



POL-GEN-04

Elections Code

Elections Committee → Board of Directors

1. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This Code is adopted by the Board of Directors 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, referendum, or plebiscite;

"Constituency" means a constituency as defined by the Constitution;

"Contest" means an election for a single seat within a General Election or By-Election;

"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 publicly campaigns for a Candidate and supports them in an organizational capacity.

3. ELECTIONS OFFICE

3.1 Independence

3.1.1 The Elections Office shall operate independently within the auspices of the UOSU.

3.1.2 Elections Office accounts may only be accessed by authorized Elections Office staff, unless approved by the Elections Committee.

3.2 Chief Electoral Officer

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

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

3.2.3 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.

3.3 Deputy chief Electoral Officer

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer shall be appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer and the appointment shall be subject to ratification by the Elections Committee.

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

3.3.4 The Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, while serving as acting Chief Electoral Officer, shall be paid at the rate of pay of the Chief Electoral Officer.

3.4 Eligibility

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

3.4.2 No person may serve as Chief Electoral Officer or Deputy Chief Electoral Officer while serving in another position within the UOSU.

3.4.3 The Chief Electoral Officer and Deputy Chief Electoral Officer shall not vote in any election, referendum, or plebiscite.

3.5 Appointment and Removal

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 serve for a term from May 1 until the April 30 following their appointment, or until such time as the Chief Electoral Officer resigns, dies, or is removed in accordance with Section 3.5.3.

3.5.3 The Chief Electoral Officer may be removed for cause by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Elections Committee.

3.6 Employees

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 Elections Office employees shall remain impartial regarding all elections, referendums, and plebiscites administered under this Code.

3.6.3 The Finance Committee shall determine the pay of Elections Office employees, including the Chief Electoral Officer.

3.7 Budget and Spending

3.7.1 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;

3.7.2 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.

- 3.7.3 Without limiting the generality of section 3.7.2, the Chief Electoral Officer shall grant or deny reimbursements in accordance with section 7.3.

3.8 Communications

- 3.8.1 The UOSU shall support the communications needs of the Elections Office.
- 3.8.2 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.
- 3.8.3 The Chief Electoral Officer shall authorize all election-related communications prior to their public release.
- 3.8.4 The Chief Electoral Officer shall maintain communication with the University of Ottawa regarding Board of Governors and Senate contests.

3.8 Guidelines and Interpretations

- 3.9.1 The Chief Electoral Officer may publish guidelines and interpretations on the application of this Code.
- 3.9.2 The Chief Electoral Officer shall, on application by a Candidate, publish a guideline or interpretation on the application of this Code.
- 3.9.3 Guidelines and interpretations shall be publicly available, and for information purposes only unless otherwise indicated by the Chief Electoral Officer.

4. ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

4.1 Oversight

- 4.1.1 The Elections Committee shall oversee the Chief Electoral Officer.

4.2 Directives

- 4.2.1 The Elections Committee may issue directives to the Chief Electoral Officer relating to Elections Office initiatives and priorities but shall not involve the day-to-day management of the Elections Office.

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, Members are qualified to be Candidates for the Senate and Members who are qualified to be a director under the Act are eligible to be Candidates for the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Board of Governors.

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

6.1.3 An individual may not be a Candidate in a By-Election if they are a member of the Board of Directors or of University of Ottawa governing bodies, excluding individuals serving in an interim capacity.

6.1.4 An individual must be a full-time student to be a Candidate for the Board of Governors or Senate.

6.1.5 If, at any point, a Candidate becomes ineligible to serve in the seat that they are contesting, they shall be disqualified.

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 of Directors 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.

6.2.7 Within twenty-four (24) hours following the close of the Nomination Period and at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer, Candidates may correct minor non-substantive errors that are clerical in nature and do not change the nature of the intended text, such as but not limited to: a spelling error in a name, a mistake in the digits of a student number, or a missed signature, causing a Candidate's Nomination Package to be rejected.

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 thirty-six (36) 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 in accordance with sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 between the start of the Campaign Period and twenty-four (24) hours prior to the conclusion of

the Voting Period. Failing such shall result in the Candidate's disqualification.

7.2.2 Candidates for the Board of Directors 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 Campaign Finance

7.3.1 No Candidate seeking a seat on a body referenced in Column 1 may spend more than the amount listed in the corresponding row of Column 2:

Column 1	Column 2
Executive Committee	\$200
Board of Directors	\$100
Board of Governors	\$200
Senate	\$100

7.3.2 Candidates shall be entitled to reimbursement for expenses up to and including the limits described in section 7.3.1.

7.3.3 No Candidates shall accept donations or funding for the purposes of campaigning.

7.3.4 All expenses and corresponding receipts must be documented and reported by each Candidate to the Chief Electoral Officer within five (5) days of the end of the Voting Period. Failing such, Candidates shall not be reimbursed.

7.3.5 Candidates for the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee may request that the Elections Office purchase specific items on their behalf, which will contribute towards their total expenses.

7.3.6 Expenses reimbursed pursuant to section 7.3.2 must be directly for the purposes of campaigning. Subscription-based services shall only be reimbursed from the start of the Campaign Period until the end of the Voting Period.

7.3.7 No reimbursement shall be provided for expenses related to referendums or plebiscites, except as authorized by the Elections Committee.

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 of Directors 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 When paper ballots are used to conduct an election and the margin of victory in a contest is less than or equal to the greater of 0.5 percent of votes cast in the contest and 15 votes, a recount shall be conducted on the request of a Candidate in that contest or the Elections Committee within forty-eight (48) hours of the announcement of the results.

8.4.3 The Elections Committee shall meet within seven (7) days following the announcement of the results or the conclusion of a recount to consider and report the results to the Board of Directors.

8.4.4 The Elections Committee shall not report the results while any recount, or appeal to the Election Appeals Board that could reasonably

affect the outcome of any contest, is pending.

- 8.4.5 The results shall, on the recommendation of the Elections Committee, be considered and ratified by the Board of Directors, which 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 it 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 9.2.2 and 9.2.3.

9.3 Investigation

9.3.1 Any investigation, initiated following a complaint or of the Chief Electoral Officer's own volition, 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 The Chief Electoral Officer shall, when issuing a decision or determination, inform the recipients of the right to appeal and the deadline to do so under sections 10.2.1 and 10.3.1.

9.4.5 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 members appointed under section 10.1.1 ii. shall serve from the time they are appointed until the April 30 following their appointment or until they resign, die, or are removed by the Elections Committee.
- 10.1.4 The Chair of the Elections Committee or their designate shall serve as Chair of the Election Appeals Board.
- 10.1.5 Quorum shall consist of three (3) members.
- 10.1.6 Should a member of the Election Appeals Board be unable to hear an appeal, the Chair of the Election Appeals Board shall appoint a member of the Elections Committee to hear the appeal in their place.
- 10.1.7 Compensation for members appointed under section 10.1.1 ii. shall be set by the Finance Committee.

10.2 Jurisdiction

- 10.2.1 Decisions and determinations of the Chief Electoral Officer under sections 6.1.5, 6.2.3, 7.2.1, 9.2.1, 9.2.2, and 9.4.1 may be appealed to the Election Appeals Board.
- 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 Election Appeals Board 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 & Decision

10.3.1 An appeal under section 10.2.1 must be made in writing to the Chair of the Election Appeals Board 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 Election Appeals Board shall rule on an appeal within seventy-two (72) hours of its receipt.

10.4 Appeals Committee

10.4.1 The Appeals Committee shall hear appeals of:

- i. Decisions of the Election Appeals Board made pursuant to section 10.2.1; and
- ii. Decisions and determinations of the Chief Electoral Officer appealable under section 10.2.1 if the Election Appeals Board does not rule on the matter within seventy-two (72) hours, as described in section 10.3.3.

10.4.2 The following people may initiate appeals under section 10.4.1:

- i. The complainant;
- ii. Any member on whom the decision imposes a penalty or other disadvantage, directly or indirectly;
- iii. The Chief Electoral Officer.

11. REFERENDUMS AND PLESBICITES

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 of Directors 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 of Directors on the recommendation of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Elections Committee.

Proposed by Committee	Adopted by Board	Notes
ELEC – 2023-12-06	2023-12-28	<i>This Code was adopted with minor amendments to reflect motions passed at the 2023 Autumn General Assembly.</i>
2023-12-06	2023-12-28	<i>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.</i>
2023-08-14	2023-08-20	<i>Conducted a long-overdue review of the Elections Code, streamlining it from 30 pages to 10 pages.</i>
ELEC - 2024-12-08	2024-12-22	<i>Clarifying procedures for candidates to fulfill their obligations, CEO appointment and authority, amending. Clarifying the procedure for appeals and violations</i>
ELEC- 2025-07-08	2025-08-26	<i>Establishing an Appeals Board which advises the Elections Committee.</i>
ELEC – 2025-12-13	2025-12-21	<i>Restricting Board members for running for Executive positions in by-elections, introducing a 24 hour grace period to correct non-substantive errors on nomination forms. Clarifying authority, independence, recounts, finances and the role of Appeals Board following constitutional changes.</i>
Mandatory Review Term: 1 Year		
Next Mandatory Review: 2026-12-21		

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.