



Interact Faculty Adviser Guide

Rotarian and faculty advisers play major roles in supporting Interact clubs. The faculty adviser, who is a faculty member at a school-based club, oversees the activities of the Interact club and serves as a liaison between the sponsoring Rotary club and the school administration. Patience, organization, and the desire to work with young people are essential qualities of effective advisers. This guide explains how Interact fits into the Rotary family, suggests adviser responsibilities, outlines risk management, supplies additional resources, and suggests effective and successful ways to fulfill the faculty adviser role.

Rotary International and Interact

Rotary International is a worldwide service organization for business and professional men and women, with more than 1.2 million members in over 31,000 Rotary clubs. Rotary's main objective is service — in the community, in the workplace, and throughout the world. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today's most critical issues, such as children at risk, poverty, hunger, the environment, illiteracy, and violence. They support Rotary youth programs, including Interact, in the belief that young people should take an active interest in community life and have the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Rotary is organized at club, district, and international levels to carry out its program of service. Rotarians are members of their clubs, which are grouped into 529 districts, and Rotary clubs are members of the global association known as Rotary International. Each club elects its own officers and enjoys considerable autonomy within the framework of the Standard Interact Club Constitution and the RI Constitution and Bylaws. Among other responsibilities, the district governor is concerned with the organization and development of Interact clubs. The governor appoints a district Interact chair and works with the district Interact committee to organize new Interact clubs in the district, increase communication among existing clubs, and plan districtwide training for club officers. District Interact chairs are a valuable resource for advisers, and regular communication with them is encouraged.

Suggested Faculty Adviser Responsibilities

Faculty advisers at school-based Interact clubs are essential to the club's success. They must attend all meetings, assist with service projects, provide guidance to the club's board of directors, and liaise between the school administration and sponsoring Rotary club.

Meetings

- Help with arranging meeting dates and times, but allow Interactors to carry out meetings.
- Attend all club meetings and ensure they run smoothly.
- Assist with campaigns and elections of Interact officers.
- Help with guest speaker arrangements.

Projects

- Advise on service project implementation, especially for in-school activities.
- Maintain a calendar of Interact events to avoid conflicting with other school activities.
- Attend all Interact activities outside of school hours, or help arrange transportation and chaperones.
- Arrange logistics of project sites and any equipment needs.
- Determine if projects require special school approval or additional insurance.
- Coordinate joint fundraising and service activities with the sponsoring Rotary club.

Interact Club Board of Directors

- Coordinate a leadership training workshop for new officers.
- Assist the board members in understanding their duties and reporting their activities to other members of the club.
- Verify that Interact committees meet their requirements and deadlines.
- Recommend that Interactors participate in leadership seminars and any other Rotary-sponsored youth opportunities.
- Keep the board members organized, realistic in their expectations and limitations, and focused on the goals of the club.

Ongoing Support

- Help maintain accurate club records and documentation, and monitor the flow of club funds.
- Oversee editing, publication, distribution, and announcement of Interact newsletters.
- Guide efforts to recruit members.
- Work on Interact promotion with the school newspaper staff and local media.

School Administration

- Verify that members meet school academic requirements.
- Approve all Interact-related announcements and communications.
- Act as a liaison between the sponsoring Rotary club and the school principal, faculty, and staff.
- Gain support from colleagues and parents.
- Keep apprised of changing school policies that can affect the administration of the Interact club.

Risk Management

Risk management involves identifying events or situations that may cause harm to a person or damage property, and implementing solutions to minimize or reduce these risks. Recognizing the importance of protecting any young person involved in a Rotary-sponsored activity, the RI Board of Directors has adopted the following Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth:

Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact through Rotary.

A risk management program can provide a basis for understanding what risks are possible in your Interact program, so that participants may make good choices in dealing with these risks. Injury, illness, abuse, and other risks are inherent in many aspects of our society. Although a risk management program cannot guarantee elimination of all risks, it can reduce the number and effect of negative occurrences.

Interact clubs in the United States are covered under RI's general liability insurance program. For Interact clubs outside the United States, there are no Rotary International insurance requirements. The sponsoring Rotary club's Interact subcommittee is advised to assess Interact-related liability issues and contact its insurance administrators, brokers, or agents to determine whether the club's insurance policies provide adequate coverage for its Interact program. All participants are urged to verify that their health and life insurance provide adequate coverage for them while participating in program activities. This takes on greater significance when a participant is traveling away from home because many health insurance policies provide only limited coverage outside of the insured's home area.

Faculty advisers should be aware it is recommended that the Rotary club or district consult its legal counsel before signing any agreement or contract with any organization, contractor, or service provider. Such agreements may contain waivers or hold-harmless or indemnification agreements that may attempt to release a party from liability and transfer the risk to your club or district. Should a questionable situation arise, you are encouraged to contact local authorities for consultation or assistance. Finally, be aware that Rotary International is not liable for any illness or personal injury or for property damage.

Resources

One of the primary goals of Interact clubs is to provide service locally and internationally. RI has a variety of resources to support the efforts of Interact clubs and to develop their service projects.

RI Web Site

The [Interact section](#) on Rotary International's Web site contains program news and updates, resources for download, and Interact photographs. The site can also help you to get project ideas and learn about other Rotary-sponsored programs (such as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Rotary Youth Exchange, and Rotaract).

Interact Publications

Several RI publications can help you organize and administer an Interact program. The following items are available from RI Publications Order Services or the international office serving your area; you can also order or download materials on the RI Web site:

Interact Handbook — A comprehensive program resource that includes information on organizing and maintaining an Interact club. It includes project examples and forms and constitutional documents. A must for all Interact advisers. **(654-EN)**

Interact Brochure — A promotional piece to inform potential members about club activities and purpose. **(600-EN)**

Serious Fun — A nine-minute video for promoting Interact among prospective members. Features Interact projects in Canada, Cyprus, Ireland, Japan, and the United States. **(650-EN)**

Service Projects

Rotary club community service information and activities can easily be adapted to fit Interact clubs. The following publications provide valuable details on how to select, plan, implement, and evaluate service projects and highlight many successful ones:

Communities in Action: A Guide to Effective Projects (605A-EN)

A Menu of Service Opportunities (605B-EN)

Community Projects Database

This searchable, online database (at www.rotary.org/programs/projectsdb) of service projects implemented by Rotary clubs and districts, Interact clubs, and other Rotary-sponsored programs provides ideas for a wide variety of projects and the opportunity to benefit from the experience of others. Each entry includes a short description of the project and contact information for the project sponsors. Others seeking to start a similar project can contact the sponsors for more-detailed information and to exchange ideas.

Interact Correspondence Exchange List

This resource allows Interactors in different countries to correspond with one another, learn more about different cultures, increase communication between clubs, and strengthen the international component of the Interact program. The list contains Interact club contacts worldwide and is an excellent way to communicate with other Interact clubs to discuss joint project ideas, create new friendships, and learn about one another through Interact. To request a copy, e-mail your postal address to interact@rotaryintl.org.

Tips for Making Your Interact Club a Success

The success of an Interact club depends greatly on the strength and participation of its advisers. Experienced advisers have shared the following tips:

- Dedicate yourself to your role. Interact advising requires a substantial time commitment. A consistent faculty adviser is important to a club's success.
- Maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude.
- Work closely with the Rotarian adviser.
- Realize that new clubs need more guidance. Be willing to ask questions and seek assistance from the Rotary club, your school, and community.
- Invite Rotarians to attend and speak at Interact club meetings regularly.
- Know the community and its resources.
- Be aware of other service clubs in the school and community, and maintain positive, cooperative relationships with them.
- Allow Interactors to fail since it can be a good learning experience. But step in if risk management issues are compromised.
- Encourage Interactors to resolve disagreements on their own, but arbitrate when necessary.
- Motivate by praising successes, and encourage optimism when activities fail.
- Realize that youth activities change throughout the year, and emphasize the importance of consistent attendance.
- Work with other Interact clubs and advisers in the district.
- Communicate regularly with the district Interact chair and suggest that an annual district adviser training seminar be organized.
- Encourage Interactors to participate in district training events offered in the area.



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