



TRIAL BY CHAPTER

Overview, Guidance & Official Checklist for Chapter Officers

Beta Theta Pi Foundation and Administrative Office
Brennan Hall | 5134 Bonham Road | Oxford, Ohio 45056
800.800.BETA | beta.org | [@betathetapi](https://twitter.com/betathetapi)

Table of Contents

Trial by Chapter: Overview and Guidance for Chapter Officers	3
Commitment to Fairness and Integrity	3
When a Trial by Chapter is Required.....	4
Purpose of the Checklist	4
Key Phases of the Trial by Chapter Process.....	4
Moving Forward	5
Trial by Chapter Checklist	6
Part One: Contact Information for Primary Roles	6
Part Two: Consultation with the District Chief.....	7
Part Three: Notice of Trial	8
Part Four: Trial Proceedings	9
Part Five: Post-Trial Procedures	12

Trial by Chapter: Overview and Guidance for Chapter Officers

The Trial by Chapter (TBC) is the most serious internal accountability process available to a chapter of Beta Theta Pi. It exists to ensure that when a member's actions may warrant significant disciplinary outcomes, such as long-term suspension or expulsion from the Fraternity, the process is handled with fairness, structure, and fidelity to the Fraternity's values.

Given the gravity of a Trial by Chapter, one should never be approached casually. It is not a routine disciplinary tool, but rather a formal proceeding reserved for situations involving substantial violations of membership expectations or when lesser measures are no longer appropriate. At its core, the TBC process is designed to balance two essential priorities: protecting the integrity of the chapter and ensuring the accused member is afforded substantial justice.

Commitment to Fairness and Integrity

Before initiating a Trial by Chapter, chapter leaders must thoroughly review Chapter XIII of *The Code of Beta Theta Pi*, which outlines the official procedures, rights of the accused, and expectations for due process. This document serves as the governing framework for all TBC proceedings and should guide every step of the process.

Additionally, chapters are required to consult with their district or regional chief prior to formally issuing charges. This step is critical, not only for procedural compliance, but also to ensure the chapter is thoughtfully considering whether a Trial by Chapter is the appropriate course of action.

A Trial by Chapter is not only about determining responsibility. It is about upholding the principles of fairness, accountability and brotherhood. Chapters are expected to approach this process with professionalism, discretion and respect for all individuals involved.

Best practices, such as securing a private meeting space, involving advisors, minimizing distractions and maintaining thorough documentation, help ensure the process is conducted with the seriousness it demands.

The accused member has the right to:

- Be given due notice of the charges against him and the date, time and location of the trial.
- Be heard at a hearing or trial.
- Present evidence and hear the evidence against him.
- Be represented by an advisor or counselor, who must be a member of the Fraternity.
- Be present throughout the proceedings, except when the chapter is deliberating and voting.
- Appeal the outcome(s) or sanction(s), as provided within The Code.
- Waive some or all of these rights.

When a Trial by Chapter is Required

A Trial by Chapter must be used in cases where:

- The alleged misconduct may result in **expulsion**, or
- The alleged misconduct may result in a **suspension exceeding one year**, or
- The Kai Committee determines that the severity or complexity of the situation warrants a full chapter proceeding.

In these situations, the responsibility shifts from a small committee to the full chapter, reinforcing the collective duty of members to uphold the standards of Beta Theta Pi.

Purpose of the Checklist

The Trial by Chapter Checklist is the Fraternity's official tool for guiding chapters through this process. It serves two essential functions:

1. **Procedural Guide** – It walks chapter officers step-by-step through each phase of the process to ensure consistency, fairness, and adherence to The Code.
2. **Official Record** – It documents the actions taken by the chapter and must be submitted, along with meeting minutes, if the accused member is found guilty.

Completing the checklist thoroughly and accurately is not optional. It is a required component of ensuring the legitimacy and defensibility of the outcome.

Key Phases of the Trial by Chapter Process

While the checklist provides detailed instructions, it is helpful to understand the broader structure of the process:

1. Formal Charges: The process begins with clearly documented charges that outline the alleged misconduct, including relevant details such as dates, locations, and behaviors inconsistent with the character of a worthy member. As appropriate, these should also include the specific bylaw, policy, or expectation the member violated. These charges must be reviewed by the district chief for accuracy, validity, thoroughness of the charges, and other procedural issues worthy of the chapter's consideration before being presented to the accused.

2. Notice of Trial: The accused must be given proper notice of the charges and the trial details at least three days in advance. This notice must include:

- A clear description of the charges
- The date, time and location of the trial

Notice must also be shared with the broader chapter and appropriate Fraternity stakeholders, such as chapter advisors, house corporation officers, Administrative Office staff, etc. Providing proper notice is essential to ensuring due process.

3. The Trial Proceedings: The trial itself is a formal meeting conducted in accordance with established procedures.

Key roles include:

- **Chapter President**, who serves as chair and oversees the proceedings.
- **Kai Committee**, who presents the case against the accused and provides any supporting evidence.
- **Secretary**, who records minutes and maintains official documentation.

Following the presentation of evidence and discussion, the chapter deliberates and votes. A simple majority determines whether the member is found guilty and, if so, what sanction is appropriate.

4. Post-Trial Responsibilities

After the trial, the accused must be notified of the outcome. The accused also retains the right to appeal the decision within specified timelines.

The meeting minutes must be distributed to the accused, district chief and Chief Executive Office within 10 days. Roster updates must be completed through the MyBeta system.

Moving Forward

The following checklist is designed to guide you through each step of the Trial by Chapter process. Chapter officers should review it carefully in advance and use it throughout the proceedings. By following this process with diligence and integrity, your chapter demonstrates its commitment to both accountability and the values that define Beta Theta Pi.

Trial by Chapter Checklist

Part One: Contact Information for Primary Roles

Chapter Information

- Chapter (Campus Name): _____
- Greek Designation: _____
- Chapter Mailing Address: _____

Chapter President (Chairman of the Trial): The President serves as chair and conducts the trial in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and The Code.

- Name: _____
- Roll Number: _____
- Email: _____
- Phone Number: _____

Vice President of Administration (Secretary): The Secretary is responsible for taking detailed minutes and submitting them with this checklist to appropriate parties.

- Name: _____
- Roll Number: _____
- Email: _____
- Phone Number: _____

Member Submitting the Charge(s): Who is making the charge or claim against another member? A charge or claim may be brought against any member (in any status) by any member or pledge of Beta Theta Pi.

- Name: _____
- Roll Number: _____
- Email: _____
- Phone Number: _____

Accused Member Information: Who is the charge or claim against?

- Name: _____
- Roll Number: _____
- Email: _____
- Phone Number: _____

District or Regional Chief: The district or regional chief must review the charges and provide counsel as outlined in The Code.

- Name: _____
- Region and District No.: _____
- Email: _____
- Phone Number: _____

Part Two: Consultation with the District Chief

Description of Charges: Provide a detailed description of the alleged misconduct. Include specific dates, locations and behaviors that are inconsistent with the character of a worthy member of Beta Theta Pi.

Date charges filed with district or regional chief: _____

Date of consultation with the district or regional chief: _____

Part Three: Notice of Trial

Trial Details:

- Date of Trial: _____
- Time of Trial: _____
- Location of Trial: _____

The trial is not a public event and careful attention should be given to who is permitted into the location of the trial. The location should be a secure, private area or room where access can be managed.

Method(s) of Notice to the Accused: The accused must receive notice at least three (3) days in advance of the trial and must be informed of the specific charge(s) or claim(s) against him. Indicate which communication method(s) were used and the date notice was provided by each.

- ☐ Email - Date notice provided: _____
- ☐ Phone Call - Date notice provided: _____
- ☐ In-Person - Date notice provided: _____

Notice to Chapter and Fraternity Stakeholders: All collegiate members, chapter advisors, and appropriate General Fraternity Officers (district chief) must be notified. The chapter is strongly encouraged to notify their assigned Administrative Office staff member.

Chapter ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ In-Person Date notice provided: _____

Advisor(s) ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ In-Person Date notice provided: _____

Name of recipient(s): _____

House Corporation ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ In-Person Date notice provided: _____

Name of recipient(s): _____

Part Four: Trial Proceedings

Documentation: The chapter is required to document the trial by chapter through written minutes of the proceedings. Minutes should summarize the evidence presented and be added to the end of this document.

Quorum: A chapter quorum is required for the trial to proceed. Attendance of an advisor or General Fraternity Officer is strongly encouraged. This quorum only includes active collegiate members who are not temporarily inactive.

1. Total number of initiated members on the chapter roster: ____
2. Total number of initiated members who are not temporarily inactive: ____
3. Quorum Needed = (#1 - #2) x .50 = ____ (round up to the nearest whole number)
4. Total number of active initiated members present at the trial: ____

Kai Committee (Prosecution): The Kai Committee shall organize and present the case against the Accused. List all members and roll numbers:

- Kai Committee Prosecution #1 (Executive Board Officer):

Name: _____ Roll Number: _____

- Kai Committee Prosecution #2:

Name: _____ Roll Number: _____

- Kai Committee Prosecution #3:

Name: _____ Roll Number: _____

- Kai Committee Prosecution #4:

Name: _____ Roll Number: _____

- Kai Committee Prosecution #5:

Name: _____ Roll Number: _____

Was the accused present? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the Accused does not attend the hearing after being given due notice, the chapter may consider the failure to appear as an admission of the charges.

Counsel for the Accused (if applicable): The accused has the right to be represented by an advisor or counselor who shall be a member of the Fraternity.

- Name: _____
 - Example: John R. Knox, *Miami '39*
- Roll Number: _____

Guest Attendance: In addition to a quorum of collegiate members, list other attendees:

- General Fraternity Officer(s): _____
- Chapter Advisor(s): _____
- Other Individuals: _____

The Kai Committee shall present the charge(s) against the accused. The accused shall be given an opportunity to admit or deny the charges. Based on the response of the accused, the chapter will utilize the appropriate order of operations below.

Pleading by the Accused: ☐ Not Guilty ☐ Guilty

If the Accused Pleads Not Guilty: If the Accused denies the charge, the chapter will consider the evidence and arguments presented by each side and will then vote on the question of whether the charge has been proved.

1. The Kai Committee makes opening statement.
2. The Kai Committee presents evidence or witness(es).
3. The chapter members ask questions of the Kai Committee.
4. The Accused makes opening statement.
5. The Accused presents evidence or witness(es).
6. The chapter members ask questions of the Accused.
7. The chapter enters deliberation. The accused may remain in or leave the room, but should not contribute to or disrupt the proceedings.
8. Vote for Guilty or Not Guilty: The chapter determines by a majority vote (simple majority, 50% + 1) if the Accused is guilty or not guilty. The accused should not be present for this vote. List the number of votes below and indicate the outcome by checking the appropriate box.

Number of votes for Guilty: ____
 Number of votes for Not Guilty: ____
 Total number of votes counted: ____

 - a. ☐ Guilty → Proceed to sanction phase
 - b. ☐ Not Guilty → Charges are dismissed and the trial concludes.
8. Vote on Sanction: If found Guilty, the chapter will consider and decide the penalty to be imposed by majority vote (simple majority, 50% + 1). If the chapter determines expulsion or suspension greater than one year is not appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Kai Committee to determine the appropriate lesser penalty.

9. List the number of votes below and indicate the outcome by checking the appropriate box.

Number of votes for Expulsion: ____

Number of votes for Suspension: ____

Number of votes for Referral to the Kai Committee: ____

Total number of votes counted: ____

- a. ☐ Expulsion
- b. ☐ Suspension – Length/Term: _____
- c. ☐ Referral to Kai Committee for alternative sanction

If the Accused Pleads Guilty: If the charge is admitted, the chapter will then set the penalty by a majority vote of collegiate members who are not temporarily inactive.

1. Vote on Sanction: The chapter will consider and decide the penalty to be imposed by majority vote (simple majority, 50% + 1). If the chapter determines expulsion or suspension greater than one year is not appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Kai Committee to determine the appropriate lesser penalty. List the number of votes below and indicate the outcome by checking the appropriate box.

Number of votes for Expulsion: ____

Number of votes for Suspension: ____

Number of votes for Referral to the Kai Committee: ____

Total number of votes counted: ____

- a. ☐ Expulsion
- b. ☐ Suspension – Length/Term: _____
- c. ☐ Referral to Kai Committee for alternative sanction

Part Five: Post-Trial Procedures

Notice of Outcome to the Accused: The accused must be informed of the outcome of the trial. Regardless of a phone call or in-person discussion, it is recommended that the outcome also be communicated in writing.

- ☐ Email - Date outcome provided: _____
- ☐ Phone Call - Date outcome provided: _____
- ☐ In-Person - Date outcome provided: _____

Distribution of Minutes: Minutes shall be kept of the proceedings of the trial summarizing the evidence presented. If the Accused is found guilty, minutes of the proceedings must be distributed within 10 days.

Minutes distributed to the Accused? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Minutes distributed to the district chief? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Minutes distributed to the Chief Executive Officer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Modification of Member's Status: If the Accused is found guilty, chapter officers must ensure the chapter roster accurately reflects the member's status. Changing the member's status to expelled or suspended member should be submitted via the MyBeta portal.

Certification

We certify that the above information is accurate and that all steps were followed to ensure a fair and just process.

President:

_____ Date: _____

Vice President of Administration (Secretary):

_____ Date: _____

Minutes of the Trial by Chapter Proceedings:

Minutes of the Trial by Chapter Proceedings: