



Elections Code

POL-GEN-04

Elections Committee-> Board of Directors

Proposed by Committee	Adopted by Board	Notes
ELEC- 2025-07-08	2025-08-26	Establishing an Appeals Board which advises the Elections Committee.
ELEC - 2024-12-08	2024-12-22	Clarifying procedures for candidates to fulfill their obligations, CEO appointment and authority, amending. Clarifying the procedure for appeals and violations
ELEC - 2023-12-06	2023-12-28	This Code was adopted with minor amendments to reflect motions passed at the 2023 Autumn General Assembly.
2023-12-06	2023-12-28	Introduced bilingualism testing for executive candidates as per the Autumn General Assembly motion, clarified class talk obligations, and explicitly prohibited the use of UOSU's branding or logo in campaign materials.
2023-08-14	2023-08-20	Conducted a long-overdue review of the Elections Code, streamlining it from 30 pages to 10 pages.

1. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This Code is adopted by the Board of Directors ("Board") under the authority given to it by the Constitution of the University of Ottawa Students' Union ("UOSU") to create a free, fair, and accessible set of rules to govern its elections, referendum, and plebiscites.
- 1.2 This Code applies to all elections, referendums, and plebiscites administered by the UOSU and to all its Members.
- 1.3 This Code must be interpreted reasonably and consistently with the Constitution, and in a manner which promotes integrity and fairness of the electoral process.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 In this Code,

"Candidate" means a person who has been nominated as a candidate pursuant to section 6.2;



“Campaigning” means any conduct with the goal of influencing Electors to vote or refrain from voting, or to vote or refrain from voting for a particular Candidate;

“Constituency” means a constituency as defined by section 4.3 of the Constitution;

“Elector” means any Member;

“Nomination Package” means the required collection of documents to be nominated pursuant to section 6.2;

“Prescribed” means prescribed by the Chief Electoral Officer;

“Prospective Candidate” means a person who is seeking to become a Candidate;

“Volunteer” means any person who campaigns for a Candidate in a public-facing manner, excluding endorsements.

3. ELECTIONS OFFICE

3.1 Chief Electoral Officer

3.1.1 There shall be a Chief Electoral Officer who shall oversee and direct the Elections Office.

3.1.2 The Chief Electoral Officer shall:

- i. Exercise general direction and supervision over the administration of UOSU’s elections, referendums, and plebiscites;
- ii. Ensure that all elections, referendums, and plebiscites are free, fair, accessible, and in compliance with UOSU bylaws and policies;
- iii. Be responsible for the enforcement of this Code;
- iv. Organize training and bilingualism testing for Prospective Candidates;
- v. Operate independently and be responsible solely to the Elections Committee;



- vi. Report to the Elections Committee and the Board following the conclusion of an election, referendum, or plebiscite; and
- vii. Perform other duties assigned to the Chief Electoral Officer under this Code.

3.1.3 The Chief Electoral Officer may:

- i. Delegate, in writing, specified powers or duties of the Chief Electoral Officer to a Deputy Chief Electoral Officer or other Elections Office employee;
- ii. Establish regulations for the good administration of this Code;
- iii. Taking individual and exceptional circumstance into account, grant exemptions to sections 7.2.1, and 9.1.2 of this Code; and
- iv. Provide Electors with information about the electoral process, the right to vote, and how to become a Candidate.

3.2 Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

3.2.1 There shall be a Deputy Chief Electoral Officer who shall:

- i. Assist the Chief Electoral Officer in performing their duties; and
- ii. Serve as acting Chief Electoral Officer in the event that the Chief Electoral Officer is unable to carry out their duties or the office of the Chief Electoral Officer is vacant.

3.2.2 The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer shall be hired by the Chief Electoral Officer with the approval of the Elections Committee.

3.2.3 The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer may be removed for cause by the Chief Electoral Officer.

3.3 Eligibility

3.3.1 No person who is or has served as a Director or Executive may serve as Chief Electoral Officer or Deputy Chief Electoral Officer;



- 3.3.2 No person may serve as Chief Electoral Officer or Deputy Chief Electoral Officer while serving in another position within the UOSU;
- 3.3.3 The Chief Electoral Officer and Deputy Chief Electoral Officer shall not vote in any election, referendum, or plebiscite.

3.4 Appointment and Removal

- 3.4.1 The Chief Electoral Officer shall be appointed by a two third (2/3) majority of the Elections Committee.
- 3.4.2 The Chief Electoral Officer shall serve for a term from May 1 until April 30 in the calendar year following their appointment, or until such time as the Chief Electoral Officer resigns, dies, or is removed in accordance with Section 3.4.4.
- 3.4.3 No Chief Electoral Officer shall serve for more than two (2) terms.
- 3.4.4 The Chief Electoral Officer may be removed for cause by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Elections Committee.

3.5 Employees

- 3.5.1 The Chief Electoral Officer shall be appointed by a two third (2/3) majority of the Elections Committee.
- 3.5.2 The Chief Electoral Officer shall employ in the Elections Office such employees as are required to perform the duties of the Chief Electoral Officer, and as are provided for by the budget.
- 3.5.3 Elections Office employees shall remain impartial regarding all elections, referendums, and plebiscites administered under this Code.
- 3.5.4 The Finance Committee shall determine the pay of Elections Office employees, including the Chief Electoral Officer.

3.6 Budget

- 3.6.1 The Chief Electoral Officer shall submit to the Operations Commissioner during the annual budgeting process the estimated amount needed to operate the Elections Office for the following fiscal year;



3.6.2 Money allocated to the Elections Office by the budget shall be expended only as authorized by:

- i. The Chief Electoral Officer, or
- ii. In the case of expenses exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), except for the renewal of election software subscriptions, the Elections Committee.

3.6.3 Without limiting the generality of section 3.6.2, the Chief Electoral Officer shall grant or deny reimbursements in accordance with section 7.3.

3.7 Communications

3.7.1 The UOSU shall support the communications needs of the Elections Office.

3.7.2 Despite any other policy, the Chief Electoral Officer shall be the spokesperson for the Elections Office and be authorized to release public statements on its Behalf.

3.7.3 The Chief Electoral Officer shall authorize all election-related communications prior to their public release.

3.7.4 The Chief Electoral Officer shall maintain communication with the University of Ottawa regarding Board of Governors and Senate elections.

3.8 Guidelines and Interpretations

3.8.1 The Chief Electoral Officer may publish guidelines and interpretations on the application of this Code.

3.8.2 The Chief Electoral Officer shall, on application by a Candidate, publish a guideline or interpretation on the application of this Code.

3.8.3 Guidelines and interpretations shall be publicly available and for information purposes only.

4. ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

4.1 Oversight



4.1.1 The Elections Committee shall oversee the Elections Office.

4.2 Policies

4.2.1 The Elections Committee may adopt policies regarding the conduct of elections, referendums, and plebiscites, provided they are consistent with this Code and the Constitution.

4.2.2 All policies established pursuant to section 4.2.1 shall be publicly available.

5. TIMELINE

5.1 Limits

5.1.1 The electoral periods shall be ordered as follows;

- i. Nomination Period,
- ii. Campaign Period,
- iii. Voting Period.

5.1.2 The Nomination Period and Voting Period shall conclude at 6 p.m. on the given day.

5.2 Notice

5.2.1 A notice, in the form of a post on the UOSU website and an email sent to all Electors containing the election timeline and Elections Office contact information shall be delivered no less than seven (7) days prior to an election.

6. CANDIDATES

6.1 Eligibility

6.1.1 Subject to section 6 and the Constitution, a Member who is qualified to be a director under the Act is eligible to be Candidate.



6.1.2 An individual may only be a Candidate in one (1) contest at a time.

6.2 Nomination

6.2.1 During the Nomination Period, Prospective Candidates shall submit a Nomination Package in the prescribed form that includes;

- i. A declaration form signed by the Prospective Candidate providing the prescribed identifying information and confirming that they will abide by this Code; and
- ii. A nomination form with the prescribed identifying information, of at least twenty-five (25) Electors, which, in the case of Prospective Candidates for the Board or Senate, must be from the Prospective Candidate's faculty;

6.2.2 Prospective Candidates for the Executive Committee shall submit adequate proof of bilingualism with their Nomination Package. If this takes the form of bilingualism testing as administered by the Chief Electoral Officer, they shall have until the end of the Campaign Period to complete the testing.

6.2.3 Upon receiving a Nomination Package, the Chief Electoral Officer shall determine whether it is complete and accurate pursuant to section 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.

6.2.4 A Nomination Package is not incomplete or inaccurate, by reason only that:

- i. A person who signed it is not an Elector, if twenty-five (25) Electors have signed it; or
- ii. The identifying information of an Electors as it appears in the nomination form of the Nomination Package differs from that appearing on the student list when the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied in relation to the identity of that person and the accuracy of their signature.

6.2.5 If a Nomination Package is complete and accurate, the Chief Electoral Officer shall approve the nomination and inform the Candidate. Otherwise, the Chief Electoral Officer shall reject the nomination and inform the Prospective Candidate of the reason for such refusal.



- 6.2.6 If a Prospective Candidate for the Executive Committee's Nomination Package has been determined to be complete and accurate with regard to section 6.2.1, they shall be considered a Candidate pending the receipt of the bilingualism testing results. If the results are not received by the end of the Campaign Period, the Candidate shall be provisionally included on the ballot pending the receipt of the results.

6.3 Training

- 6.3.1 All Candidates shall attend training, as administered by the Chief Electoral Officer.

6.4 Candidate List

- 6.4.1 The list of Candidates shall be published by the Chief Electoral Officer no later than eighteen (18) hours after the start of the Campaign Period.

7. CAMPAIGN

7.1 Rules

- 7.1.1 Electors and Candidates are responsible for the conduct of the campaign, including social media content, the action of their Volunteers, and comments made publicly and privately in the context of the campaign.
- 7.1.2 No one shall campaign while violating federal, provincial, municipal, or University of Ottawa laws, by-laws, regulations, or rules.
- 7.1.3 Candidates for the Executive Committee shall conduct all public campaigning in French and English.
- 7.1.4 No one shall campaign outside of the Campaign Period or Voting Period.
- 7.1.5 No Candidate, nor their Volunteers shall campaign for, or on behalf of any other Candidate.
- 7.1.6 No one shall harass, intimidate, bully, or sabotage Elections Office employees, Electors, or Candidates.
- 7.1.7 No one shall undermine the integrity, fairness, and freedom of the electoral process.



- 7.1.8 No one shall vote on behalf of anyone else.
- 7.1.9 No one shall, at any place where voting is taking place, influence an Electors to vote or refrain from voting for a particular Candidate or ballot question.
- 7.1.10. No one shall publish information that is demonstrably false or maliciously misleading.
- 7.1.11 No one shall produce campaign material that uses the branding, logo, or colours of the UOSU or that represents themselves as a representative of the UOSU.
- 7.1.12 Candidates shall provide the Chief Electoral Officer with a list of their volunteers on an ongoing basis.

7.2 Class talks

- 7.2.1 Each Candidate's campaign must conduct three (3) class talks between the start of the Campaign Period and twenty-four (24) hours prior to the conclusion of the Voting Period.
- 7.2.2 Candidates for the Board and Senate must conduct their class talks in classes offered by the Candidate's faculty.
- 7.2.3 Candidates for the Executive Committee and Board of Governors must conduct their class talks in classes offered by at least two (2) faculties and at least one (1) must be in English and at least one (1) must be in French.

7.3 Expenses

- 7.3.1 No Candidate for the Board or Senate may spend more than one hundred dollars (\$100) on their campaign.
- 7.3.2 No candidate for the Executive Committee or Board of Governors may spend more than two hundred dollars (\$200) on their campaign.
- 7.3.3 Candidates shall be entitled to reimbursement for expenses up to and including the limits described in sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.2.
- 7.3.4 Expenses reimbursed pursuant to section 7.3.3 must be directly for the purposes of the campaign. Subscription-based services shall only be reimbursed from the start of the Campaign Period until the end of the Voting Period.



- 7.3.5 No reimbursement shall be provided for expenses related to referendums or plebiscites, except as authorized by the Elections Committee.
- 7.3.6 Candidates must submit an expense report and all corresponding receipts to the Chief Electoral Officer within five (5) days of the end of the Voting Period.

7.4 Liability

- 7.4.1 The UOSU is not responsible for penalties Candidates incur for violating the provisions of this Code.

8. VOTE

8.1 Rights

- 8.1.1 Every Elector is entitled to one (1) vote.
- 8.1.2 The vote is secret.
- 8.1.3 Electors who are members of multiple Constituencies shall be able to cast one (1) vote in the Board and Senate contests for each of those Constituencies.

8.2 Voting Period

- 8.2.1 Electors shall vote only during the Voting Period.
- 8.2.2 Despite any other section of this Code, should ballots be unavailable for more than twelve (12) hours to a substantial number of Electors during the Voting Period and the Chief Electoral Officer determine that it has negatively affected the integrity of the electoral process, the Chief Electoral Officer must extend the Voting Period for as long as is necessary to grant all Electors adequate opportunity to vote, but for no longer than seventy-two (72) hours.

8.3 Voting System

- 8.3.1 For each contest on the ballot:
 - i. If the number of Candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, all Candidates must enlist with a “yes” and “no” option for each, and all candidates receiving a majority of “yes” votes are declared



to be elected.

- ii. If the number of Candidates is greater than the number of seats to be filled, Candidates shall be listed in alphabetical order by last name, and all candidates will be declared to be elected pursuant to Appendix A.
- iii. Despite paragraph ii, if there are two (2) Candidates and one (1) seat to be filled, the Candidate receiving a majority of votes is declared to be elected.

8.4 Results

- 8.4.1 The Chief Electoral Officer shall verify and publicly announce the unofficial results within twenty-four (24) hours following the Voting Period. Should there be doubt regarding the results, the Chief Electoral Officer may delay the announcement by an additional seventy-two (72) hours.
- 8.4.2 On the request of a Candidate or the Elections Committee within forty-eight (48) hours of the announcement of the results, a recount shall be conducted.
- 8.4.3 Following the announcement of the results, the Elections Committee must meet within seven (7) days to consider and report the results to the Board.
- 8.4.4 The Elections Committee shall not report the results while any recount or appeal to the Election Appeals Board is pending.
- 8.4.5 The results shall, on the recommendation of the Elections Committee, be considered and ratified by the Board, who shall not amend the results.

9. VIOLATIONS

9.1 Complaints

- 9.1.1 An Elector may submit, in the prescribed form, a complaint of a violation of this Code or Article 7 of the Constitution by an Elector.
- 9.1.2 Complaints must be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer no later than twenty- four (24) hours following the end of the Voting Period.



- 9.1.3 The identity of a complainant shall be confidential, except as waived by the complainant or as is otherwise required to ensure procedural fairness

9.2 Determination of Complaint

- 9.2.1 Upon the receipt of a complaint under section 9.1.1, the Chief Electoral Officer shall determine if the matter is a complaint with respect to non-compliance with this Code and shall only proceed with if it is. If the matter is not a complaint with respect to non-compliance with this Code, the Chief Electoral Officer shall inform the complainant.
- 9.2.2 The Chief Electoral Officer shall determine if a complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or not made in good faith, or whether there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for an investigation, in which case the Chief Electoral Officer shall not initiate an investigation, or, where that becomes apparent during an investigation, shall terminate the investigation.
- 9.2.3 Where a complainant breaches the integrity of an investigation by sharing details online or in public, the Chief Electoral Officer may terminate the investigation.
- 9.2.4 The complainant and respondent, as appropriate, shall be advised, with rationale, of any decision as set out in sections 9.2.3 and 9.2.4.

9.3 Investigation

- 9.3.1 Any investigation will be conducted in private and remain confidential, except as may be disclosed in any decision issued pursuant to section 9.4.1 or as necessary for the conduct of the investigation.

9.4 Decision and Sanction

- 9.4.1 Following an investigation, the Chief Electoral Officer shall issue a written decision on their determinations to the Elections Committee, complainant, respondent, and any other relevant parties.
- 9.4.2 If an Elector is found to have violated this Code on a balance of probabilities, they may be sanctioned by the Chief Electoral Officer by one (1) or more of:



- i. A censure.
- ii. A requirement to issue a public apology,
- iii. A requirement to remove certain campaign materials;
- iv. A reduction in the expense reimbursement limit,
- v. A suspension of campaigning,
- vi. A disqualification,
- vii. A reduction in a candidate's vote total, solely in cases affecting a specific, identifiable number of votes; and
- viii. Any other penalty deemed just by the Chief Electoral Officer.

9.4.3 When issuing a decision, the Chief Electoral Officer shall follow principles of progressive discipline and consider the following:

- i. The severity of the violation and its potential impact on the election, referendum, or plebiscite results,
- ii. Whether an Elector intentionally violated this Code
- iii. Whether an Elector has taken steps to correct previous violations and generally respected the authority of the Chief Electoral Officer.
- iv. Whether an Elector intentionally hid evidence of a violation or otherwise attempted to misrepresent their conduct.

9.4.4 All decisions and appeals must be made publicly available, with names and identifying information redacted if deemed necessary by the Chief Electoral Officer.

10. APPEALS

10.1 Election Appeals Board



10.1.1 There shall be an Election Appeals Board which shall be composed of the following members;

- i. The Chair of the Elections Committee, or their designate; and
- ii. Two (2) students at the Faculty of Law appointed by the Elections Committee on the recommendation of the Common Law Students' Society and/or by the *Association des étudiantes et étudiants en droit civil*.

10.1.2 The members appointed under section 10.1.1 ii. shall not be Executives, Directors, nor be employed or otherwise remunerated by the UOSU, or by a business or service centre thereof.

10.1.3 The Chair of the Elections Committee or their designate shall serve as Chair of the Election Appeals Board.

10.1.4 Quorum shall consist of three (3) members.

10.1.5 Should a member of the Elections Appeals Board be unable to hear an appeal, the Chair of the Elections Appeals Board shall appoint a member of the Elections Committee to hear the appeal in their place.

10.2 Jurisdiction

10.2.1 Decisions and determinations of the Chief Electoral Officer under sections 6.2.3, 9.2.1, 9.2.2, and 9.4.1 may be appealed to the Elections Committee.

10.2.2 Only the following parties may appeal a decision or determination of the Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 10.2.1:

- i. The complainant; or
- ii. A person on whom the decision or determination imposes a penalty or otherwise, disadvantages, directly or indirectly.

10.2.3 The Elections Committee may overrule a decision or determination of the Chief Electoral Officer only when it is determined that it was unreasonable or that it negatively affected the integrity of the electoral process.



10.3 Initiation & Review

- 10.3.1 An appeal under section 10.2.1 must be made in writing to the Chair of the Elections Committee within twenty-four (24) hours of the receipt of the decision or determination from the Chief Electoral Officer.
- 10.3.2 Any person who appeals a decision or determination of the Chief Electoral Officer forfeits their right to confidentiality under section 9.1.3.
- 10.3.3 The Elections Committee shall refer the complaint to the Elections Appeals Board for their review and recommendation. The Elections Appeals Board may recommend that the Elections Committee overrule a decision or determination of the Chief Electoral Officer only when it is determined that it was unreasonable or that it negatively affected the integrity of the electoral process.

10.4 Decision

- 10.4.1 The Elections Committee must rule on an appeal within seventy-two (72) hours of its receipt.
- 10.4.2 Pursuant to the Constitution, if the Elections Committee does not rule on an appeal within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt, the matter is appealable directly to the Appeals Committee.
- 10.4.3 Rulings of the Elections Committee may be appealed to the Appeals Committee pursuant to the Constitution.

11. REFERENDUMS AND PLEBISCITES

11.1 Ballot Options

- 11.1.1 Whenever possible, a referendum or plebiscite shall have two options representing a binary choice.
- 11.1.2 The option receiving a majority of votes is declared to be passed.
- 11.1.3 In the case of an equality of votes, a referendum or plebiscite will be declared to have failed, and the status quo will remain.

11.2 Campaigning

- 11.2.1 Electors publicly campaigning for or against a referendum or plebiscite must abide by this Code.

12. EVALUATION

12.1 Review

- 12.1.1 The Chief Electoral Officer may provide insights to the Elections Committee and the Board on the effectiveness of this Code and any amendments that, in their opinion, are desirable for the better administration of this Code or other relevant policies or procedures.
- 12.1.2 The Elections Committee shall consult with the Chief Electoral Officer when reviewing this Code.

12.2 Amendment

- 12.2.1 This Code may only be amended by the Board on the recommendation of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Elections Committee.

Mandatory Review Term: 1 year
Next Mandatory Review: 2026-08-26

Certified by the Chair of the Board



Appendix A : Single Transferable Vote

1. When filling out a ballot, each voter shall rank the candidates, with “1” being the highest.
2. On the first round of counting, each candidate shall receive one (1) vote for each ballot indicating them as first preference.
3. After each round of counting, any candidate receiving votes greater than the quota of $\left(\frac{\text{votes}}{n+1} + 1\right)$, (with n defined as the total positions to be elected), shall be elected. If multiple candidates have reached the quota, the candidate receiving more votes is declared elected first.
4. After a candidate is declared elected, any surplus votes they have received over the quota shall be redistributed proportionally to any remaining candidates based on the next highest preference indicated on each ballot.
5. After no more candidates have reached the quota for election, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be eliminated and their votes shall be redistributed to any remaining candidates based on the next highest preference indicated on each ballot.
6. The process laid out in steps 3-5 shall repeat until all positions to be elected have been filled or until the number of remaining candidates equals the number of positions remaining to be filled.
7. If at any point there is a tie between two candidates, the tie shall be broken by random draw as conducted by the CEO.