

HL7 User Group Switzerland – Ballot Rules

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A HL7 voting procedure – commonly referred to as a "Ballot" within the HL7 community – is a formal process for the adoption of new standards. Materials that are to be recognized by HL7 as standards must undergo a ballot. In this process, a sufficient number of members must vote in favor of adoption, and negative comments must be resolved by consensus.

There are the following types of HL7 ballots, each with different normative impact:

1. **Normative Ballot:**
For official HL7 standards.
2. **Standard for Trial Use (STU) Ballot:**
Used for the release of pre-standards to be evaluated in practice.
3. **Informative Ballot** ("comment only"):
Used to gather input on any materials without normative meaning.

For HL7 Switzerland, as an official affiliate of HL7 International, the following ballot rules are defined. They govern the conduct of votes within the HL7 User Group Switzerland, for example, for the adoption of normative resolutions by the Technical Committee (TC).

Document History:

4.0-draft, 07.04.2025:	Updates suggested for TC meeting: translation into English and following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Section 1: addition of exception for publications with no significant changes- Section 3: generalized participation for IPAG
3.0, 11.04.2022:	Decisions at the TC Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Section 6: simplification- Section 8: addition of double votes
2.1, 15.07.2021:	In addition, IPAG will also participate for CH EMED upon agreement.
2.0, 22.06.2021:	Update at the TC meeting

Conducting voting procedures ("Ballots") for HL7 standards and specifications within the jurisdiction of Switzerland.

1. HL7 Switzerland standards and specifications must undergo a voting procedure, except for publications that do not include significant changes, new features, or any breaking changes (e.g., technical corrections, dependency updates).
2. The HL7 Switzerland Association (HL7 User Group Switzerland) maintains an internal list of all individuals authorized to participate in the voting procedures.
3. All members of the HL7 Switzerland Association are eligible to participate. For ballots under the governance of a Joint Venture Working Group, members of the Joint Working Group who are not HL7 Switzerland members are also eligible. Additionally, the IPAG is eligible to participate with two voting representatives in ballots for exchange formats where they provided an underlying concept.

Each individual member ("natural person") has one vote. Organizations and associations ("legal entities") must be represented by a maximum of two persons, who must be designated in writing by name to the Technical Manager and are authorized to cast the vote. Only the designated representatives will be included in the list of participants. There is a right to be included in the list.

The Technical Manager is free to make the materials for a ballot available to interested non-members. These individuals may submit comments but do not have voting rights in the ballot.

4. At least 14 days before the start of the voting procedure, it must be announced to all eligible participants, including the content and deadlines (announcement phase). The duration of the voting procedure will be communicated in advance during the announcement phase, depending on the scope of the voting material, and is at the discretion of the Technical Manager. During this period, eligible participants can submit their votes and comments.
5. After the announcement period has ended, the voting procedure begins. The Technical Manager leads and coordinates the voting process. The specifications must be made available to all eligible participants in the same manner. Negative votes must be

accompanied by substantive comments to be considered valid, while positive votes or abstentions may also be commented on.

6. After the voting process has concluded, votes and comments are compiled by the Technical Manager and the respective ballot coordinators, commented on again, and made available to the ballot participants. To resolve negative comments, a mutual agreement should be sought between the commenter and the submitter of the specification.

Negative votes or comments may be withdrawn if an agreement on the next steps is reached and the submitter of the specification commits to making the necessary changes. This withdrawal must be communicated in writing to the Technical Manager. If an accepted negative comment cannot be resolved by mutual agreement, the HL7 Switzerland board will decide on the further course of action. In any case, an unresolved negative comment must be published along with the specification.

7. Finally, all participants of the voting process are informed about all comments and the changes made to the specification during the process. If no objections are raised within the objection period specified during the announcement phase, the changes are considered finalized.

Objections must be submitted in writing with justification and can refer only to changes made to the specification during the voting process. The Technical Committee decides on the validity of the objection.

8. The acceptance of a specification requires 80 percent "yes" votes from the total number of "yes" and "no" votes cast by eligible participants, as well as a minimum of three votes. However, the actual quorum depends on the type of ballot (see Section 9).

Votes include all "yes" votes cast during the voting process according to Section 6, provided the eligible voter has not objected under Section 7, as well as all "no" votes cast under Section 6, unless the voter has additionally objected under Section 7, and all submitted abstentions. If fewer than three votes are cast, the specification is considered rejected, and the voting process is deemed closed.

For the balloting vote on an implementation guide, votes from organizations and individuals who participated in a trial implementation of the version under ballot at an HL7-designated public testing event are counted twice.

9. The following types of ballots are distinguished: An informative ballot is used to provide comments on a proposed specification but has no normative significance. An STU (Standard for Trial Use) is a preliminary version of a normative standard for practical testing. An STU standard can (usually after a successful trial phase) be included again in a voting procedure. A normative ballot is required for normative specifications.

The quorum for all ballots is 10 participants. The Technical Manager may, with appropriate justification, propose a different quorum to the board of HL7 Switzerland (e.g., if too few experts are available to participate in the ballot). The board will decide on this by simple majority. However, the quorum cannot be less than 3 participants.