

The following is an archived version of a discussion on Meta Stack Exchange, including an important reply by Monica Cellio. It exists for archival purposes, in case the GoFundMe page is removed or altered. The aim of this archive is to preserve the content, not to provide functionality or retain the original appearance. Some links have been removed to avoid confusion.

The original of this page was

<https://meta.stackexchange.com/questions/336177/feedback-post-moderator-review-and-reinstatement-processes>

This is based on a snapshot taken on December 22, 2019.



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[Feedback post: Moderator review and reinstatement processes](#)

Ask Question

Asked 2 months ago

Active 11 days ago

Viewed 73k times

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The Moderator review and reinstatement processes posted 21 October 2019 have been discussed with the moderators and the two posts below reflect the agreed process for removing or reinstating moderators from now on. While these processes may change over time as they're put into practice, for now they are considered finalized and are available for use.

- [What processes exist to issue formal warnings or remove moderators?](#)
- [What is the process for reinstating a moderator?](#)

There are two review policies - one (Action Review) is the older policy from 2012 and one (Conduct Review) is the new policy. There is one reinstatement policy for all former moderators who wish to be reinstated.

We expect that some of you may have questions about the processes and want some clarifications. **This post is a place for you to ask them.** Please do not post questions about the process on those posts - they will be removed.

We very much respect the value of meta discussion but would like to keep the process posts clean and not have to delete all of the discussion to make the actual policy clear. Having the discussion here makes that easier. We have cross-linked the posts so that they're easy to find.

For ease of response and voting, please limit each answer to one specific concern.

[discussion moderation moderators](#)

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[edited Dec 6 at 16:53](#)

asked Oct 21 at 20:15



[Catija](#) ♦

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- 119

Are there specific guidelines re interacting with the press (by either party)? – [mjwills](#) Oct 21 at 20:26

- 16

@mjwills have you seen [meta.stackexchange.com/questions/335708/...](#)? – [sourcejedi](#) Oct 21 at 20:27

- 1

@sourcejedi Thanks, very helpful. I wonder whether it may be prudent to be explicit that that policy is in effect in this context. – [mjwills](#) Oct 21 at 20:29

- 134

Genuine question, when can we expect to get responses to the questions/concerns raised? – [Script47](#) Oct 21 at 21:18

- 9

@Script47 Gonna depend on the question. Some of them we're already answering. Some of them will take some time. – [Catija](#) ♦ Oct 21 at 21:22

- 138

It ain't much and I don't have a big reputation but I kindly ask for Monica to be reinstated. – [smtrejo](#) [says Reinstating Monica](#) Oct 30 at 0:20

- 11

Slightly off topic, but how is it decided who gets the unhappy task of posting "questions" like this and exposing their reputation to damage from massive downvoting? – [K Man](#) Nov 3 at 23:24

- 3

@KMan Kinda depends. For this, I was helping JNat so he posted the policies and I posted the feedback post - but as you can see, JNat's been the one primarily answering questions in the answers below. For the new FAQ, I was the primary person working on reconciling the existing FAQ posts to create the new FAQ and Cesar was helping and had posted the prior FAQ. – [Catija](#) Nov 4 at 0:16

- 18

@Catija Is there a planned timeline you can share when a followup to this is posted? Can we expect any changes in the process, and/or an announcement of the final process, and is there a timeline for either? – [Magisch](#) Nov 4 at 9:33

- 51

@Script47 Well it's been a few weeks and only 1 of the top 13 posts has a staff answer. I guess that's your answer. – [David says Reinstate Monica](#) Nov 5 at 21:42

- 41

@Catija I haven't heard anything on the feedback that was left -- do you have a timeframe on when we can expect to hear something? – [George Stocker](#) Nov 7 at 12:51

- So, when will we get an answer to the remaining questions? It's 6th December 2019! Will you answer them before 2020? Or do we have to wait till 2121? – [Ismael Miguel](#) Dec 6 at 12:42

- 3

[As of 2019-12-06 16:53:44Z](#), this question lost the featured tag without an answer to most of the questions posted here. Does that mean that all contents here will be ignored? And all unanswered questions will remain that way? – [Ismael Miguel](#) Dec 9 at 16:35

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73 Answers

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1333

I know that my answer will overlap others, but enough people are waiting for me to comment on this process with an eye toward my case in particular that I'm going to post anyway.

The new removal process, while better than what was done to me, lacks important safeguards present in the pre-existing Moderator Action Review Process. Most importantly, it lacks the interactive phase where the accused can respond to comments raised by others. It also **lacks transparency**, being handled entirely by two CMs out of view of anybody else including the accused. It also **does not allow the accused to challenge specific judges** for substantiated concerns of bias; it relies on CMs to recuse themselves, but the moderator has no say or even knowledge of who acted. If there were more trust between the community and SE this might be surmountable, but in the current climate that's an awfully big assumption.

The new reinstatement process is even more flawed:

- **There is no transparency or ability to audit.** The moderator submits a petition into the void and eventually an answer comes out. If I were to submit an application, a CM or Director could simply veto it and then say "we went through a process so we must be right".
- **The moderator cannot challenge judges.** If a moderator has been removed, chances are that there were some interactions with some community managers and/or members of the community strategy team that would prejudice an appeal. A moderator should not be subject to summary judgement by the employee who ruled on the removal in the first place, and the moderator should have the opportunity to raise specific concerns about anybody. The moderator should know who the judges are.
- **The process starts from a presumption of guilt.** If a moderator went through the paired removal process and actually received the information about charges and warnings called for in it, then the moderator has a starting point for an appeal. But if that *didn't* happen, the moderator is forced to guess. "Guilty until proven innocent" is not a sound judicial process; this process should not apply in cases where no sound *removal* process was followed.
- **There is no dialogue, no hearing, and no opportunity to present witnesses or evidence.** The interactive aspects of the pre-existing removal process (MARF) are missing in both the new removal process and the reinstatement process. While synchronous chat for worldwide teams is a major hassle, there needs to be *some* way to include the moderator in a *discussion* of the situation.

Both processes involve **annotations**, which should be shared with the moderator and subject to challenge. I can only imagine what unsupported annotations a CM or Director may have added to my account, for example.

The new removal process, if properly followed, would have given me a fair chance, though the concerns about transparency and bias remain. That process would have required SE to share information about the specific complaint with me and, at worst, would have resulted in a warning. **But that's not what happened**, and against that backdrop, the **reinstatement process would not be fair in my case**. I shan't submit to it.

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[edited Oct 23 at 3:25](#)

answered Oct 22 at 2:56



[Monica Cellio](#)

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- 88

I think your last sentence is what they were hoping you would say. It certainly lets them off the hook. – user102937 Oct 22 at 2:59

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@RobertHarvey I think they were hoping I would submit to it, so they could then say "no" and claim they followed a process. I'm not letting them off the hook, but this process won't be my path to getting this fixed. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 3:01

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@ChrisW after all that SE has done, including unrecanted public smearing, I would be foolish to assume good faith from them. It is way too easy for them to misuse this process to smear me even more. Dialogue only happens at their initiative, unlike in the original removal process where all the mods on the team discuss the matter together. And since I had *already* said I would stay out of TL (and did so), if that had been sufficient for them we wouldn't be here. If things have changed and that *would* have been sufficient, they should reverse their faulty decision. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 12:17

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Monica, there are **NO** annotations on your account at all in the last three years. – [Catija](#) Oct 22 at 12:29

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@Catija I mentioned Sara because the process runs through Sara's team. Sara has the authority, in this process, of unilaterally denying an appeal. I think that's an important factor and you've edited it out; further, my answer now casts doubt on the CMs, and I'm pretty sure they aren't the ones who acted badly here. But thank you for letting me know that there are no annotations currently; I obviously couldn't have known that when I wrote this answer. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 12:34

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@Catija SE can claim that all they like, but the actual process lacks the transparency to allow me to audit the results. Also, all the other stuff I said -- given what got us here, going through this process would be like building on quicksand and guessing about where to pour the foundation. (And I honestly don't see how referring to a very public record is "calling out" someone inappropriately, but I'm not going to get into an edit dispute with an employee.) – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 13:08

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@StrongBad and once I understood that inconsistency issue, I agreed to *treat everyone the same*. That's clear in the transcript and it's what I've been careful to do since that conversation. (It's not a big stretch; I write gender-neutral wherever possible already.) My questions weren't about "hunting for the minimum accommodation"; they were about finding something that would be acceptable to everyone, taking *my* needs and identity issues into account as well. I'm allowed to have those too, right? – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 14:18

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@StrongBad it's never been my intention to hurt anyone. When I became aware that people were hurt for reasons I couldn't understand, I withdrew. I don't know what else you want me to say. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 14:27

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Also, there's a context in which lots of people were feeling hurt by each other, but somehow I'm being singled out? I'll own my part in that but it's *not* the full story by any means @StrongBad. (Also, not a CoC violation...) – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 22 at 15:47

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@StrongBad - So, to clarify - before you would support requesting that SE take steps to mitigate the harm of The Register article (i.e. issue an apology and a retraction), you need to see that Monica accepts responsibility for her ill-treatment? If I've got that stated correctly, your position is coming dangerously close to victim blaming. – [ConcernedClient](#) Oct 22 at 16:31

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@StrongBad If holding a particular opinion on a controversial issue is now automatically construed as hurtful behavior that the person holding it has to apologize for, that seems like a very dangerous precedent. Besides (and I'm being hypothetical here), if we accept that, couldn't Monica just say that she's offended by their position? Why is the fact that they may have been offended by Monica's position more valid or important than the fact that Monica may have been offended by theirs? I for one would hate to see us settling disagreements by trying to determine who's more offended. – [EJoshuaS - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 18:22

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@StrongBad If that's really what Monica's being accused of (unintentionally hurting people by holding a particular opinion), that seems like thoughtcrime. I'm not taking a particular stance on pronoun use here, I'm just saying that I think that it's important that we be able to discuss the issues. Are we going to shut down any debate of any potentially controversial issues now based on the fact that someone, somewhere, might be offended? – [EJoshuaS - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 18:26

- 70

@KyleStrand there are opinions and expressions of opinions that we should agree we ought not host. At the other extreme, "somebody might disagree" is not sufficient reason to bar an opinion. Diversity means encountering perspectives with which you are unfamiliar or disagree; through the resulting discourse we all learn and grow. Where between these two endpoints to draw the line is a matter of much debate; the line seems to be moving much closer to the latter now. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 23 at 0:01

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@Catija "No amount of harm ever makes calling out people on meta and accusing them of things acceptable. That's been our policy for years." So, where's the remediation for Sara **doing exactly that** to me? – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 23 at 2:32

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@StrongBad: "*Monica's stance on pronouns and her usage of pronouns hurt people.*" Hold on a second. Do you really mean her *usage* of pronouns, or her *lack* of usage of pronouns? Also: her **stance** hurt people? Even though she had been perfectly abiding by the rules regardless? Do you realize what you're saying is that you [*<- generic*] think people deserve to be *punished even if they're abiding by your own rules*, solely because they *disagreed* with you? Meaning: obedience is *not* enough for you; agreement is also mandatory? Are you serious here? – [Mehrddad](#) Oct 23 at 23:33

-

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The reinstatement process is broken as written.

The process is rigged against the previous moderator (PM).

Community Managers (CMs) can recuse themselves if they feel they can't be impartial.

There needs to be a way to recuse CMs who can't be impartial but won't recuse themselves. CMs recusing other CMs? The PM recusing up to a small number of CMs? The moderator teams for the target sites?

The process is concluded here.

This is **unacceptable**. The PM never gets a say in this whole process other than applying. They have no way to argue for themselves, set preconditions of their own, or even say "Hang on, the reasons you gave me are factually incorrect/too vague to mean anything!".

If a precondition is set, CM1 will communicate this back to PM

Wait, that's done *after* talking to the mod team? That seems pointlessly opaque: what's wrong with telling PM "Is \$thing okay with you? If so, we'll ask the mods if they want you back on condition you do \$thing" first?

reinstatement is possible under the agreement that a reasonable and attainable precondition should and could be met

This is vulnerable to "Have you stopped beating your wife?". It may be okay if the conditions are strictly about the future, e.g. "PM will never call a user a doo-doo head". It's certainly not okay if the condition can be "PM will stop calling users doo-doo heads" (implying that they did so) or worse "PM will apologise for calling users doo-doo heads" (when PM denies having ever done so).

access is restored

This is the *best* possible outcome for PM. There is no outcome that involves an acknowledgement that the removal was in error (e.g. a miscalculation of inactivity duration, a mistaken belief that PM had broken a rule), let alone an apology or reparations if applicable.

subject to summary removal for non-compliance

Who evaluates compliance? This could easily be gamed.

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[edited Oct 21 at 21:09](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:59



[Leopold says Reinstatement Monica](#)

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If preconditions are communicated to the PM prior to consultation with the current moderators and the current moderators have additional preconditions, then PM will be given two, potentially conflicting sets of preconditions and be aware that the second set of preconditions were specified by the current moderators. That seems less desirable than holding off a week to tell the PM about the preconditions. – [StrongBad](#) Oct 21 at 21:08

- 2

If a former moderator who goes through this process has their own preconditions, wouldn't that generally be a barrier to continued participation with the CM team? I mean, at the end of the day, all of the bits and bytes still flow to Stack Exchange, and someone wanting to come back to work with the CM team would have to accept that they're not *really* in control of their destiny. – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:52

- 1

(It's also the same reason that I don't think it makes *any* sense for Monica to ask for reinstatement, nor for others to ask for it on her behalf.) – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:52

- 11

"This is vulnerable to "Have you stopped beating your wife?" to me that seems to be by design (and rightly so). If it has been determined that PM hasn't violated a rule, then there will be no precondition. But if it has been determined that there was a violation, then it's reasonable to request that PM acknowledges that before being reinstated. If PM still denies that they did *the thing* even though it was determined that they in fact did it, the promise not to do it in the future is not worth much. – [tim](#) Oct 22 at 7:41

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Great point about the voluntary recusal being problematic. (I wonder if, say, Sara Chippis would recuse herself from Monica's case. It would be a most interesting test case.) – [J.R. means 'Just Reinstater'](#) Oct 22 at 10:24

- 11

Another rigged part of the reinstatement process is step 2.1: "If CM1 finds any annotation that states reinstatement is deemed impossible, the request is denied [...]". This seems incredibly vague and arbitrary - so there's an annotation like "never reinstate her lol" about Monica, she can never be reinstated? Hopefully it's not as frivolous as that, but having non-transparent annotations that can immediately stop the process after the first step seems like an easy way out for SE. – [l4mpi](#) Oct 22 at 11:28

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@J.R. - for me the better question is, that since Sarah was undoubtedly the person who made the call to demod Monica (and given that she is a director and the other CMs are not) **why on earth would we expect them to go against her when it would threaten their jobs and livelihoods?** If my boss asked me to review one of their decisions, I'd say "*great idea, boss*" because I'm not a moron. – [Richard](#) Oct 22 at 16:11

- 3

You raise a valid point, @tim, although it depends on any preconditions supplied by the company and/or moderators being fair. If, e.g., someone is demodded because a director is having a horrible day and needs to vent on someone, then given the precondition that they must

publicly state that they will never again eat live babies while tap-dancing on global television (when they have never done so in the first place), then it becomes problematic. (A silly example, I know, I just wanted an example precondition that clearly has no basis in past actions, to illustrate the flaw. ;P) – [Justin Time - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 22:00

- 14

@tim When someone has behaved badly, it is indeed very important that they admit their mistakes and try to rectify things before you give them your trust. Will anyone from Stack Overflow do that? Or is this something they just want other people to do? – [Gort the Robot](#) Oct 23 at 1:26

- @Richard, exactly. In clinical psychology the concept of recusal is more general than what you see in litigious situations. Clinician's are trained to know there are situations that they should never enter into (counseling family members, counseling multiple members of a family) because even under the best of intentions, fully believing that you can be impartial- you will not see when you have lost that ability; therefore, unrepairable harm can occur. This is unethical. You can loose your license for unethical behavior; so the plea "I thought I could have been impartial" is indefensible. – [Lmidh](#) Dec 1 at 15:51

- @Lmidh - Except that SE are the only ones policing SE. The idea that anyone would tell their boss to recuse themselves or go against their decision is laughable. – [Richard](#) Dec 1 at 17:49

- @Richard- Agreed, that's why SE recusal, as stated, is impossible to operate in an ethical or fair way; therefore the entire proposal, as stated, is unable to operate in a fair or ethical way. The idea that the proposal is good or fixes anything is indefensible because it isn't even logically sound. – [Lmidh](#) Dec 1 at 19:12

- It seems the Moniker truck has traction, but as regards the 'Like dumpertruck' meme popular among semi counter-culture coders a while back, what do these numbers actually meanme? – [What's in a Google Search](#) Dec 3 at 21:29

-

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Thank you for taking the time to put this process together. I know this was dozens and dozens of hours across 7-10 people, If I understand your internal structure correctly. I wouldn't be surprised if you've spent 500 people-hours on this issue already, and I understand the desire to 'ship it and iterate'.

Please take a moment to pause, and think: What do these processes optimize for? What does shipping these processes now optimize for?

The answer you have internally is different than what we're seeing.

Here's what we see:

Trust is at an all-time low. I wouldn't be surprised if for some people there was less than zero trust -- that the level of trust went negative, as if you need to improve trust *just to get people to neither trust or distrust you*.

Personally, I'm at zero trust right now. This is not an attack; and it's not you individually, it's you collectively. I know most of the SE staff involved in these affairs on a first name basis, and I respect and cherish our interactions. The ones I don't know on a first-name basis, I've still had net-positive interactions with. In short, I am pre-disposed through our interactions to trust you, but currently do not.

I tell you this not to raise your hackles, but to hopefully share my feelings with you and show you another perspective.

These processes are a bit like putting the cart before the horse. These are pretty good processes for a high-trust environment, but you don't have a high-trust environment, and putting these processes in place right now won't make the environment higher trust.

If anything, putting the removal process in place right now will result in lower trust, and without taking in the substantive feedback of your community and moderators, you will further erode any remaining positive trust you have with members of the community.

So, take a pause. Regroup. Have a meeting. And in this meeting, figure out what you want to do: Do you want to put this process in place, *tout suite*? Or do you want to restore trust with your community? If SE employees reading this trust me, please hear me on this: *Putting this process in place will damage trust, not restore it*.

I'd love to get on a call with you to listen to the issues you have and to help you solve this problem, and I believe there are concrete actions you can take now that will restore some trust [and other actions you can do to further restore trust](#).

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[edited Oct 23 at 1:07](#)

[answered Oct 22 at 10:55](#)



[George Stocker](#)

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"I wouldn't be surprised if for some people there was less than zero trust -- that the level of trust went negative, as if you need to improve trust *just to get people to neither trust or distrust you*." I have less than zero trust indeed. – [Anne Daunted GoFundMonica](#) Oct 22 at 12:10

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As always more diplomatic and solution oriented than most of us. Here's hoping they take you up on that. Also, the less than zero trust is true for many of us. We trust the individual CMs, but the company gets no benefit of the doubt right now. In fact, senior management is 0 for 5 when it comes to doing what they say. – [Magisch](#) Oct 22 at 12:17

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tout suite -> *tout de suite* ;) – [Eric Duminil](#) Oct 23 at 9:42

- 11

@alephzero To be fair, they might be forced by higher ups to find a solution to this mess without admitting any guilt and without apologizing. Thousands of hours wouldn't be enough. – [Eric Duminil](#) Oct 23 at 9:51

- 10

You know, this entire answer was a sight for sore eyes. – [Marc.2377](#) Oct 23 at 12:57

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@EricDuminil "... *without admitting any guilt and without apologizing.*" Easily done. "**We have concluded it is in the best interest of this community to reinstate Monica Cellio to her previous status without conditions.**" And do it, unilaterally. With no further explanation. Just like in court, most settlements pay cash without admitting any wrong-doing and without making any apology that would implicitly constitute an admission of fault. I am not a lawyer, but I've worked with more than my fair share of them. – [Amadeus-Reinstate-Monica](#) Oct 24 at 17:18

- 3

@Amadeus That's true, but it's also only half of the problem (cf. TheRegister). – [Eric Duminil](#) Oct 24 at 17:26

- @EricDuminil They could accompany that with any new policy change desired (which includes a good one, though that is not in evidence yet). By just doing it, sans process, it becomes Monica's choice whether she wants to then resign or not, they can't stop her if she does, but then they can also claim it was entirely her choice, they restored her to her pre-firing status unconditionally (no conditions on her, and none on them either). – [Amadeus-Reinstate-Monica](#) Oct 24 at 17:39

- @Amadeus: I fail to see how it would solve the problem of Point 4 in this [question](#) (TheRegister article). As far as I can tell, it seems to be the biggest problem. – [Eric Duminil](#) Oct 24 at 18:03

- 4

@EricDuminil it doesn't, that would take a separate action, or no action. Reinstating Monica would defuse the situation. They could publish a non-apology retraction in The Register, claiming their contact did so without the permission of the board of directors and did not represent an opinion of SE. – [Amadeus-Reinstate-Monica](#) Oct 24 at 18:22

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"these are pretty good processes for a high-trust environment, but you don't have a high-trust environment, and putting these processes in place right now won't make the environment higher trust." very well said. – [Steve Bennett](#) Nov 2 at 8:02

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The two new processes are palliative at best. I would NEVER want to be a moderator with such procedures in place:

1. There is no community oversight of any community manager's action, and frankly, I do not trust the CMs to never make mistakes and do not see why the community should. The oversight could be performed by other mods under NDA, and be not binding. Both parties need an impartial voice guaranteeing that the process was followed and that the decisions were not too controversial.
2. CMs retain absolute power, including the ability to ban a moderator indefinitely without giving any reasonable reason or appeal. This is unnecessary.
3. Any annotation that says a diamond can't be restored prevents it, indefinitely and with no limits. There are no appeals or guarantees of reinstatement in case of mistakes. This should be corrected (in fact, I don't see why it should be allowed at all).
4. CMs are responsible for inevitable mistakes in judging moderators and are also responsible for deciding whether they made a mistake. This should not be the case, and community oversight is essential to align the incentives.
5. There is no oversight for emergency demodding and nothing to prevent its abuse.
6. Substantially, there are no guaranteed timings. You can delay responding to anyone as long as you want. This should also be corrected, especially in the case of emergency demodding.
7. Accused mods are merely informed that the process is in place once their guilt is "determined". This is "guilty until proven innocent". By talking to @Catija I know this is not as intended but it needs to be fixed: mods should be contacted before any determination and the accusation and the evidence supporting it needs to be shared too, so they can defend themselves.

While I appreciate the effort in writing this, it's clear to me that you have not demonstrated the intention of creating a fair process - this apparently codifies the previous "non-process" in a process that fails to solve the more substantial problems. Instead, it should make more effort to increase trust in some form, and make sure it does not codify that you do not trust us, instead.

You should extensively review it or scratch it and build a process that enshrines mutual trust.

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[edited Oct 22 at 9:17](#)

[answered Oct 21 at 21:24](#)



[Sklivvz](#)

32k1010 gold badges8787 silver badges150150 bronze badges

- 11

We are suffering from day to day. [hide the pain harold.jpg](#). – [Suvitruf says Reinststate Monica](#)
Oct 21 at 21:51

- 7

You're not wrong, Sklivvz, but I can't really see a better way either. How could the community provide oversight of CM actions? There will be times when the actions of the "bad" mod can't be shared with

the community without shaming them publicly. This should basically be like the process of user suspension which is handled by mods with no community input. The problem is that we no longer trust SE to act fairly. If trust hadn't been lost, this procedure would be fine. Without trust, no procedure can be good enough. I don't really see a way around this. – [terdon - stop harming Monica](#) Oct 21 at 22:08

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@terdon there are plenty of ways! (a) the accused mod should see all the evidence against them and be able to present counter-evidence. This would prevent cases like Monica's where she's not even able to disagree because the accusations are so vague and no evidence was presented. (b) some random community moderators could be included in at least reviewing the evidence under NDA and be able to agree or disagree publicly about the outcome. Just two random thoughts, but if there was an interest in having a process based on trust there are 1000 ways. – [Sklivvz](#) Oct 21 at 22:16

- 8

Hmm. Yes, those are good suggestions. I was thinking of "community" as "the community that elected this mod". But allowing the mod to see the evidence (except when provided in confidence) does seem like a no-brainer, really. I hadn't realized that wasn't part of the process! – [terdon - stop harming Monica](#) Oct 21 at 22:18

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In absolute generality, a necessary condition of a good process is that the incentives align with the outcome. All parties should have incentives that create a balanced outcome, preventing mistakes, and reinforcing trust. At the moments the incentives are objectively broken. For example CMs have no incentive in finding mistakes in their own work. Sometimes they don't even have the possibility (e.g. an annotation is unappealable even when totally wrong) – [Sklivvz](#) Oct 21 at 22:18

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I don't normally do this, but this is one thing I would categorically disagree with you on. Community-elected Moderators are appointed to represent the community, but have always been beholden to the rules the company sets for them. This also means that CMs have the privilege of serving as benevolent dictators over the process. Asking the community to adjudicate a situation like this is akin to making moderation *more* of a popularity contest rather than it being at least somewhat more in-line with what an outside observer could expect. – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:27

- 3

That isn't to say that I don't see your point; I think what you're trying to get at is to make it more of a trustworthy process. I think my only real sticking point is that you're not thrilled that CMs hold absolute power...when in actuality they do. Resolving *that* tension is something that goes above this process' pay grade. – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:28

- 9

@Makoto I think CMs should be free to make their own decisions, but I think they should NOT be able to do so *secretly*. Non-binding oversight is one way. – [Sklivvz](#) Oct 21 at 22:43

- 1

@Sklivvz: I mean...this *isn't* a public trial. This is honestly the company providing clarity around a policy which they admitted wasn't followed or in place or *both*, and we're still getting the same judges and the same hard reality check we had before this whole debacle kicked off. The company can make

decisions about whether or not a moderator can remain a moderator. Expecting any less is a bit odd since this isn't a public trial. – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:50

- 6

Again, the opposite of a secret trial is not necessarily a public trial. Plenty of trials are conducted behind closed doors to guarantee privacy, yet with oversight by the public to guarantee fairness.

– [Sklivvz](#) Oct 21 at 23:03

- 30

My biggest problem with this is that it doesn't seem to involve the other mods for that site ("team") at all - not in gathering information and context, not consulting them... Why not? It does reinforce the problem that we don't trust the CMs to handle this. – [mxyzplk - Justice for Monica](#) Oct 21 at 23:25

- 7

@Sklivvz I really liked the one line summary as you had it before the last edit: "You should scratch it and build a process that enshrines mutual trust." – [De Novo supports GoFundMonica](#) Oct 22 at 0:05

- 1

@DeNovo Thanks, I've incorporated your feedback – [Sklivvz](#) Oct 22 at 9:17

- That's such a nice idea that I'd have to agree. And there is an even better approach: "build a process that *does not need mutual trust*." But one that works even without. Taking a hint from democratic institutions that need to be balanced *against* each other in the face of antagonistic interests and ambitions. We saw the ousting of the 7th king Superbus a benevolent dictator/king and now look at processes modelled after a failed republic. Why not just skip that?

– [LangLangC](#) Oct 22 at 10:27

-

add a comment

223

The new process was created in response to the lack of process that led to the firing of Monica. So I think it is fair to ask in what ways the events around Monica's firing violated the tenets of this new process, and what SE is planning to do to correct their mistakes. I think SE should state publicly in which ways the rights this process grants to moderators were ignored by the previous events. We have read an apology by SE, but that was a bit fuzzy on exactly what SE thinks they did wrong, and it doesn't really leave me with the impression that SE necessarily understood just how much they screwed up. It would help to restore confidence if SE would actually state what went wrong, and how the new process addresses these mistakes.

One important principle of the new process is that there should be a warning, and that this warning should contain clear and actionable feedback. This is to me maybe one of the most important parts, and one I personally consider one of the aspect that were not followed at all in previous events, to my limited knowledge.

I think the process itself is fine, and I'm glad to see that SE incorporates the feedback it received from the moderators. But the process still requires us to trust SE, as it's entirely in the hands of SE employees. Which is probably the way it has to be, I don't really see any other viable options. But that

trust is something SE has to earn again, and while the new process is a good step, it doesn't necessarily fix the fundamental issue behind the botched firing without process. Resolving the situation with Monica is a prerequisite for quite a few people to earn back that trust.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 21 at 23:06](#)



[Sonic the Reinstatement Monica-hog](#)

37.4k99 gold badges7070 silver badges168168 bronze badges

[answered Oct 21 at 20:30](#)



[Mad Scientist](#)

147k5151 gold badges267267 silver badges546546 bronze badges

- 5

I kinda want to chalk this one up to the fact that there *wasn't* a clear and followed policy which led to Monica's abrupt dismissal. The absence of a policy would, in my mind, be enough to see to it that things like this "happen" without what others would consider due process. – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:25

- 39

@Makoto Then the right course of action would be to reinstate Monica instead of "standing by the hard decision" to abruptly fire her without due process. – [ColleenV parted ways](#) Oct 21 at 22:36

- 23

@ColleenV: Sorry, this process isn't about Monica. This is about **making sure that some other moderator doesn't get treated as badly as Monica did**. That's how I'm reading it, anyway. – [Makoto](#) Oct 21 at 22:37

- 188

I will note that there *was* a process, and that it was completely ignored. – [SolveIt](#) Oct 21 at 22:55

- 11

You're functioning under the assumption that they believe they did something wrong. I haven't seen anything to suggest, at least specific to Monica's case, SE believes that. Which I guess in the end is their right. It's their company, their rules. I don't like it but if the bosses have spoken then... – [James](#) Oct 22 at 3:42

- 22

@SolveIt Yea, every time I read one of these posts I keep thinking "What's the point of creating a new policy if the old one wasn't used?" – [Mast](#) Oct 22 at 8:44

- 17

@Mast - Ah, but they'll follow it this time, honest. – [Richard](#) Oct 22 at 11:30

- There are other options. See [this question](#) and [this answer](#) for two possibilities. – [rockwalrus-stop harming Monica](#) Oct 22 at 20:54
- 9
Based on my reading of the proposed process, it *allows* for exactly what happened to Monica to happen again. Step 1: CM decides there is a problem. Step 2: CM unilaterally removes moderator status. – [BJ Myers](#) Oct 22 at 22:49
- 4
@Richard I haven't read anywhere that they intend to follow the new process any closer than the old one. To my knowledge, they just said "we didn't follow process, so let's make a new process". – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 23:26
- 1
@Makoto If Monica had *just* been fired I would agree. But Monica was fired over the CoC, which was being amended. That SO had a knee-jerk response in firing her is a secondary concern. If she can be fired as a moderator for Kafkaesque reasons, every user is at risk of punishment. If SO will not treat her equitably in a process they set up in response to their own admitted screw-up, what hope do we have that we will be treated any better? – [Machavity](#) Oct 24 at 14:15

add a comment

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These processes miss the point.

All of the company's current big issues with the community boil down to one issue: The company lost a lot of goodwill and trust.

Without trust, review processes that work must rely on transparency and consistency. A written process theoretically creates some consistency, but unless it's accompanied by transparency or trust, in practice people won't know if the process is followed correctly, fairly, and impartially.

Keep in mind how all of this looks: The company fired a moderator, refused to let her know why, then the company posted some seemingly false and slanderous accusations against the moderator, missed 4 separate opportunities to apologize and own up to their mistakes, and now, weeks later, graciously allows the moderator to ask to be let back in, if she promises, so to speak, "to stop beating her wife".

This looks bad. If what actually happened is any better than the above summary, the company should be desperate to create more transparency.

[shareimprove this answer](#)
[edited Oct 23 at 13:31](#)



[Marc.2377](#)

1,23499 silver badges1717 bronze badges
answered Oct 21 at 22:49



[Peter - Unban Robert Harvey](#)

2,39511 gold badge88 silver badges1717 bronze badges

- 38

This, but the collapse didn't begin with the loss of trust. Losing trust was a consequence of changing the site's primary focus from programming to socially engineering programmers.

– [ReinstateMonicaSackTheStaff](#) Oct 22 at 22:30

- 14

I see no reason why a rational person would engage with this site. It is built ENTIRELY on contributions from un-reimbursed volunteers. These volunteers serve at the whim of people with a political agenda diametrically opposed to the very premise of meritocracy. Or in the words of WOPR from the movie 'War Games' -- The only winning move is to not play. I will continue to farm SE for answers. I will not contribute ANYTHING that could be used against me in the kangaroo court they have established. – [Terry](#) Oct 23 at 13:42

- 11

@Terry its not even a kangaroo court - they implemented a star chamber. – [gbjbaanb](#) Oct 25 at 8:59

add a comment

168

There is no protection against directed findings

The only people who can take decisions on moderator removal and reinstatement are community managers (CM). All CM are part of the same corporate hierarchy. The same person, or a very small set of persons, decides whether all CM will keep earning their living tomorrow.

This means that Stack Overflow, Inc. management can direct findings, either overtly or implicitly. If a CM knows that their boss wants a moderator removed or reinstated, but their personal conviction goes in the other direction, they'll have to make a hard choice between going with their conscience and keeping their job.

A fair process must:

- avoid such conflicts of interest and loyalty;
- in such a way that everybody involved (especially employees) can be sure that there will be no retaliation;
- and in such a way that the community can trust that the people involved felt safe against retaliation.

This is a difficult governance problem. There is both a high need for confidentiality (especially so that if a moderator does something wrong, the victims know that they won't face retaliation) and high trust

(which is hard to guarantee without openness). There is some inspiration to be had with whistleblower processes which face the same difficulty.

I don't see how this problem could be solved without involving non-employees in the process. There needs to be some independent oversight. In the first few years of Stack Overflow, Jeff was the benevolent dictator. It worked because Jeff was "one of us". Those days are long over. SOI is a mostly faceless corporation that has already demonstrated that it does not have the best interest of the community in mind. This cannot be resolved by company-internal processes.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 29 at 11:41](#)

answered Oct 22 at 11:02



[Gilles 'SO- stop being evil'](#)

102k2525 gold badges201201 silver badges449449 bronze badges

- 16

Excellent answer. You do a good job explaining the exact reasons why the standard corporate approach for granting positions is incompatible with the justice system they are trying to establish, something I briefly alluded to [in my answer](#). – [Wildcard](#) Oct 22 at 17:26

- Gilles, my edit would probably be rejected for being "too minor" so I'm not gonna make it, but I believe you meant "Those days" instead of "These days". If this is the case, would you please fix it and then flag my comment for removal. :) – [286110](#) Oct 22 at 20:43

- [@286110](#) [Should it be "those", really?](#) – [Gilles 'SO- stop being evil'](#) Oct 22 at 21:31

- [Legally separating Stack Exchange, Inc and the community](#) could really help making these conflicts of interest go away. – [rockwalrus-stop harming Monica](#) Oct 22 at 23:27

- 3

[@Gilles](#) I'm not good with English grammar here, but the period deemed good here by you is the period that coincided with Jeff as the benevolent dictator, and since we are way past that period I think "those" fits here instead of "these". – [286110](#) Oct 23 at 0:45

- "SOI is a mostly faceless corporation". I don't think so, majority of recent actions were done by the Director of Public Q&A or her subordinates (most likely by her order). If Jeff was the benevolent dictator, Sara is evil dictator of Public Q&A. She has support from top management, that seems do not understand the damage causing by her actions. – [MiFreidgeim SO-stop being evil](#) Nov 26 at 12:10

add a comment

156

This does not address the core issue

This must be called out, again, and again, until an answer is received.

Monica was suspended without a warning, and [accused of violating the CoC](#). [This has been brought up time and time again](#). No process, not matter how detailed, can work where the party is presumed guilty, and until SE, either reinstates Monica and apologizes for slandering her, or provides evidence to back their claims, or Monica declares SE has managed this privately and she is satisfied, no process that is created will have any validity, or indeed moral authority, as the issuing party has shown itself unable to engage the community with the necessary transparency to convince me that *any* process will be followed. Especially one like this, that relies on CMs, rather than the users.

[Monica remains unsatisfied](#)

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 22 at 0:15



[Reinstating Monica](#)

6,75555 gold badges99 silver badges2020 bronze badges

- 5

This is not about Monica specific, period. – [Luuklag](#) Oct 22 at 7:46

- 80

@Luuklag Yes it is. Its impossible to disentangle the Monica's treatment from this attempt to justify it post-fact. Here's a pretty decent explanation of why:

meta.stackexchange.com/a/336117/408593 – [Reinstating Monica](#) Oct 22 at 15:01

- 11

repeatedly asserting "This is not about Monica" is merely an attempt to control the debate through intimidation. Either there is a debate between two sides who disagree but respect one another, in which case both sides must engage with the other's points, or there is an autocratic entity that controls truth and compels speech. Repeatedly asserting that others opinions are not valid is not inclusive and does not advance the values on which SE was built. – [Mark C. Wallace](#) Nov 4 at 14:45

- 1

If this is not about Monica, then it's about the intent to do to others what they did to her. That is even worse than it just being about her. – [Monty Harder](#) Nov 14 at 19:28

add a comment

124

The last process we had was completely ignored. What happens the next time a CM decides there should be an exception?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 23:01



[SolveIt](#)

1,18211 gold badge33 silver badges88 bronze badges

- 5
According to JNat, [it won't happen because there's a process to prevent it.](#) – [user12205](#) Oct 22 at 11:32
- 20
The new policy allows for retroactive following by claiming the removal was an "emergency". A term which is conveniently undefined. – [Numeron](#) Oct 24 at 4:37
- Coming from StackOverflow background: "FEATURE FREEZE! We only accept emergency hotfixes now!!!" Cue every feature being rebranded as "emergency hotfix." Sounds familiar? But sure, This Time It Will Be Different. – [Piskvor](#) Nov 26 at 17:06

•

add a comment

121

In the restoration process, Discovery phase, step 2.1,

If CM1 finds any annotation that states reinstatement is deemed impossible, the request is denied....

Under what conditions would such an annotation be added to the former moderator's account? Neither the Moderator Conduct Review Process nor the Moderator Action Review Process seem to indicate who has the authority to make such an annotation or what circumstances must be found to exist for such an annotation to be made. Is such a clause intended only for the worst of the worst, the remorseless "serial killers" of the moderation world, or is it intended as a standard annotation to be used in most cases of moderator removal?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:46



[Columbia says Reinstate Monica](#)

13.9k66 gold badges3232 silver badges7777 bronze badges

- 5
Almost duplicate of [yonder answer](#), but this is more comprehensive. – [Daniel Fischer](#) Oct 21 at 20:51
- 13
Yes. these annotations should be considered *extremely* rare and particularly substantiated. They should not be considered standard at all. The bulk of (unrequested) moderator removals are for going dormant and failing to respond to emails checking in. None of these would include an annotation like this. – [Catija](#)♦ Oct 21 at 22:30
- 43
@Catija I'm sure that's the case, but nobody was worried about the typical removal anyway. The whole point of having a process is to fairly deal with difficult cases. – [SolveIt](#) Oct 21 at 22:43

- 14
@Catija This procedure, from our perspective, is to protect us from you. Such annotations should make no difference at all, since if a moderator should never be reinstated there'll be reasons for that *beyond* "you've got a User-Is-Evil flag, sorry-not-sorry". This step should just be completely removed. – [wizzwizz4](#) Oct 22 at 10:20
- 1
@Catija so an "ordinary" CoC violation (one that is not extremely grievous), like calling someone an idiot for posting an off-topic question or using the old cover sheet on a TPS report, would not result in such a bar? Or is this intended to cover non-CoC violations versus *any* CoC violation (with any CoC violation resulting in a bar)? – [Columbia says Reinstatement Monica](#) Oct 22 at 13:35
- 10
I fear (*read: lack of trust*) that this step 2.1 is there for one and only one purpose: so that after ratification and before reviewing Monica's case, someone can add an annotation stating "reinstatement of this former moderator is impossible", thus not just permitting but *forcing* CM1 to deny reinstatement and end the process right there, in order to avoid the embarrassment (for SE) of what a genuine reinstatement review would entail – [landru27](#) Oct 23 at 20:48

add a comment

100

Initiation

The process is started when the Community Management Team is made aware of an issue. This can be a complaint against a moderator, or the Team being made aware of a security issue (like a moderator's account appearing to be compromised).

Emergency Removal Phase

The CM (CM1) who "stumbles upon" the issue will take care of it. Moderator access should be removed immediately, to limit the potential for any further damage. Available info is documented.

This looks like what happened to Monica. I can understand why a security issue or compromised account would warranting immediate, unilateral action; however, I'm still bothered that "a complaint against a moderator" is grounds for immediate removal.

I suppose this explains why calls for Monica's immediate reinstatement have seemingly been ignored and gone unheard. SE still feels like they made the right move; now they've put a process in place that conveniently justifies and codifies their prior actions.

[Complaints against moderators](#) are part of the business of moderating. You can't please all of the people all of the time.

I'm very disappointed in the way this is heading. Had the procedure said that, in the case of complaints, the Emergency Removal Phase *will be skipped* (instead of *can be skipped*), my concerns would be allayed. However, as written, I don't like how skipping is merely an option.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 21 at 21:10](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:51



[J.R. means 'Just Reinstate'](#)

4,41133 gold badges1717 silver badges2424 bronze badges

- 3

"In the event of a security issue, the Emergency Removal Phase is initiated; in the event of any other complaint [...], that step can be skipped" This seems to indicate that emergency removal will be used for security issues only, with regular complaints using the non-emergency process.

– [Davis Broda](#) Oct 21 at 20:54

- 8

@DavisB - I suppose I'm concerned about the wording there. If the procedure said *will be skipped* instead of *can be skipped*, my concerns would be allayed. – [J.R. means 'Just Reinstate'](#)

Oct 21 at 20:57

- might want to edit the question in that case, to make it clear that the can/will distinction is your objection here. Otherwise it just looks like you missed a few lines in the policy. – [Davis Broda](#)

Oct 21 at 20:58

- @DavisB - I took your sage advice and have edited my post accordingly. – [J.R. means 'Just Reinstate'](#)

Oct 21 at 21:01

- 1

"We made a decision to act quickly, which I personally approved, but in doing so skipped several critical parts of the process." [cto apology] Does that help? From the list of anticipated reasons it seems pretty clear to me emergency removal is about time-critical stuff. "This feedback should always be the first option if the moderator could have simply failed to perceive their actions as problematic." [policy]

I'm not seeing your reading of the policy. – [sourcejedi](#) Oct 21 at 21:12

- 1

I'm kinda happier with the blanket "extremely out of character" and "other unanticipated incidents", than trying to go into greater detail to map out what it looks like for a trusted moderator to suddenly become damaging to the site or users. I'm put in mind of this [alleged example](#). **Content warning** for extreme injury, also philosophical discussion and historical debate. – [sourcejedi](#) Oct 21 at 21:24

- ...Semi-relevant question, what happens in the case of complaints against community-facing company employees? – [Justin Time - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 22:14

- 2

Moreover, why can't emergency halts be accomplished by a suspension rather than the much more severe demodding? – [Numeron](#) Oct 24 at 3:33

- @Numeron: A suspended mod can unsuspend themselves, if memory serves, and in fact I believe this has actually been tested by mods in the past, just to see what would happen. That is, the software does not treat suspension as a temporary demodding: they still retain the mod power to issue and remove suspensions of any user. Diamond removal is, for technical reasons, the only way to actually stop a mod from using their privileges. – [Nathan Tuggy](#) Oct 26 at 8:28
- That seems like a bizarre and somewhat serious oversight, @NathanTuggy. o.o I'm curious why it's set up that way. – [Justin Time - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 26 at 19:52
- @JustinTime: It's never been considered important enough to fix, since the designed way to temporarily halt a (potentially) rogue mod is just to remove their diamond (and then suspend if still necessary), then put it back when done. Mod tools in general, since they're in-house software used by probably less than a thousand people *ever* (~600 current moderators, a few hundred past moderators), are kind of rough around the edges. – [Nathan Tuggy](#) Oct 27 at 4:12
- Fair enough, @NathanTuggy. Still comes across as a bit weird, though, even if there's a good reason for it. ;P – [Justin Time - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 27 at 18:14

add a comment

83

What constitutes an "emergency" for removal purposes? While an emergency by its very name indicates that things must be expedited to prevent ongoing harm, I think that this needs to be defined better, so that the vagueness of one word in a policy cannot be used as a sole justification for a removal. I certainly hope that expressing disagreement is not an "emergency".

I don't know if a list of things that constitutes an emergency is desired, or a list of things that are *not* emergencies, or both. But this needs elaborating.

Funny how no one really thought about what constitutes an emergency before. But just thinking about why we need this: it's about something many others and I have pointed out plenty of times recently. It's a matter of trust.

This is just one case of needing to "get it in writing". The times when people need to get it in writing are when working with other parties/groups where the trust level isn't high enough given the importance: the mortgage company when getting a home loan, contract review, credit card companies, lawyers, etc.

With trust firmly in place, so many people wouldn't be questioning, nitpicking, and just generally being cynical about all Meta interactions.

In addition to getting the process right, do the right thing and regain the community's trust.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 22 at 0:31](#)

[answered Oct 21 at 21:09](#)



[rgettman](#)

4,14411 gold badge1616 silver badges3434 bronze badges

- 72
 - +1. Was Monica's removal an "emergency" according to this new process? (If so, it stretches the definition of "emergency" to "because a SE employee wanted to do it now...") – [mxyzplk - Justice for Monica](#) Oct 21 at 23:35
- 12

Emergencies generally center around possible account compromise (and actions that look like it), misuse of private information (PII, particularly), or even mod-only userscripts that have gone awry and are removing content while the mod sleeps. These are serious security threats for which a diamond removal can't be delayed due to the special access the diamond grants.

– [Catija♦](#) Oct 22 at 5:08
- 33

@Catija Can we take that as a "no"? – [SolveIt](#) Oct 22 at 6:42
- 4

@Goyo Either way, I'd like to hear SE's official position on this. – [SolveIt](#) Oct 22 at 11:59
- 8

I don't think that defining emergency is that important... what *is* important is that any emergency measure is only temporary, e.g., limited to at most one week and thereafter either confirmed by a regular process or automatically undone. – [maaartinus](#) Oct 23 at 10:36
- 2

@SolveIt definitely a no – [danielbeard](#) Oct 23 at 17:08
- Definitely more of a "can't comment because lawyers are involved", IMHO. – [Jon Harper](#) Dec 2 at 19:40

add a comment

81

I mentioned this on the Moderator Team site, but never had time to come back to it and follow-up:

For a re-instatement, will the information gathered during the Discovery phase be shared with the former moderator?

It seems to be mentioned in the removal process that the moderator will be informed of what's happening, but it's not completely clear there, and it's not mentioned in the re-instatement process that the former moderator will be told specifically why they were removed.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:25



[Ward - Reinstate Monica](#)

11.5k88 gold badges3434 silver badges6363 bronze badges

- This was the first thing that came to my mind as I read through the processes. – [BenV](#) Oct 21 at 20:25
- 5

Yeah, complete transparency would seem to require this, albeit with redactions where necessary to prevent sharing of sensitive information (although the need for that should be minimal, as the focus should be on the moderator's own actions, and there are no privacy concerns in sharing one's own actions with them). – [Cody Gray](#) Oct 21 at 20:57

- 3

Do you mean in the case that the request for reinstatement is denied? – [Catija](#) Oct 21 at 21:53

- @Catija I meant in any case... Ideally a mod would be given the specifics when they're removed, but in cases where that doesn't happen "on the way out," it should be part of the process to come back. – [Ward - Reinstatement Monica](#) Oct 21 at 22:57

- 3

Oh, you specifically say "for a re-instatement"... If the reinstatement is deemed uneventful and just passed through the process and confirmed, is there a reason to mention anything found in Discovery? – [Catija](#) Oct 21 at 23:05

- 54

@Catija A reason ? It's called being honest. Not "mentioning" things found in discovery is called "covering up things". The expression "honesty is the best policy" leaps to mind, although not in terms of recent SE management actions. – [StephenG](#) Oct 22 at 0:00

- 3

@Catija In my original comment in the Moderator's Team, I was specifically referring to the reinstatement process because that's where I thought the term "discovery" was most appropriate. And to me, "Discovery" implies that both parties have all the information. Ideally, both parties would have the information during a removal, but in addition to the current Monica situation (where she wasn't told why), I can imagine a re-instatement where the former mod doesn't have all the info, e.g. if it's after a long-ish period of time. – [Ward - Reinstatement Monica](#) Oct 22 at 0:14

- 5

@StephenG I'm gonna need you to explain... an example, maybe? When is a time that a mod requests reinstatement, that reinstatement is granted without debate... what is there to disclose? – [Catija](#) Oct 22 at 0:53

- 18

@Catija Seriously ? The reasons for the removal (including whether they were in error or a deliberate act of malice or seemed justified and if so why) *and* the reasons for the reinstatement. People need to see that justice is done and why things happened. I am flabbergasted that you need this explained to you. – [StephenG](#) Oct 22 at 1:02

- 6

@StephenG I think we're coming at this from two different assumptions... most of the time the reason for reinstatement is "because they asked to be reinstated." – [Catija](#) Oct 22 at 1:05

- 38

@Catija I think you're right in that the two of you are looking at it from different POVs. You appear to be looking at it from: moderator asked to resign and asked to be reinstated. StephenG appears to be looking at it from the point of view: moderator was removed not at their request and has now asked for reinstatement (possibly not knowing why they were removed). In the future, moderators will, hopefully, have had the reasons for removal communicated to them

during the removal process. At this time, that is not necessarily the case for any moderator who was previously removed. – [Makyen](#) Oct 22 at 2:49

- 9

@Catija Moderators elected by the members and removed by the elected moderators should **not** be reinstated without explanation to the members - this challenges the (alleged) trust relationship that is supposed to exist. Likewise elected moderators removed by SE management and subsequently reinstated need to have a clear explanation (which they are free to publish) explaining why they were removed and why they were reinstated (and what remedies were applied). This is natural justice for moderators, the members who elect them and the managers. Justice is open, not secret. – [StephenG](#) Oct 22 at 8:22

- 4

@Catija, policies like this should be written with the exceptional case in mind. In the more mundane cases, people will naturally take shortcuts and/or combine steps (like combining the communication about being reinstated with the message about what was found during the discovery phase). – [Bart van Ingen Schenau](#) Oct 22 at 13:18

- @Catija Here is a decent example. A community manager has a bad day and demods 5 random people they are prejudice against and then try to cover it up by claiming those 5 people violated policies without any evidence for that. When those 5 mods are reinstated (assuming anyone figures out what happened), they should be notified that it was a community manager being a jerk and that the person has been scolded or reprimanded or maybe even outright fired. It is an extreme example, yes, but feel free to insert any idiotic reason onto a trigger-happy CM having a bad day and a get a good example. – [The Great Duck](#) Dec 7 at 5:13

- @Catija If a user was banned or kicked out of any group and they don't know why that either means the ban was in error, or the user didn't learn from what happened. For the same reason you get an email telling you why a suspension has occurred from the moderators, a moderator should be told why they were demodded - period either when reapplying or at the time of demodding. The only exception would be the incredibly obvious cases where a moderator was demodded because they asked or because their bot broke and it was **temporary** hotfix. – [The Great Duck](#) Dec 7 at 5:18

-

add a comment

80

Regarding the reinstatement process.

Community Managers (CMs) can recuse themselves if they feel they can't be impartial

Is it the case that a CM should also generally recuse themselves if they were involved in that moderator's removal process?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:38



[Robert Longson](#)

14.7k66 gold badges3333 silver badges7272 bronze badges

- 4

That might be ideal, but there are not that many CMs. – [StrongBad](#) Oct 21 at 20:47

- 60

This is like filing an appeal to a court, only to find you are facing the same judge again.

– [user12205](#) Oct 21 at 23:41

- 8

Yes, this is absurd. What moderator who feels they were justified (or wants a certain state of affairs) would *ever* recuse themselves? It shouldn't be voluntary—it should be essential. No moderator involved with the original decision should have *any* say in anything to do with the reinstatement process. – [Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#) Oct 22 at 4:04

- 9

@JasonBassford Manager. CMs are staff, community managers, not moderators. There's only seven of us and four or even six could have been involved in the process of removing a moderator since the first event leads to a warning and the second to removal. If it was six, that leaves only one person on the CM team... and at least two, if not three are required for reinstatement. We can not require that they all recuse themselves. – [Catija♦](#) Oct 22 at 4:55

- 21

@Catija In that case, it's impossible for the process to be impartial. You've pretty much said that the process is a *fait accompli*. – [Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#) Oct 22 at 5:04

- 4

@JasonBassford Except for one thing... it's completely hypothetical. No mods have been removed with the process at this point and the existing process for mod removal has been used once. So saying that it's impossible and we can't be impartial when it's not even a concern... these processes may change over time as we put them to the test. Your concern may be completely valid... but on the time scale I've seen (one removal in 7 years), I think we can see how it goes? – [Catija♦](#) Oct 22 at 5:32

- 36

@Catija But that's not how due process (or planning) works. As an earlier comment said, if you appeal a decision from a judge, the legal system does not have the same judge rule on your appeal. It's only common sense. I don't see how my concern could *not* be valid. You are also splitting hairs—because you know perfectly well that Monica was removed. Saying that it wasn't with *the process* is a convenient blinder to the issue. You've had her wait, on the premise that it's for this process to come out. Saying now that the reinstatement process doesn't cover her situation is disingenuous. – [Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#) Oct 22 at 5:45

- 6

@JasonBassford Well, fortunately, all seven CMs are available even by your standards to address Monica's request, should she make one. – [Catija♦](#) Oct 22 at 13:35

- @Catija is [this answer](#) out of date then as it lists 12 people, not 7. – [Robert Longson](#) Oct 22 at 15:31
- 1

@Catija My point is that not all seven *should* be involved. It should be much less than that. Assuming it's even possible at this point for anything about this to be impartial. – [Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#) Oct 22 at 16:13

- 3

@RobertLongson Community Team != Community Managers – [Catija](#) Oct 23 at 12:12

- 2

@Catija That question says *Who are the Community Team (sometimes referred to as the Community Managers or CM's), and what is their role?* and the answer doesn't say *Community Team* doesn't mean *Community Managers*. I guess that is what confuses Robert. If that answer is wrong, it should be corrected. – [kiamlaluno](#) Nov 4 at 8:44

- 1

@Catija perhaps the real issue then is having 5-6 people all crammed together deciding if a moderator is removed or not. Or maybe there needs to be more people involved so that way an appeal *can* be impartial. I believe the problem everyone has is that there is nothing tangible to prevent outright malice from a community manager or series of community managers from demodding random users with no ability to appeal. – [The Great Duck](#) Dec 7 at 5:22

-

add a comment

79

The real, essential problem that I see (that actually might not be able to be resolved, because of the underlying conflict of interest between company and community):

- Moderators get to their position via a democratic process, an election within the **user community** of a specific site on the stack exchange network. (And note: "all" users are asked to vote. It is not like the moderator community decides for new padawans, invites them and later announces "they joined the force".)
- Yet, "firing" them is something that **solely** happens within Stack Exchange Inc.!

I understand that the *company* is running the servers, and I understand their need to be able to act immediately to emergencies such as compromised user ids.

But for any other kind of depriving a moderator of his status, the *user community* should have a say. At a **minimum** by having all other elected moderators being able to *vote* on that. The idea that solely CMs working for Stack Exchange Inc. determine what is going to happen isn't convincing. Any more.

In the past, the moderator status was subject to decisions by Stack Exchange Inc. only. And when 99.99% of the users trust the company, why not?

But going forward from here: if Stack Exchange Inc. is **serious** about listening the community again, then a "moderator firing process" that doesn't include some form of **community** input is **not** going to regain the trust you lost.

I can see the *company* POV: the company paying for the servers specifies polices, such as the code of conduct. That affects their business, which in the end pays the servers. That drives the need to deal with conduct violations, especially when committed by moderators. But that doesn't dictate that Stack Exchange Inc. should be the **sole** party making such decisions in a unilateral way. And as said: we are at a point where we need **real** actions that make a **real** difference.

Thus my suggestion: step back and find ways to *incorporate* the community into this crucial policy/process!

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 1 at 19:18](#)

answered Oct 22 at 9:09



[GhostCat says Reinstate Monica](#)

16.1k77 gold badges5757 silver badges104104 bronze badges

- 4

It might "make sense" that company calls all the shots, but it is far from the only solution or even a proven superior concept. In the end such concept says the company doesn't trust its own community in any way, and wants to keep an asymmetric, even aristocratic, power structure in place. But [Co-determination](#) would be one way out or at least worth exploring? – [LangLangC](#)
Oct 22 at 12:16

- 1

@LangLangC Reworded the last sentence, maybe that helps. – [GhostCat says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 12:43

- 1

Yup. Just to add: My POV is that especially things like the CoC should be "up for discussion" (as outright denied in theregister article). A community is "more inclusive" when it and all its members are included in the decision making fundamental policies as well. Agency, legitimacy and outcome can be better that way. As already promised: ["Meta Stack Exchange ... It's built and run by you "](#)
– [LangLangC](#) Oct 22 at 12:53

- 3

Perhaps a middle ground could be that the *reinstatement* process is voted by the community, similar to actual elections, but the *firing* process is handled by the company themselves so they can act quickly if they feel the need to. – [Grumpy says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 13:11

- 1

This. This is by far the most important thing to be taken into consideration here. Anyone claiming this cannot be done for "legal reasons" is mistaken because everything on this website is **already public**. Anything other than a private moderator chat is basically open for review anyway, and there's no reason to state that the chat cannot be public for the purposes of such inquiries. We need to be able to do this

properly by having the community decide. Furthermore, by making the process public it prevents a rogue mod from lying and causing a community division. – [The Great Duck](#) Dec 7 at 5:26

- 1

Cont. (disclaimer: I do not believe Monica is lying. This a hypothetical.) suppose Monica is 100% lying and that what actually occurred is that she cursed out a CM in response to nothing worthy of that sort of attitude. Do we have any way to tell whether that would be true or not? No, we actually don't. However, the entire community (in meta at least) is split **because we can't see the logs**. Either stack exchange is being secretive to protect themselves or a moderator is pulling us down a wild goose chase. We need to have the community *at least* provide input and review the evidence... – [The Great Duck](#) Dec 7 at 5:30

-

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74

tl;dr: Does being removed as a moderator result in an *ineligibility* to stand for election? If so, does the ineligibility apply only on the site(s) where the moderator was actually removed/de-modded, or does it apply to *all* sites?

How does the moderator restoration procedure relate to a former moderator getting elected or re-elected by a community? I asked this [a while back](#) and never got an official answer.

The moderator reinstatement process seems to indicate that a favorable result for the former moderator results in *immediate* restoration of their diamond, without any need for an election or even any community involvement at all. Is this intended to imply that the former moderator may *alternately* choose to seek restoration by being elected or re-elected by one of the Stack Exchange communities, or is it intended as the *sole* restoration process and/or a *prerequisite* for becoming an election candidate?

[This](#) answer asks specifically about a former moderator seeking election on the community that they formerly moderated, but there's also the possibility that such a person might seek election *elsewhere*. The Initiation section of the restoration process states:

Previous moderators (PM) may request reinstatement through the /contact form on the site that they wish to be reinstated....

Thus, it isn't clear if this reinstatement procedure even *applies* to a moderator seeking election in another community. What happens in that case? For example, suppose I was dismissed as a moderator for cause from Shoes and Ships Stack Exchange. I contribute quietly for a sufficiently long period of time (e.g. at least a year, to allow any possible general site suspension-related bars to expire), eventually deciding to leave my old haunt alone and instead seek moderatorship on Sealing Wax.SE, which I have never moderated before. What happens in that case?

- Do I have to seek reinstatement on Shoes and Ships.SE before I can stand for election on Sealing Wax.SE?
- May I just go ahead and run, letting the community determine if I am worthy?

- Do I have to apply for "reinstatement" on Sealing Wax.SE despite the fact that I have never actually been a moderator there?
- Do I have to begin a "generic" reinstatement process that does not give me back my original diamond, but restores my ability to stand for election?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 22 at 15:11](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:54



[Columbia says Reinstate Monica](#)

13.9k66 gold badges3232 silver badges7777 bronze badges

- 3
Those are some interesting example communities... :P – [V2Blast](#) Oct 22 at 3:44
- 9
[@V2Blast](#) they are from Lewis Carroll. The entire mess is very *Wonderland* like. – [Columbia says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 10:15
- 1
[@ColumbiasaysReinstateMonica](#), especially when you read *Wonderland* as a surreal horror story. – [Frank Luke](#) Nov 4 at 21:20
- 2
[@ColumbiasaysReinstateMonica](#) Rather than Lewis Carroll, I think Franz Kafka is closer to the mark. – [Monty Harder](#) Nov 14 at 19:33

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70

How can we trust you to use this process going forward?

I presume that Monica's removal would not have happened under the emergency scenarios. That means the previous removal procedure was *at minimum* ignored. I personally believe that SE just completely forgot the old procedure existed. So how can we have faith that the next time you want to remove a mod you will actually use this process?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Dec 11 at 11:45](#)



[zovits supports GoFundMonica](#)

16511 silver badge66 bronze badges

answered Oct 22 at 15:01



[David says Reinstate Monica](#)

3,39711 gold badge1414 silver badges2626 bronze badges

- 1

Maybe I'm misunderstanding, but I thought that the previous removal procedure was only for when use by moderators (and there were no procedures limiting SE's actions)? The introduction to [this policy](#) says it is a "process for allowing a team of moderators to remove one of their own". Am I looking at the wrong thing? – [divibisan](#) Oct 22 at 15:17

- 8

@divibisan For a long time it was the *only* mod removal process (short of emergency magic ban hammer from SE for account compromise, etc) . Additionally "The process may also be initiated *by* the community team at Stack Exchange...". I agree that by rule lawyering the new policy is more applicable to a retroactive application, but at the time in question there was an already existing, obviously applicable, totally ignored policy. – [David says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 22 at 15:34

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69

I once heard of a consulting project in the IT sector to get certain changes made on a bunch of computers. One million dollars and one year later, there was a gigantic multi-page flow chart with an overwhelmingly complex administrative process for how the changes would be made, that no one ever read, and the changes never got made.

These processes read a lot like that. You have a pretty diagram, and someone obviously put in a lot of work to write a process that *sounds* good. They can show it to their boss, and obviously they are doing the assigned task of writing up a formal process.

Except that no moderators have been reinstated, and there are *giant, obvious, glaring* flaws in the processes presented. (There are 43 answers already, most of them detailing specific flaws, so I don't feel the need to point out *all* the specific flaws in this answer.)

What I think is that **you are attempting to combine incompatible goals.**

You want to create a formal, transparent process for removal and reinstatement of a moderator that will be fair and equitable.

And you want to run Stack Exchange as a for-profit company, with people assigned to jobs using normal corporate reasons for giving positions. Including the people assigned to approve or disapprove reinstatement proceedings.

These goals are not compatible. You need to recognize that what you are *attempting* to do amounts to creation of a new system for justice, that *will* in fact be just and equitable and fair, and benefit the group as well as not harming the individuals to whom it is applied.

That's a tall order.

Ultimately, all the formal processes in the world won't help unless you recognize *who* you are attempting to restrain. If the company is restraining itself, and the company has the power to remove that restraint "in case of emergency," then the system is fundamentally, *irreparably* broken.

That's not to say that you can't have justice. You've actually done quite well for years. Like with a benevolent monarch who rules well, there is no outcry for more formalized procedures because people *have* justice. Conversely, when you have injustice, it doesn't matter what procedures you have in place to legitimize it and mislabel it as justice—people will still not be happy.

You can write up all the procedures you want, but at the end of the day it amounts to slapping a veneer of formality onto the arbitrary decision of a few CMs and thereby elevating that arbitrary decision to the righteous plateau of unquestionability.

I would prefer NO formal process at all, than to have a formal process that can be held up as an *excuse* for irresponsible or damaging actions.

If you see the need to take action, then take responsibility for the actions you take, and don't shuffle off that responsibility onto "the process."

That requires a high level of responsibility in a CM. But really, that's what's required anyway, to make the whole show work. Moderators and CMs show this level of responsibility all the time. Except in the case of Monica.

There *already* was a process for moderator removal. It was not followed. So let's not fix what wasn't broken. No process in the world can work if it is not followed, and attempting to "fix" it will just overcomplicate everything.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 22 at 17:36](#)

answered Oct 22 at 7:18



[Wildcard](#)

6,06633 gold badges1818 silver badges3131 bronze badges

- [Gilles' answer](#) covers similar points, such as how Jeff was a benevolent dictator that made the setup work, rather than the faceless corporation we have today. – [Wildcard](#) Oct 22 at 17:35

[add a comment](#)

64

Moderator Conduct Review Process:

From time to time, a moderator on one of our sites may violate their moderator agreement, or the company standards for behavior as documented in our Code of Conduct. Such behavior may eventually necessitate their removal from office, however both community expectations and our Code prescribe that, **in general and whenever possible, they first be warned and given an opportunity to correct their behavior.**

1. Does “*be warned and given an opportunity to correct their behavior*” also refer to Monica's case? If it does, when can we look forward to seeing her readmitted?

There is nothing written in the two processes that suggest it cannot be applied retrospectively.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

edited Oct 22 at 14:08

answered Oct 22 at 6:04



[Mari-Lou A](#)

16k99 gold badges3434 silver badges7272 bronze badges

[add a comment](#)

58

The Reinstatement Process mentioned checking for annotations deeming reinstatement impossible. I expected to see the criteria for determining and applying such annotations in the Review policies but didn't. What is the criteria for such annotations?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:38



[BenV](#)

1,8821212 silver badges1818 bronze badges

[add a comment](#)

54

It looks to me like the removal process is still driven by a single CM, with the slight speed bump that they have to convince one other CM of their case (which is pretty easy to do, given that they're the sole participant in the discovery phase). The only fundamental difference I can discern between what's written and what was done to Monica is that there has to be a warning annotation (and without any description of how annotations are created/edited/challenged/etc. there's not really hard evidence that there's a difference there either).

In my opinion, a fundamental tenet of justice that's missing from this process is the ability of the accused to know the charges leveled against them and to see and address the relevant evidence. As long as all the evidence and all the annotations that go into this decision process remain opaque to the accused, there's no way for anyone outside SE, Inc. to differentiate this process from the arbitrary process used in the recent past.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 23:12



[manveti](#)

55911 silver badge66 bronze badges

- 1

There's a difference. Removal, except emergencies, requires going through the process at least twice. The first time, the process results in "CM2 will [warn the moderator] (along with suggestions for adjusting behavior), and annotate the account." The next time through process, "if there is an annotation that notes the moderator had previously been warned about the same issue", then the moderator will be removed. I would say that the wording should be adjusted such that the warning to the moderator must be "clear and unambiguous" and clarify that "do so" means warn the moderator. – [Makyen](#) Oct 22 at 3:29

- 3

As [Catija said](#) in a comment to Monica's reply - there are no annotations on her account for the past 3 years. Go figure that one out! – [gbjbaanb](#) Oct 25 at 9:06

add a comment

48

What will, if anything, change to the process of re-instating a PM when a senior company official (Think CEO, CFO, CTO, Director of [insert department here]) was involved in the original revoking of PM's moderation rights.

Will CM's be allowed to overturn this decision by senior company official's?

[shareimprove this answer](#)
[edited Oct 22 at 7:44](#)

answered Oct 22 at 7:18



[Luuklag](#)

6,25033 gold badges1919 silver badges4949 bronze badges

- 18

Narrator: No. – [Script47](#) Oct 22 at 8:15

- 2

Given that the "senior company official" can remove the employment of a CM..... – [Ian Ringrose](#) Oct 22 at 8:59

- [@IanRingrose](#), exactly what fueled my question. – [Luuklag](#) Oct 22 at 9:27

- 4

I guess that will be regarded by the CM as an "annotation that states reinstatement is deemed impossible". – [Bart van Ingen Schenau](#) Oct 22 at 11:26

- The real solution would be that senior company official can't revoke a PM's mod rights, and that they are by default the person you appeal to when someone at the same level is unavailable. They shouldn't need to get involved other than to note that their subordinate booted someone and double check that the process was followed. They are a *supervisor* for the CM's not a super-CM, and they shouldn't EVER micromanage PERIOD. Even in an emergency situation, a CM

can lock out the person. It should be the absolute last resort and only done when waiting even ten minutes might cause *legal* trouble. – [The Great Duck](#) Dec 7 at 5:40

[add a comment](#)

47

2. CM1 will look through account annotations for reasons for removal. Annotations weren't always a feature, so CM1 will also consult with the rest of the Community Management and Community Strategy (CST) teams for any extra context.

1. If CM1 finds any annotation that states reinstatement is deemed impossible, the request is denied and the reasons for it will be stated back to PM. The process is concluded here.

There needs to be an investigation into the correctness of the annotation. As it stands, it's possible to apply a permanent, unappealable veto to any reinstatement request for any reason or no reason at all.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 21:55



[Mark](#)

2,97911 gold badge1212 silver badges2525 bronze badges

- 1

This. An annotation that precludes reinstatement should only be issued in extreme circumstances. Therefore, any such annotation should be subject to a review process, to make sure that people with the power to make annotations don't abuse it. – [Monty Harder](#) Nov 14 at 19:38

[add a comment](#)

45

In a perfect world, where the majority of us still retain some trust in Stack Exchange, this would work. However, we're not presently in this world. That means that this will work out to be at best a paper tiger.

A real impartial process would include a company external arbitrator or panel of arbitrators and a public evidence phase akin to the arbitration committee that Wikipedia uses for these purposes.

If you're serious about earning back the trust you lost, the process needs to be completely decoupled from the interests of the company, and the company needs to agree to be bound by the decisions of the external arbitrator (s). Moderators serve their communities, and it should fall to members of these communities to assess the evidence and make a fair determination.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 22 at 7:16](#)



[Suraj Rao](#)

42211 gold badge44 silver badges1111 bronze badges
answered Oct 22 at 5:35



[Magisch](#)

21.6k66 gold badges4242 silver badges8080 bronze badges
add a comment

44

One question specifically about international sites.

2. CMs can recuse themselves if they feel they can't be impartial. CM1, CM2, and CM3 will be picked at random from remaining CM pool.
3. CM1 will review data and research concerns - look through account annotations, query the involved parties, etc. If there is a note to check with the Community Strategy Team (CST), they'll do so: the CST may have information relevant for next steps.

There is only one CM responsible for all international sites. So, even **if CM recuse himself when he feels he can't be impartial**, other CM's will learn about the situation from his point of view. For SORu it's especially important, because there is only one russian speaking CM in your team. Basically, the whole process in the case of disagreements between mod and this CM will be biased.

Any suggestions for this case?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 21:42



[Suvitruf says Reinstate Monica](#)

13.7k11 gold badge2121 silver badges6868 bronze badges

- 18

This is perhaps an extreme case, but the concern is not specific to RUSO or even international sites; everything comes with a perspective, a filter. The rationale for having multiple - at minimum 2 - CMs involved is to reduce this distortion, but it cannot be entirely eliminated. The role of CM2 is particularly critical in this, akin to the original role of the devil's advocate: they must test the claim, ensure that it has merit. That may in some cases require drawing on additional resources to assert the veracity of statements made by CM1. – [Shog9♦](#) Oct 21 at 21:59

- 3

@Shog9 thanks! Looks good in theory. I hope we will never examine it on practice. – [Suvitruf says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 21 at 22:03

add a comment

Moderator Action Review Process

Proceedings

9. If the consensus was for removal, we will then revoke the privileges of the moderator to be removed, and also **remove the moderator's name from the election** and /users?tab=moderators **pages**.

Why?

I get the part about removing them from the moderators tab (because they are no longer a mod), but they *were* elected/appointed -- so why "rewrite history" by removing them from the election page?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 23 at 9:06](#)

answered Oct 22 at 8:58



[walén](#)

1,13133 silver badges2020 bronze badges

- 1

The same reason a company tries to distance itself from a problem employee who's made the news, I guess. Bad publicity. Not wanting to associate themselves with "bad apples". – [Script47](#) Oct 22 at 8:59

- 18

@Script47 But it wasn't the company the ones who elected the mod. It was the community. If anything, leaving the election page as-is shows that the company does not hesitate to intervene and "fix problems" caused by community decisions (like electing a mod that is not fit for the job); stock holders love that kind of things. It also serves as a reminder for the community itself to choose wiselier next time. Redacting election pages as if problematic mods were never elected in the first place rings an orwellian bell and there's no real need (IMHO) to do so. – [walén](#) Oct 22 at 9:19

- 10

You see presidents around the world being impeached all the time. What you don't see is people removing their names from history textbooks. – [user12205](#) Oct 22 at 11:22

- 7

Having the name on the election page provides something to refer to when the question is inevitably asked "How did one person without a diamond close this question?" -- the election page is the evidence that they did once have the diamond. – [Andrew Leach](#) Oct 26 at 21:27

- 2

en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_hole – [EJoshuaS - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 27 at 2:27

- 2

@walen, they remove the badthinker because he who controls the present controls the future. He who controls the past controls the present. – [Frank Luke](#) Nov 4 at 21:23

[add a comment](#)

42

What is even the point of writing down this process? If SO doesn't follow it they will just say "Yeah we didn't follow the process, but we don't re-litigate the past".

SO has demonstrated clearly that the current guiding principle is to **stick with their decisions no matter what**. If process was followed or not, if actions were right or wrong, if people providing value on their sites like it or not - it doesn't matter. Clearly "stick to your decisions" is the guiding management principle, overruling all other concerns. At most some empty words with vague promises for the future will be announced.

So the party in power is not interested in fixing mistakes or modifying past decisions that turned out bad. Something is done and then that's that. If some process wasn't followed - well, bad luck, maybe next time. There is no indication this will change anytime soon.

So, what's the point in writing down rules? They can be ignored whenever convenient.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 22 at 15:27



[sth](#)

15.7k22 gold badges3535 silver badges6464 bronze badges

[add a comment](#)

41

This [reinstatement] process is available to all moderators, whether elected or appointed, regardless of whether they stepped down on their own or were removed from their position for any reason

Pro tempore moderators of beta sites currently lose their position when a site holds its first election after graduation. They would now be entitled to being reinstated at any time. Is this an oversight or a policy change?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 22 at 12:07



[Gilles 'SO- stop being evil'](#)

102k2525 gold badges201201 silver badges449449 bronze badges

- This is exactly what I was wondering. Obviously, policy has changed to some extent, since in the past, pro-tems were unable to request re-instatement. I wonder if this "loophole" is permitted

because the re-instatement process is more defined than before, and includes a full consent from the current moderator team. No idea; just wondering. – [anonymous2](#) Oct 23 at 11:25

- If I would just step down a minute before the election result I would qualify for the process as written. :-) – [Helmar](#) Oct 25 at 16:26

add a comment

39

Could we rename one or other of these policies? "Action Review" vs. "Conduct Review" doesn't make it particularly clear what the purpose of each policy is - the former is for mod teams to use in case of breakdowns, while the latter is for broader community concerns and for CoC/agreement violations.

Calling the former policy something along the lines of "Moderator Team Review Process" should serve to clarify that - it's not actions we're really reviewing, it's whether or not the *team* can continue to work together.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 20:27



[ArtOfCode](#)

30.4k1010 gold badges5656 silver badges9999 bronze badges

add a comment

39

I really don't get it.

If **CM1 finds** any annotation that states reinstatement is deemed impossible, **the request is denied** and the reasons for it will be stated back to PM. The process is concluded here.

Moderator was elected by a community. It looks strange that one CM decide mod's fate.

And even this:

Community Managers (CMs) can recuse themselves if they feel they can't be impartial.
CM1, CM2, and CM3 will be picked at random from remaining CM pool

If there be any disagreements between mod and one CM, the rest, obviously, will be on the CM's side.
How can we be sure of an impartial CM's attitude in this case?

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 21 at 21:16



[Suvitruf says Reinstate Monica](#)

13.7k11 gold badge2121 silver badges6868 bronze badges

- 3

Annotations are placed on an account by other CMs. You should split off your two questions into separate answers. – user474678 Oct 21 at 21:44

•

add a comment

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