

OSCAR Privileges

Letters of Intent submitted to Laurel appear on OSCAR (Online System for Commentary and Response), located at <http://oscar.sca.org>. These letters may be read by anyone. To read the comments and responses you need read privileges; to make comments you need commenting privileges. This policy sets forward the criteria used by Crescent in granting (and revoking) these privileges.

Reading Privileges

Any warranted herald may request reading privileges and, pending Laurel approval*, these privileges will be granted. The herald need not be warranted as a territorial herald. Violating the policy established by Laurel on the February 2008 Cover Letter is grounds for revocation of these privileges. (That policy can be found below.) Accounts that are inactive for six months may be removed from OSCAR by Laurel staff or Crescent. Similarly, a lapse in warrant is sufficient grounds for Crescent to revoke reading privileges. Heralds whose privileges have been revoked or accounts deactivated may reapply for reading privileges.

Commenting Privileges

After reading commentary for at least two months, any warranted herald may request commenting privileges. After a discussion on appropriate commenting style and content with Crescent or Dolphin, and pending Laurel approval, will these privileges will be granted. As with reading privileges, violating the Laurel's February 2008 policy (below) is grounds for revocation of these privileges, as is a lapse in warrant.

The Administrative Handbook section VII.B discusses requirements for retaining OSCAR commenting privileges. These reasons include:

1. Failure to Comment. Failure to comment for six successive Laurel meetings is grounds for removal from the mailing list. At Laurel's discretion, extensions for commentary may be granted in case of illness or personal catastrophe, or because the individual provides specialized expertise that remains valuable to the Laurel office.

Individuals who persistently offer only non-substantive or incomplete commentary may be considered to have failed to comment. In particular, individuals who persistently refuse to cite sources for information, comment only at the very end of the period for commentary, ignore other commenters' inquiries and requests, or otherwise persistently fail to enter the discussion over issues raised may be considered to have failed to comment.

* Per the College of Arms Administrative Handbook section VII.A.6, Laurel may decline to ratify privileges to OSCAR.

2. Persistent Breach of General Commenting Requirements - Failure to abide by the requirements for format, distribution, or content of commentary may be construed as a failure to comment. In particular, commenters who do not submit comments to OSCAR, or who comment using inappropriate language or tone may be removed from the mailing list and OSCAR without warning.

At the discretion of Laurel or Crescent a commenter may at any time be placed in moderated mode. This means that comments must be approved before others will be allowed to see them. A commenter placed in moderated mode who does not show improvement in the area that caused moderation will have their commenting privileges revoked.

Revocation of commenting privileges may be accompanying by revocation of reading privileges at the discretion of Crescent.

From Laurel: OSCAR Commentary And Confidentiality

The question has been raised, how confidential is commentary in OSCAR? That is to say, should the submitter be told anything about its content?

My answer to that is an unequivocal It Depends. Passing on the exact wording of comments without the explicit permission of their writer may be grounds for loss of commenting privileges. If sharing information contained in such comments would have a useful purpose (i.e., starting to look for permission to conflict, finding more supporting documentation), then I see no reason why not. Otherwise, I would examine my motives carefully, and remember that OSCAR privileges are exactly that.

But there's another consideration. Commentary on OSCAR is not the final word; that doesn't happen until Wreath, Pelican or in extreme circumstances I have spoken it. I would very strongly discourage advising a submitter to take any action on their item while that item is still in commentary, as the problem may quite possibly be solved by the time the meeting is held.

I expect all commenters to not only be sensible and courteous in passing on what is happening on OSCAR, but also remind their clients that the decision has not yet been made. [February 2008 CL]