



Exercising your right to vote: Frequently Asked Questions

World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)

Last Review: April 2019

1. **Who has the right to vote?**
2. **How are votes allocated?**
3. **What are the vote options?**
4. **Why would anyone with the right to vote choose to abstain from voting?**
5. **What is the voting process?**
6. **What about special votes: secret ballots?**
7. **Who is a scrutineer and what are their responsibilities?**
8. **How is an issue brought before the membership for voting?**
9. **How does the consent agenda work?**

1. Who has the right to vote?

Every member association (full, associate, and affiliate) and all elected Members of the Executive Board. Each WSAVA member association has an Assembly representative who is the individual designated to officially vote on behalf of their association unless this vote is assigned by Proxy to another person (see below).

2. How are votes allocated?

Each associate & affiliate member and each elected member of the Executive Board have one vote. For full member associations, their vote is weighted to reflect their membership numbers, being allocated 1 to 8 votes based on the weighting table below (WSAVA By-Laws 6.8) to ensure equitable voice representation.

Number of Veterinarians	Number of Votes
Affiliate and Associate Members	1
0 – 100	1
101 – 400	2
401 – 900	3
901 - 1600	4
1601 – 2500	5
2501 – 3600	6
3601 – 4900	7
> 4900	8

WSAVA Secretariat Office

72 Melville Street
Dundas, Ontario
Canada L9H 2A1
Tel: +905.627.8540
Fax: +905.627.8425
Email: wsavasecretariat@gmail.com





3. What are the vote options?

All votes will have the following three options:

- 🐾 **For/in favour** – means that the member association is in favour of/supports the motion
- 🐾 **Against/not in favour** - means that the member association is not in favour of/does not support the motion
- 🐾 **Abstain** – means that the member association wants to abstain or decline in providing a for/against vote

4. Why would anyone with the right to vote choose to abstain from voting?

There are many potential reasons that may include but are not limited to:

- 🐾 **Conflict of interest** – when a member association or member of the Executive Board has a direct and vested interest in the vote outcome
- 🐾 **Insufficient knowledge/information upon which to make an informed decision** – the member association should always make every effort to gain the information required to allow the association to render an informed yes/no decision and vote
- 🐾 Inability to generate member association membership consensus on supporting or not supporting the motion up for vote

5. What is the voting process?

5.1. Assembly Meeting

5.1.1. Direct Participation Voting

The WSAVA member association Assembly representative is in attendance at the Assembly meeting and will register their association's vote accordingly

5.1.2. Proxy Voting

Should the WSAVA member association Assembly representative not be in attendance at the Assembly meeting, their vote (including its weighting) can be assigned to another member of their association or another member association's Assembly representative who will be in attendance at the Assembly meeting. The Proxy vote holder will register the votes they hold at the time a motion is called to a vote. Assigning an association's Proxy vote requires a letter of notification from the association President to the WSAVA Honorary Secretary a minimum of 3 weeks in advance of the scheduled vote (WSAVA By- Law 4.2). Should plans change and the Assembly representative becomes able to attend the Assembly meeting, the Proxy will be null & void and the Assembly representative shall re-assume their voting privileges. If attendance of the member association Assembly representative is uncertain, having a Proxy vote in place with the option to re-assume voting if present, will ensure that the member association will actively participate in Assembly meeting outcomes.

5.1.3. Ballot Voting

Should the WSAVA member association Assembly representative not be in attendance at the Assembly meeting, their vote (including weighting) can be






registered by completion and submission of a pre-meeting ballot that will accompany the meeting announcement. The completed ballot must be received by the Honorary Secretary 14 days prior to the scheduled meeting (WSAVA By-Law 6.8). In the event that a postal ballot provides a vote to be held as “secret”, the YourWSAVA Manager will hold the same responsibilities as the scrutineers (see below) and affirm adherence to these in front of the Assembly.

5.2. Interim Association Meetings

Should the business needs of the WSAVA require an additional meeting of the association outside of/in addition to the annual Assembly meeting, the vote will occur through postal ballot as described in 5.1.3 above or via “secret ballot” as described in 6 below.

6. What about special votes: secret ballots?

Agenda items requiring discussion and vote will arise that may be considered controversial and potentially polarizing where the ability to have a secret vote is crucial to ensuring member associations can vote without the fear of real or perceived repercussions. Items that will be subjected to a secret ballot are:

-  Executive Board office elections
-  Congress Steering Committee recommendation for the annual WSAVA World Congress winning bid & location
-  New member applications

7. Who is a scrutineer and what are their responsibilities?

Scrutineers are non-voting members of the WSAVA Assembly and have no vested interest in the outcome of the vote. In the event of a secret ballot, they will be responsible for destroying the secret ballots following acceptance of the vote outcome by the Assembly members and thereby ensure no member of the WSAVA voting body or leadership will have knowledge as to how individual votes were cast. They will be required to confirm their adherence to these responsibilities in front of the Assembly prior to assuming them.

8. How is an issue brought before the membership for voting?

Any Assembly member representative can bring an issue to the Assembly members for consideration and/or vote. If this is to occur at the annual Assembly meeting, a discussion paper summarizing the issue and proposed motion needs to be received by the Honorary Secretary at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting (WSAVA By-Law 6.6) for inclusion onto the agenda.

In select situations where an issue of WSAVA relevance/import has arisen within the 30 days prior to the scheduled Assembly meeting, a motion can be forwarded to place this on the agenda under Any Other Business; should the motion be seconded and pass by majority vote, the issue in question will be placed on the agenda for further discussion.

WSAVA Secretariat Office

72 Melville Street
Dundas, Ontario
Canada L9H 2A1
Tel: +905.627.8540
Fax: +905.627.8425
Email: wsavasecretariat@gmail.com



Any Assembly member representative can petition the WSAVA Secretariat for an interim meeting of the WSAVA Assembly representatives as long as they have the support of 5% of the WSAVA member associations (WSAVA By-Law 6.3). This would also require the requisite discussion form and proposed motion as outlined above.

9. How does the consent agenda work?

The consent agenda represents a number of agenda items that for all intent & purposes are presented to the WSAVA Assembly representatives as informational items not accompanied by a motion and hence not requiring a vote specific to each individual item (e.g., committee reports, association annual updates, meeting reports, etc). The items in the Consent agenda will be voted on “en masse” for formal Assembly endorsement at the end of the Assembly meeting. However, should a participating Assembly representative feel that an item listed under the Consent agenda does require further discussion, they can request its removal when the consent agenda content is raised by the WSAVA President or meeting chair. This item will then be placed as an agenda item for discussion under the regular meeting agenda.

