

The Road to DTM

Distinguished Toastmaster — What, When, How & Where, explained for new members

Circulated by the District 127 Pathways Team

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WHAT is the DTM?

The Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) is the highest educational and leadership recognition in Toastmasters International. It isn't a level you get placed into — it's an award you apply for once you've completed a defined set of educational AND leadership requirements. It proves you've grown as both a communicator and a leader, inside and outside your club.

You do not need to rush. Most members take 5–10+ years to earn a DTM. As a new member, use this roadmap to make smart choices early (which path to pick, which roles to take on) so your everyday Toastmasters activity naturally builds toward it.

WHY pursue it?

- It's recognized worldwide as Toastmasters' top achievement.
- It forces well-rounded growth: speaking skill, mentoring, club leadership, and district leadership.
- You receive an official certificate, a DTM pin, and recognition at club/district events.
- The journey itself builds real skills — leadership, coaching, and project management — useful far beyond Toastmasters.

WHAT you must complete — the 6 requirements

All six must be completed and verified by a club officer before you submit your final application.

#	Requirement (WHAT)	WHERE	Typical WHEN
1	Complete two Pathways learning paths (any two; each has 5 levels)	Base Camp (online)	Ongoing — often years 1–4
2	Serve as a club officer for 12 months total (two 6-month terms or one annual term); help prepare a Club Success Plan; attend District Club Officer Training	Your home club + District training	Once you're settled in, often years 1–3
3	Serve a complete one-year term as a District leader (e.g., Area Director or above)	District level	After some club-officer experience, years 2–5
4	Serve successfully as a club mentor or coach	Your club or another club	Anytime once you have experience to share
5	Serve successfully as a club sponsor, OR conduct a Speechcraft / Youth Leadership program	New club formation or community outreach	Flexible, whenever the opportunity arises
6	Complete the DTM project — a self-designed project applying your skills	Anywhere you choose (club, workplace, community)	Near the end, after Path 1 + Levels 1–3 of Path 2

This is the current official requirement set (per toastmasters.org). Requirements can be refined by Toastmasters International over time, so always confirm details against the official "Distinguished Toastmaster Award Application" before you apply.

WHEN should a new member start?

1. **Right away (Month 1–3)** — Join a club, attend regularly, and pick your first Pathways learning path in Base Camp. This is Requirement 1 — start the clock immediately.
2. **Year 1** — Give speeches, take on small meeting roles, and volunteer for a club officer position (Requirement 2) once you're comfortable — new members are welcomed into officer roles.
3. **Year 1–2** — Finish your first learning path. Start your second, unique path. Ask an experienced member to mentor you and consider mentoring a newer member yourself later (Requirement 4).
4. **Year 2–3** — Continue as a club officer; participate in your club's Club Success Plan and attend District Club Officer Training. Look for a District leadership role such as Area Director (Requirement 3).
5. **Year 3–4** — Look for a chance to sponsor a new club, or run a Speechcraft/Youth Leadership program (Requirement 5).
6. **Final stretch** — Once you finish Path 1 and reach Levels 1–3 of Path 2, request access to the DTM project (Requirement 6), design and complete it, then submit your full application.

These years are a typical pace, not a rule — go faster or slower based on your own time and club opportunities.

HOW do you actually do this? (step-by-step)

7. **Track everything from day one** — Keep a simple log (digital or paper) of every speech, role, and activity — you'll need this to fill out the DTM application later.
8. **Work your first path in Base Camp** — Log in at toastmasters.org, go to Base Camp, and complete levels 1–5 of your chosen path (see our separate "Base Camp Project Submission" handout for the detailed steps).
9. **Volunteer for a club role** — At your club's officer elections (usually mid-year and year-end), volunteer for a role like Secretary, Treasurer, VP Education, etc. Serve a full 12 months across one or two terms.
10. **Attend Club Officer Training** — Your District runs officer training sessions roughly twice a year — attend at least one while serving as an officer.
11. **Help build a Club Success Plan** — Work with your club's officer team, usually once a year, to set goals for the club (this is a short guided worksheet run by your club President/VPE).
12. **Run for a District role** — Once you have some officer experience, contact your District leadership (or check the District website) about running for Area Director or a similar one-year district role.
13. **Mentor someone** — Offer to mentor a new member in your club, or ask your VP Education to pair you with one.
14. **Sponsor a club or run a Speechcraft/Youth Leadership program** — Watch for club-building drives in your District, or propose a Speechcraft (public workshop) or Youth Leadership program through your club.
15. **Request the DTM project** — After finishing one path and Levels 1–3 of a second, email educationprogram@toastmasters.org (or call +1 720-439-5050) to request access to the DTM project in Base Camp.
16. **Design & complete your DTM project** — Create a project of your own design that applies your Toastmasters skills — this can even be done outside the Toastmasters setting (e.g., at work or in your community).
17. **Get everything verified** — Ask a current club officer to verify, on the official DTM Award Application, that you've completed all six requirements.
18. **Submit your application** — Send the completed, verified DTM Award Application to Toastmasters World Headquarters as instructed on the form.

WHERE does each part happen?

- Base Camp (online, at toastmasters.org) — both learning paths and the DTM project.
- Your home club — officer roles, mentoring, Club Success Plan, speeches.

- Your District — District leader role, Club Officer Training sessions.
- Your community / workplace — club sponsorship, Speechcraft, Youth Leadership, and often the DTM project itself.
- Toastmasters World Headquarters — final DTM Award Application submission and approval.

Quick Reference Checklist

- ☐ Joined a club and started my first Pathways learning path
- ☐ Completed learning Path 1 (all 5 levels)
- ☐ Served as a club officer for 12 months total
- ☐ Participated in a Club Success Plan
- ☐ Attended a District Club Officer Training
- ☐ Completed learning Path 2 (all 5 levels)
- ☐ Served a full one-year term as a District leader
- ☐ Served as a club mentor or coach
- ☐ Sponsored a club OR ran a Speechcraft/Youth Leadership program
- ☐ Requested and completed the DTM project
- ☐ Got all requirements verified by a club officer
- ☐ Submitted the DTM Award Application to World Headquarters

Tips for New Members

- Put Toastmasters on your to-do list every week, even for one small item — steady progress beats bursts of activity.
- Find a mentor early to help you understand requirements and stay motivated.
- Keep a running record (digital or print) of every speech, role, and activity as you go.
- Sign up for speeches often — consider a "Speakathon" meeting format if your club has many willing speakers.
- Consider joining a second club — it gives you more chances to speak and to hold officer roles.
- Your DTM project doesn't have to be Toastmasters-only — many members design projects at work or in their community.

Need Help?

For questions about Pathways, Base Camp, or the DTM project, contact Toastmasters' Club and Member Support / Education Program team:

- Email: educationprogram@toastmasters.org
- Phone: +1 720-439-5050

For questions about District leadership roles or officer training, contact your District's leadership team (details on your District's website).