

Emoji Subcommittee Terminology and Process

To: UTC
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Proposals to encode new emoji characters

Summary of terminology (key terms in italics):

Stage 0: *Incoming, proposed* to emoji subcommittee (ESC)

Stage 1: *Forwarded* to UTC (ESC decision; with or without a recommendation)

Stage 2: *Candidate*; added to the emoji candidate list (UTC decision)

Stage 3: *Provisionally accepted* for encoding in next Unicode release (UTC decision); add to Unicode beta

Stage 4: *Released* in a version of The Unicode Standard

Process:

Stage 0, incoming, proposed

Incoming emoji proposals go first to the emoji subcommittee (ESC) which can do one of four things:

1. Determine immediately that the proposed characters fall under one or more of the Factors for Exclusion (see Selection Factors), and notify the proposer.
2. Consider the proposal as input for future encoding decisions, and notify the proposer. This action can be taken regardless of whether the proposal is well-formed.
3. Determine that the proposal may have merit in its own right, but is not sufficiently well-formed according to the criteria in Selection Factors, or takes an encoding approach that the subcommittee believes should be changed. In this case the ESC sends the proposal back to the originator with a suggestion and/or request for modification.
4. Determine that the proposal is well-formed with sufficient merit, and should be forwarded to the UTC. The proposer is notified.

In any of cases 2-4, the proposed character(s) may also be included in a proposal developed by the ESC for a larger set of related characters.

Stage 1, forwarded

When an emoji character proposal is forwarded to the UTC, its overall status is *stage 1, forwarded to UTC*. Before each UTC meeting, the ESC will summarize the characters currently proposed to UTC, and provide one of the following sub-statuses:

1. Proposed without any recommendation from ESC.
2. Proposed with recommendation to encode.
3. Proposed with recommendation not to encode (this should be rare).
4. Proposed as background for another larger proposal that includes it. In this case, it is the larger proposal that would have one of the three statuses above.

Stage 2, candidate

During each UTC meeting, some or all of the characters that are proposed to UTC may be considered as candidates, with the following possible results:

1. Proposed characters may be accepted for *stage 2* as *candidates for emoji encoding*.
2. Proposed characters may be rejected as candidates. The proposer is notified.
3. Proposed characters may be sent back to the emoji subcommittee with instructions to reconsider or improve the proposal, possibly in conjunction with the original proposer. In this case the characters lose their status as *stage 1 forwarded to UTC* until they are re-submitted by the ESC.
4. No action may be taken; the proposed characters remain in that status for consideration at a future UTC meeting.

Stage 3, provisionally accepted

At the Q4 UTC meeting, after considering proposed characters, then all characters that are currently *stage 2 candidates for emoji encoding* (including those that became candidates earlier in the same meeting) are considered for encoding in the next release of Unicode. As a result, some candidates may become provisionally *accepted* for encoding in the next Unicode release. Others may remain as candidates. The provisionally accepted characters are included in the Unicode beta.

Stage 4, released

When the emoji are part of a release, then they move to *stage 4, released*.

Proposals to add emoji status or to document new ZWJ sequences

Requests to add emoji status for existing characters, or to document new ZWJ sequences, may come from the following sources (and others):

- External documents.
- ESC determination that proposed emoji characters might be better represented as ZWJ sequences.
- ESC determination that existing non-emoji characters should be made emoji, especially if they are needed for some emoji-related mechanisms.
- Script subcommittee suggestions that proposed symbols might be considered as emoji.

The ESC determines which changes should be considered for the next emoji data update, and then takes one or both of the following actions:

- If an external document proposes some of the supported changes, forward it to UTC, and/or
- Create a proposal to UTC from ESC requesting some of the supported changes.

If UTC agrees to consider the changes as part of a new draft update to the emoji data (and a new draft release of UTR51), the normal procedure is to authorize a public review for the proposed changes. The

ESC then prepares the draft material for public review. Before posting, the editorial committee typically reviews the draft material and suggests changes.

After the public review closes, public review feedback is considered at the next UTC meeting and incorporated as necessary into the proposed updates to data and UTR51, along with any feedback directly from the UTC. With those updates, the UTC may authorize release of the updated emoji data and a new version of UTR51.

See related document [L2/16-320](#) proposing a more formal process for ZWJ sequence proposals.