Balloting Rules

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**Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Package</td>
<td>The material subject to ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered - no action required</td>
<td>[Disposition] No change proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered for future use</td>
<td>[Disposition] No change but the comment will be retained for consideration during a future release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers</td>
<td>Person or persons responsible for preparing the material to be balloted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>Status after review of a comment and any proposed change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposition of Comments</td>
<td>Document in which the dispositions of all submitted comments, together with any proposed changes, have been collated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicate</td>
<td>[Disposition] The comment or proposal is substantially the same as another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Members</td>
<td>Personal, Organisation, Government or Benefactor members of HL7 UK who have paid their membership fees for the period including the Return Date for the ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative Ballot</td>
<td>Ballot for the approval of material that is not intended to become a Standard or an STU, but nonetheless is for general publication; the material explains or supports the structure of the HL7 specifications, or provides detailed information regarding the interpretation or implementation of an HL7 specification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Board</td>
<td>The Management Board of HL7 UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-substantive change</td>
<td>A change that does not materially affect the intent or content of the balloted materials; for example the correction of typographical or formatting errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Ballot</td>
<td>Ballot for the approval of an HL7 UK Standard; candidates for normative ballots are usually based on approved STUs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Persuasive</td>
<td>[Disposition] No change will be made (for stated reasons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Persuasive with Modification</td>
<td>[Disposition] The comment is not accepted but a change will nevertheless be made as a result of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Related</td>
<td>[Disposition] Comment does not fall within the scope of the ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>[Disposition] The proposed change will be made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive with Modification</td>
<td>[Disposition] A change will be made but with noticeable differences from the proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Review Comments</td>
<td>Comments submitted by those not entitled to a vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return Date</td>
<td>Final date for voting and submission of comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard for Trial Use (STU) Ballot</td>
<td>Ballot for material that is not sufficiently mature for a Normative Ballot; once approved the content of an STU is refined and enhanced through demonstrations of interoperability. Note: The term DSTU (Draft Standard for Trial Use) has been deprecated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive change</td>
<td>A change that materially affects the intent or content of the balloted material. For example the change alters the information content of a message, the circumstances under which it would be sent, or the interpretation of its content. Another example is changing 'shall' to 'should' or vice-versa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction and Scope

This document sets out the HL7 UK rules for balloting Normative Standards, Standards for Trial Use (STUs) and informative material.

STU ballots are for material that is not sufficiently mature for a Normative Ballot. Once approved, the content of an STU is refined and enhanced through demonstrations of interoperability.

The Management Board may specify the duration of a trial use period. Before the end of a trial use period, or at regular intervals if there is no period, the Management Board shall consider the status of the STU. Such consideration shall include whether a Normative Ballot should take place or whether to set a trial use period or extend an existing one.

2 Ballot management

The Management Board has final authority in all matters concerning HL7 UK ballots. The HL7 UK Technical Chair usually manages ballots on behalf of the Management Board.

In the event of absence or unavailability of the HL7 UK Technical Chair during the ballot process, the Management Board shall select a temporary replacement to manage the ballot. The HL7 UK Technical Chair or their replacement is the Technical Chair for a ballot.

Unless specifically indicated otherwise, the Technical Chair may delegate any of the requirements in the remainder of this document for which they have responsibility.

3 Ballot Package

3.1 Preparation

For the ballot process to commence, the material that is subject to ballot - the Ballot Package - shall be prepared by the Developers and submitted to the Technical Chair.

3.2 Assurance

Prior to authorisation (4.1) the Technical Chair shall confirm to the Management Board that the Ballot Package meets the applicable pre-ballot assurance requirements. Any such requirements shall be available on the HL7 UK website or wiki pages.

3.3 Availability and integrity

The Ballot Package shall be available throughout the ballot period. The Ballot Package shall be available in an electronic form, from a web location referenced in the ballot announcement (4.3). The material shall not be altered in any way during the ballot period.
4 Issuing the ballot

4.1 Authorisation
Provided applicable assurance requirements have been met, a ballot may be authorised by the Management Board or a majority vote within a general meeting of the HL7 UK membership. The ballot shall then be organised by the Technical Chair.

4.2 Notice of ballot
Following this authorisation, notice that a ballot will be taking place should be provided as soon as possible and shall be issued before the ballot announcement (4.3) is made. This notice should at least consist of an appropriate email to the HL7 UK members' mailing list and information on the HL7 UK website or wiki pages.

4.3 Announcement process and content
Within one month of the authorisation of a ballot, a ballot announcement shall be sent to the entire membership of HL7 UK. For this purpose the announcement is considered to have been made when an appropriate email has been sent to the HL7 UK members' mailing list and the announcement has been posted on the HL7 UK website or wiki pages.

The announcement shall include all of the following:
- information on the location and nature of the Ballot Package
- instructions for commenting and voting
- details of the return address for the ballot
- the Return Date.

4.4 Return Date
The Return Date shall be not less than one calendar month nor more than three calendar months after the date of the ballot announcement. During the ballot period the Technical Chair may issue reminders about the Return Date.

5 Voting

5.1 Process
Votes shall be submitted by email or by other mechanism specified by the Management Board. Votes shall be in the form specified in the ballot announcement.

To be valid, negative votes shall be accompanied by comments. Any negative vote that is not accompanied by comments shall be recorded as an abstention.

5.2 Eligibility
Personal, Organisation, Government or Benefactor members of HL7 UK, who have paid their membership fees for the period including the Return Date for the ballot, shall be entitled to vote. These are Eligible Members.
5.3 Allocation of votes
Votes shall be allocated as follows:

- 1 vote for each Personal member
- 3 votes for each Organisation, Government or Benefactor member.

In the case of Organisation, Government or Benefactor members, the votes counted shall be those cast by the Authorised Representative of the organisation or a person acting on their behalf. If it cannot be established beyond reasonable doubt that votes were so cast, they shall be recorded as an abstention.

6 Comments

6.1 Submission of comments
Comments shall be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the ballot announcement (4.3).

All comments shall be submitted in an electronic form and should be submitted on the pro-forma issued with the ballot. With the prior agreement of HL7 UK an alternative electronic form may be used where the size or complexity of the comments cannot be accommodated within the constraints of the pro-forma issued.

To be considered, all comments shall clearly reference the relevant section or sections of the Ballot Package and, if negative, should have an associated proposal for change. Affirmative comments may also have proposals for change.

6.2 Comments accompanying votes
Any Eligible Member may submit comments irrespective of the nature of the vote cast.

6.3 Public Review Comments
Comments may be submitted by the public, namely people who are not Eligible Members, and are welcome. These are Public Review Comments.

6.4 Handling comments
At the close of a ballot, all comments shall be captured and collated. All comments, including Public Review Comments, shall be considered and the outcomes shall be recorded in a Disposition of Comments document.

Public Review Comments do not directly affect the voting or approval of a ballot.

6.5 Dispositions
Comments and associated proposals for change should be allocated to one of the following categories:

- Persuasive
- Not Persuasive
- Persuasive with Modification
- Not Persuasive with Modification
- Not Related
- Considered - no action required
- Considered for future use
- Duplicate.

A rationale for each disposition shall be included in the Disposition of Comments document.

7 Resolving comments and negative votes

7.1 Technical Review Meetings

One or more Technical Review Meetings shall be convened by the Technical Chair to resolve comments and negative votes. All members of HL7 UK shall be entitled to attend. Meetings should be open to others who wish to participate but the Technical Chair shall have discretion to limit attendance.

The quorum for a Technical Review meeting shall be 5 Eligible Members. To enable maximum possible attendance, meetings shall be video conferences.

Technical Review Meetings and associated votes shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set out on the HL7 UK website or wiki pages.

After consideration, by those participating in the Technical Review Meetings, of all comments and negative votes, the Technical Chair shall make a recommendation to the Management Board.

7.2 Notification of meetings

All HL7 UK members shall be notified by email from the Technical Chair to the HL7 UK members' mailing list of the time, date and other details of the Technical Review Meetings. The same information should also be emailed to the Developers of the ballot materials and submitters of Public Review Comments. Details of open meetings should be announced on the HL7 UK website or wiki pages.

The notification of the first meeting shall be sent out not less than 15 days prior to the meeting. Such notification may be included in a report of the Ballot or in a meeting agenda, or by other appropriate means. Ballot comments shall be circulated to the HL7 UK members' mailing list a minimum of 7 days before the first meeting.

7.3 Actions on negative votes

Once all comments have been considered in the Technical Review Meetings, negative voters shall be given the opportunity to change their vote to an affirmative one or to an abstention.

For such changes to be valid, the voter shall confirm them by email to the Technical Chair.

7.4 Substantive Changes

In a Normative Ballot, if the Technical Review Meetings find that Substantive Changes are to be made to the ballot material, the revised material shall be resubmitted for the entire ballot process to be repeated.
In the instance of an approved STU needing Substantive Changes resulting from consideration at Technical Review Meetings, the Technical Chair shall make a recommendation to the Management Board that either the revised content be released with the Substantive Changes or that another ballot is necessary.

The issue of Substantive Changes does not apply to Informative Ballots.

When balloting revised material results in the same comments previously found not to be Persuasive, the Technical Chair may decide that further consideration of a negative vote is not required.

7.5 Non-substantive Changes
If all comments result in only Non-substantive Changes, and the overall result of the ballot is affirmative, the Developers shall make any agreed changes and submit the revised material to the Technical Chair.

7.6 Management Board review
At its next meeting, or at a meeting specifically convened for the purpose, the Management Board shall consider the recommendations from the Technical Review meetings. If the Management Board disagrees with the recommendations, it shall ask the Technical Chair to reconsider, in consultation with those who have participated in the Technical Review Meetings. If agreement cannot be reached, the Management Board shall take the final decision.

7.7 Publication of Disposition of Comments
On completion of the Technical Review Meetings, the Technical Chair shall provide a final Disposition of Comments to the Management Board for approval and publication.

8 Approval

8.1 Thresholds
As stated in 5.1, negative votes without comments shall be recorded as abstentions. Each of the affirmative votes, negative votes and abstentions shall be counted in accordance with the requirements in 5.3. The total number of votes cast shall be the total of the weighted affirmative votes, negative votes and abstentions. For a ballot to be valid, the total number of votes cast shall be not less than 10.

For approval of a ballot, the numbers of affirmative and negative votes shall be determined after the process (as set out in 7) of resolving comments and negative votes.

An Affirmative Vote for a Standard is where at least 90% of the combined affirmative and negative votes are affirmative. An Affirmative Vote for a Standard for Trial Use (STU) is where at least 60% of the combined affirmative and negative votes are affirmative.
8.2 Voter balance

HL7 UK reserves the right to exclude votes submitted by Eligible Members who joined HL7 UK after the ballot period opened, where HL7 UK has reasonable grounds to believe that a coordinated or concerted effort has been made to change the outcome of the voting.

Where HL7 UK believes this is the case, it shall email the relevant Eligible Members with the proposed decision to exclude their votes, although any comments they have submitted shall still be considered. Affected Eligible Members shall be entitled to appeal against such proposed decisions within 7 days of the notification email. Any appeals shall be submitted by email to the Management Board for consideration. After the deadline for submitting appeals has elapsed, the Management Board shall consider any appeals and then confirm its decisions within 5 working days of the deadline.

9 Publication of approved documents

Following an Affirmative Vote, the Developers shall make any agreed changes to the material. The revised material shall be submitted to the Technical Chair. Following confirmation by the Technical Chair that all required changes have been made, the revised material shall be published by HL7 UK with an approved status.