snappy and accurate? Was the role properly introduced?
- ▶ **Grammarians** – Did the grammarians use a creative word of the day? Was the report succinct yet thorough? Were ums and ahs counted?
- ▶ **Harkmaster (if present)** – Was the harkmaster report delivered with energy and enthusiasm? Were the questions snappy and diverse?
- ▶ **Speech evaluators** – Did each speech evaluator provide specific and actionable recommendations? Were the evaluations focused on the key strong points and areas of development of each speaker? Were the speech evaluations properly structured?
- ▶ **Table Topics Master** – Was the importance of impromptu speaking skills adequately explained? Were the table topic questions easy to understand? What were the transitions between each table topics speaker like?
- ▶ **Table Topics Evaluator** – Did each table topic speaker receive one commendation and one recommendation? Were the recommendations actionable by the speakers?
- ▶ **Sergeant at Arms** – Was the sergeant at arms welcoming to guests, members and visitors? Was the room set-up in advance of the meeting? Were votes collected promptly and efficiently?

Since, you'll also be evaluating the meeting, as a whole. You need to pay attention to some other things as well:

- ▶ **Timekeeping** – Toastmasters is all about a "set idea within a set time". Finishing a meeting more than 10mins after the stated time on the agenda is worth highlighting!

- ▶ **Organisation of the meeting** – Is a guest book available? Have you been contact in advance of your general evaluation? Is everything clearly explained and signposted in the venue?
- ▶ **Meeting atmosphere** – This one can be trickier as club cultures differ sometimes quite substantially. If you find anything very amiss, highlight it after the meeting but not as part of your evaluation.

Pay attention to all the proceedings during the meeting and don't get distracted. This is especially important when the speech evaluators are evaluating the speakers. Keep your notes as concise as possible!

Remember that you'll be called on stage after the harkmaster has done her/his report, so get ready early!

DELIVERING YOUR GENERAL EVALUATION

Efficiency is key, when doing a general evaluation, as you'll only have between 7 and 10 minutes at your disposal (this varies between clubs) to evaluate over a dozen functionaries. There are a number of approaches that you can use to deliver your general evaluation. The classic one is to go role by role in chronological order from the club President to the table topics evaluator. Another one is to focus on the speech evaluators first.

When presenting your general evaluation bear in mind the following:

- ▶ **Use the third person** when delivering your report
- ▶ Deliver one commendation and one recommendation only to each functionary. You won't have time for more; keep it for after the meeting!
- ▶ Keep any comments you have on the club and general atmosphere of the meeting short. You can talk about this more with the club President after the meeting.
- ▶ Generalise if you can. For example, if several functionaries could have had a better eye-contact, make this a general recommendation for everyone.
- ▶ Be positive and encouraging throughout your report!
- ▶ Be very specific when giving recommendations to functionaries and give a short example if needed.

If you are looking to challenge yourself more, see your evaluation as a speech in itself. Include a very short but powerful introduction and conclude on a very high and powerful note.