



ELECTIONS & REFERENDA POLICY
OF THE
ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Responsibility	Secretary of Internal Affairs
Approved by	Assembly
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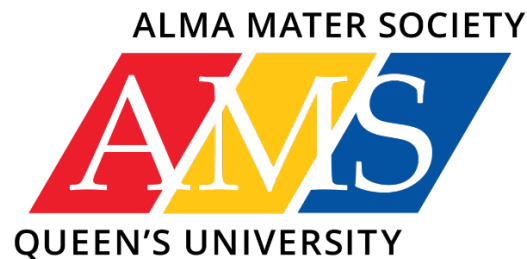


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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Mississauga of the Credit, Huron-Wendat, Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) peoples, known as Katarokwi, or colonially as “Kingston.” The Alma Mater Society at Queen’s University seeks to recognize the importance of these lands to the Indigenous peoples who have existed since time immemorial. The unjust acquisition of these lands occurred through the Crawford Purchase of 1783, a land treaty upheld by the First Peoples but later undermined by the British Crown and the “Canadian” government. This history of numerous broken promises and treaties continues to impact Indigenous communities today.

As settlers on this land, we acknowledge our continued benefit from systemic structures that marginalize Indigenous peoples. Recognizing systemic oppression, it is our duty to actively listen to and amplify Indigenous voices, addressing both past and ongoing injustices for meaningful, positive change. We are grateful to these lands for sustaining us and giving us the gift of life. This acknowledgment is a call to action, committing us to understand and respect the history and ongoing struggles of Indigenous peoples. We recognize that words alone are not enough; our actions must reflect our commitment to justice and reconciliation.

As a branch of the society that strives to connect student leaders and facilitate positive change and student advocacy on Turtle Island, we strive to maintain the core values and teachings from Indigenous peoples. As a policy centred on civic engagement with AMS governance, we must strive to ensure that the voices of Indigenous and marginalized peoples are amplified, as well as provide resources on how we can facilitate and help in advocacy that is important. We are set to encourage reflection on the privileges that have been afforded to us on this land and are committed to using them to ensure campus safety, accessibility, and impact for all students. As settlers on the stolen lands of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples, we must continue to educate ourselves and strive to decolonize every layer of our governance system.

Purpose

The **Civic System** of the Alma Mater Society (“AMS”) consists of the **Civic Affairs Office** (administrative branch), and the **Council of Order** (advisory branch). The Civic System is responsible and accountable to the Judicial Council.

Elections and Referenda are critically important functions of the Society. The AMS is committed to open and transparent processes that ensure sustainable governance and operations. Active student participation in the governance of the AMS is essential for maintaining vital programs and services to serve students. Elections and Referenda This

policy provides information to students who want to be involved in student government and affirms that the AMS supports their endeavours.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and concise rules to be used for the conduct and administration of the Elections and Referenda at the Alma Mater Society. Generally, this policy governs the eligibility requirements, rules and procedures that pertain to the administration of civic processes of the Society. Campaigning and engagement by students-at-large and promotions are governed by the *Civic Engagement Policy*. This policy also governs the operations of the Civic Affairs Office.

Scope

The scope of this policy is limited to the election of positions governed by the Constitution, and as outlined in this policy. This policy specifically governs the election of the AMS Executive, and the Undergraduate Trustee. The election of the University Rector is governed by a joint policy with the SGPS.

This policy, in context of referendums works in tandem with the Student Activity Fee Policy, which is under the purview of the AMS Board of Directors. The process is additionally governed by the Constitution, and *Assembly Policy* as referenced in this document.

Terminology

1. **Abstain:** Abstentions from voting is a form of exercising one's right to vote. When someone confirms that they are abstaining from voting, it means they are voting neither for nor against the options on the ballot.
2. **AMS Assembly ("Assembly"):** refers to the Assembly of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) as defined by the AMS Constitution.
3. **Candidate:** refers to an individual participating in an election governed by this policy. The use of this term is generally restricted to the electoral candidates for Executive or other positions within the Alma Mater Society.
4. **Civic Affairs Office:** refers to the team co-chaired by the Chief Electoral Officer and Chief Returning Officer, who are responsible for the administration all society elections and referenda as outlined by the Constitution.
5. **Civic Officers ("Officers"):** refers to both the Chief Electoral Officer and Chief Returning Officer.
6. **Contested:** refers to an Election with at least two Candidates or more.
7. **Election:** is defined as the voting process by which a Candidate is appointed to an elected position.
8. **Plebiscite:** is defined as the voting process by which a non-binding question is presented on a ballot. Such questions are governed by Part E of this policy.

9. **Plurality:** refers to the voting method used for Yes/No questions on a ballot.
10. **Ranked:** refers to the voting method used for Elections with two Candidates or more. Ranked voting requires Voters to rank their preference for each question option.
11. **Ratification:** is defined as the process by which the AMS Assembly approves Nominees to appear on a ballot, upon meeting the nomination requirements and successfully submitting the required documents. This is further elaborated on through the *Assembly Policy*.
12. **Referenda:** is defined as the voting process by which a binding question is presented on a ballot. Referendum questions may be fee-related, in which case they are governed by Part D of this policy or non-fee related, in which case they are governed by Part E of this policy.
13. **Voting Days:** is defined as the interval of time when AMS members vote on a ballot.
14. **Single Transferable:** refers to the counting method in Ranked voting where if a Voter's preferred Candidate does not get enough votes to stay in the election, their vote can be given to their second choice of Candidate.
15. **Voter:** refers to a member of the AMS, as defined by the AMS Constitution, who will be voting in Elections and Referenda.
16. **Uncontested:** refers to an Election with one Candidate.
17. **SimplyVoting:** refers to an online balloting software used to conduct AMS Elections.

Roles and Responsibilities

Secretary of Internal Affairs

- ☯ The AMS Secretary of Internal Affairs will maintain strict neutrality at all times in relation to all parties participating in an Election or Referenda and must not be considered a member of the Civic Affairs Office at any point.
- ☯ The Secretary of Internal Affairs will monitor, direct and offer advisory support to the Civic Affairs Office in Election Team for compliance with this policy. However, the Civic Officers have final decision-making power over all matters relating to Elections.

- ☯ In the event that the Secretary of Internal Affairs suspects a violation of this policy and/or concerns are raised by a member of the society about potential infractions, the Secretary of Internal Affairs will not have the right to overturn such decisions except through an appeal to the Judicial Council. The Secretary of Internal Affairs may also represent the Civic Affairs Office to the Judicial Council in the event of an appeal or as the need may be.
- ☯ The Secretary of Internal Affairs provides administrative and financial oversight, including signing authority, for the Civic Affairs Office finances within their capacity as the manager of the Internal Affairs Office.
- ☯ The Secretary of Internal Affairs shall prepare all contracts between the AMS and other groups and carry out logistical preparation that takes place over the summer months when the Civic Affairs Officer is not available. The Secretary of Internal Affairs is also responsible for setting the dates for the Civic Periods, as well as spending limits, to be approved by Assembly.

Chief Electoral Officer & Chief Returning Officers (“Co-Chairs”, “Civic Officers”)

- ☯ The Chief Electoral Officer “CEO” is the main point of contact for all non-executive elections of the Society, as well as the elections of Member Societies. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the overall marketing efforts of the Civic Affairs Office and drafting and executing a Marketing Strategy approved by the Secretary of Internal Affairs.
- ☯ The Chief Returning Officer “CRO” is the main point of contact for Part D and E of this policy, and all questions relating to Student Activity Fees and/or AMS Referenda.
- ☯ As per the Constitution, the CEO and CRO operate with full decision-making autonomy for the administration of Elections and Referenda, which is to be guaranteed by the Corporate and honored by all Executives, Officers of the Society, and the University. The CEO and CRO must be free from any influence or interference that undermines their integrity, impartiality, and actual or perceived neutrality, in accordance with this policy and the *Civic Engagement Policy*.
- ☯ The CEO and CRO must work in tandem to ensure that elections are fair, and all decision making is impartial. Their roles and responsibilities are further elaborated on in this policy, and the *Civic Engagement Policy*.

Candidates, and Campaign Groups

- ☯ All Candidates, and Campaign Groups to whom this policy applies are responsible for reading, understanding and complying with this policy. It is the responsibility of Candidates to seek support with understanding, applying or interpreting the policy where it is unclear from the Election Team.

Part A: Civic System

Section 1: Civic Affairs Office

1. The Civic Affairs Office is the administrative branch of the Civic System Secretary of Internal Affairs which fulfills the following responsibilities in addition to the mandate presented by the Constitution:
 - a. Bear ultimate responsibility for conducting all society wide Elections and Referenda processes with integrity and impartiality.
 - b. Aim to increase the awareness of and participation levels of the student body elections and referendum
 - c. Prepare a budget for its operations at the direction of the Secretary of Internal Affairs
 - d. Report the results of any election or Referenda
 - e. Have the power to apply the *Civic Engagement Policy*
 - f. Have the power to enforce and issue findings of violation(s) under the *Civic Engagement Policy*
 - g. Be accountable to the AMS Judicial Council
 - h. Interpret *the Civic Engagement Policy* in a manner consistent with its intentions.
 - i. Exhaust all efforts to reduce barriers in AMS Elections and Referenda, through accessibility considerations in documentation, promotional material, campaign and voting environments, as well as insure inclusivity for all AMS members.
2. The Civic Affairs Office should have operational independence for dealing with all matters which fall within its purview under *The Civic Engagement Policy*. It is independent from the AMS Executive, the AMS Board of Directors, and the Internal Affairs Office. Such AMS functionaries do not have authority to interfere with the proper execution of JAO's mandate to investigate alleged violations. Any interference may be subject to proceedings under Part F of the *Judicial Policy*.
3. The Chief Electoral Officer ("CEO"), is generally responsible to fulfill the following areas of jurisdiction:
 - a. To conduct of all Society wide elections, including but not limited to elections of *The Queen's Journal* Editor(s)-in-Chief;
 - b. To act as the Chief Electoral Officer as requested by a Faculty Society;
 - c. To act as an educational resource and develop training material for electoral teams of Faculty Societies;
 - d. To oversee the marketing and promotion of voting days;
 - e. To facilitate election debates and boothing;

- f. To serve as the main point of contact with *The Queen's Journal*.
4. The Chief Returning Officer ("CRO") is generally responsible to fulfill the following areas of jurisdiction:
 - a. To conduct all Society wide Referenda, including but not limited to binding, plebiscite, and fee-related referenda;
 - b. To administer the Student Activity Fee Review Committee at the direction of the Secretary of Internal Affairs, and provide support to groups wishing to establish, continue or increase their student activity fees;
 - c. To facilitate a healthy and safe space for debate on-campus;
 - d. To serve the Society and Faculty Societies on matters pertaining to Elections or Referenda policies.
5. All members of the Civic Affairs Office must comply with the procedure to determine conflicts of interest, as outlined by the *Appointment Policy*.
6. The Civic Officers are to be hired following the Constitution, and their role in the Civic Affairs Office ultimately derives its authority and jurisdiction from the Constitution.
7. All records in the Civic Affairs Office pertaining to complaints will be destroyed by April 30th of each academic year. Records under the *Election and Referenda Policy* will be destroyed at the direction of the Information and Technology Office.

Section 2: Council of Order

1. The Council of Order is the advisory branch of the Civic System of the Alma Mater Society and ultimately derives its authority and jurisdiction from the Constitution.
2. With respect to civic affairs of the Society, the Council fulfills the following areas of jurisdiction:
 - a. Act in a manner beyond reproach upholding a high standard of personal and collective responsibility, integrity, accountability and transparency.;
 - b. Act in a manner that safeguards the impartiality, neutrality, procedural fairness and autonomy of civic proceedings;
 - c. Direct the public and political representation of the Civic Affairs Office;
 - d. Express formal support or opposition to changes brought forward to policies if the presentation of changes must be accompanied by a consultation with the council prior to their reception by Assembly. Assembly retains full jurisdiction over policies affecting internal affairs, and the council cannot block the presentation of any proposal;

- e. Serve in an advisory capacity to the Civic Affairs Office as outlined or required by the *Civic Engagement Policy*; and to provide guidance, support and direction to the office as requested by the Civic Officers;
 - f. Support the Civic Officers in the resolution of any matter not addressed in this policy or the *Civic Engagement Policy*. For this purpose, the Council of Order exists as an advisory body that supports the mandate of the Judicial Council to oversee all society elections and referendums via the JCOMM Chair who sits on the Council of Order. The primary purpose of the Council of Order is to protect the integrity of the civic proceedings.
3. The Civic Officers may make any additional rules or stipulations not contained in the *Civic Engagement Policy* in accordance with the spirit, mission and mandate of AMS policy and Constitution.
- a. If this clause is used during the Civic Period, the Council of Order must convene within twenty-four (24) hours to uphold the ruling. Quorum for the Council of Order consists of the JCOMM Chair, and at least one representative from the: Judicial Affairs Office, Civic Affairs Office, Office of the Secretary of Internal Affairs or Speaker of Assembly. Any rules made under the authority of the Council of Order must be made public within twenty-four (24) hours on the AMS website, and a notification sent to all Campaign Groups. For further clarity, this authority may not be used to address appeals or concerns about a decision of the Civic Officers.
 - b. Any decision by the Council of Order may be appealed to the Judicial Council by a member of the Society. The Judicial Council may only repeal a rule or stipulation if it violates or contradicts another section in this policy, the *Civic Engagement Policy*, or other relevant AMS policies and/or presents a misinterpretation of the spirit of this policy or is implemented in a manner which undermines the integrity of the election.
 - c. Any rules made under this clause must be reviewed by the Assembly in the March Assembly, after the conclusion of all election and referenda. Assembly should have the power to accept or reject the addition of these rulings as society policy. Should Assembly reject the rule, the Council of Order must refrain from re-adding it for 1 academic year (which is defined as the period starting on May 1st and until April 30th of the following calendar year).
 - d. Outside of Civic Periods, any additional rules or stipulations must follow society procedures on amending policies. This does not restrict the right of the Civic Affairs Office to request support from the Judicial Council via a Constitutional Interpretation. After a JCOMM hearing has taken place, Assembly must be provided a copy of the decision, and any new rules should consider the spirit of the decision.

Section 3: Secretary of Internal Affairs

1. It must be recognized that it is in the best interest of all Society members for the Civic Affairs Office to operate at an arms-length from the Secretary of Internal Affairs. The Secretary is not considered a member of the Civic Affairs Office.
2. The Secretary of Internal Affairs works with the Civic Officers to represent the system externally; and provide oversight to ensure a smooth civic proceedings.
3. In all matters, the Secretary of Internal Affairs is responsible for monitoring the Civic System for compliance with this, and any relevant policies and procedures. The Secretary of Internal Affairs is bound to confidentiality relating all matters within the purview of the Civic System and enjoys autonomy in all relevant decision making under this policy or the *Appointment Policy*.
4. Notwithstanding the above, Civic Officers retain decision making autonomy and independence from the Secretary. While the Secretary is considered an advisor and retains the authority to direct members of the Civic System to comply with this policy; the Secretary may not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the Civic Affairs Office, or act in a manner that undermines the independence or integrity of the Civic System.
5. The Secretary may call a meeting of the Council of Order, to address any concerns that may undermine the Civic System at any time, or by written request of the Civic Officers.

Section 4: Judicial Council

1. Per the AMS Constitution, the Judicial Council is responsible for “the overseeing of all Society Elections and Referenda to ensure that they are being run in accordance with the Society Policy on Elections and Referenda.”
2. All decisions of the Judicial Council are final and not subject to appeal.
3. The Judicial Council must hear all cases relating to disqualification within 24 hours of the decision once it is made by the Civic Officers. Questions may not be removed from the ballot until the Judicial Council has had the opportunity to confirm and uphold the decision to disqualify any question(s).

Section 6: Conflicts of Interest

1. The Civic Affairs Office will strive to provide students with fair elections upholding the highest levels of integrity and impartiality.
2. It is the responsibility of the Secretary of Internal Affairs to address any potential, real or perceived conflicts of interest they are aware of by enforcing the rules and procedures outlined in the *Appointment Policy*. It is the responsibility of the Civic Officers to actively identify and disclose potential, real or perceived conflicts of interest to the Secretary, and seek direction to protect the integrity of civic proceedings.
3. If a Civic Officer has a conflict-of-interest, Campaigning Groups may be assigned a contact person in the Civic Affairs Office or the Chief Governance Officer at the discretion of the Secretary. This will not present an opportunity for Campaign Groups to *request* that they be assigned to either Officer, nor will the Secretary of Internal Affairs entertain such requests which are made on baseless grounds or frivolously.

Section 7: The Queen’s Journal (“The Journal”)

1. The Chief Electoral Officer shall notify The Journal of an election at least one (1) week prior to the first day of voting for publication.
2. The Chief Electoral Officer must ensure that a list of Election Candidates to be ratified is provided to The Journal no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the Ratification Assembly.
 - a. This list shall be considered provisional. The Civic Affairs Office should promptly communicate any subsequent changes to candidate status, including withdrawals, disqualifications, or additions, to The Journal.
3. The Chief Returning Officer shall ensure that campaign statements submitted in accordance with the *Civic Engagement Policy* are provided to The Journal no later than twenty-four (24) hours following the Ratification Assembly.
4. The Civic Officers shall provide The Journal with the official Election and Referenda results report for each Civic Period, in accordance with the timelines and procedures outlined in Part F, Section 5 of this Policy.
5. All Election Candidate and Referenda Group information shared under this section shall be provided conditional upon the receiving party’s agreement to maintain confidentiality and refrain from public release prior to formal ratification by Assembly.

Section 8: Suspected Policy Infringement

1. In the event that there are concerns about the Election Team deviating from this policy or policies governing the Civic Affairs Office, concerns must be raised directly to the Secretary of Internal Affairs. The Secretary will have seventy-two (72) hours to respond to or address the complaints. The Secretary of Internal Affairs may take any action or step necessary to direct the Civic Affairs Office to comply with this policy.
2. Should the Secretary of Internal Affairs fail to respond to or correct a deviation or a suspected policy infraction or should the action(s) taken be deemed unsatisfactory by the complainant, an *Oversight Hearing* may be initiated following the Charter of the Judicial Council. Complainants reserve the right for representation as outlined by the Charter of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Affairs Office may be directed to support the complainant, and/or initiate formal proceedings for Suspected Policy Infractions to be resolved formally at an *Oversight Hearing*.

Part B: AMS Executive Election

Section 1: General

1. Part B of this policy pertains to the election of the AMS Executive, as defined by the Constitution. This is understood to mean the President, Vice-President (Operations), Vice-President (University Affairs).
2. Advertising for the executive elections should take place at the end of the fall term, after the Fall Civic Period, to inform students of positions available. The responsibility for the advertisement lies with the Chief Electoral Officer.
3. The Executive Election Period should normally open on the first day of classes in the Winter Term as shown or otherwise coincide with the Winter Civic Period as defined by the *Civic Engagement Policy*.
4. In order to ensure there is sufficient time for transition and hiring, elections for AMS Executive should be concluded prior to reading week.

Section 2: Eligibility

1. Eligibility to run in an AMS Election is restricted to the following:
 - a. Students who have paid their AMS Membership Fee in the year they are participating in an election, and who would be considered as “AMS Members” as defined by the Constitution.
 - b. Are not constitutionally prohibited from running in elections.
 - c. Are not simultaneously running in any other campus election
 - d. Attestation that the Candidate has not been found of a violation of the *Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen’s University Students, or the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy*.
 - e. Individuals whose employment was terminated by the AMS are ineligible to seek candidacy for the year following their termination.
2. Any candidate running for an Executive position, who also holds any employment (paid or volunteer or otherwise) in the Alma Mater Society or any position listed under Part A of the *Appointment Policy* under positional conflicts of interest, must take a leave of absence from that position which starts on the day of the Ratification Assembly up to and including the day expenses are due.
3. All individuals considered by the Constitution as AMS Senior Managers, are permitted to run subject to:
 - a. The individual shall announce their intention to run in an election as early as possible.

- b. The individual shall ensure that their responsibilities will be adequately covered during the imposed leave of absence without inflicting excessive stress or workload on those assuming their duties.
 - c. The individual shall be prepared to resign their position immediately if requested to-do so by the Executive in the event their campaign is successful. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Executive to ensure that responsibilities are adequately met during an imposed leave of absence or resignation.
4. Individuals holding AMS salaried positions should not be prevented from running for any elected office unless constitutionally prohibited. However, insofar as this is likely to result in a conflict of time and/or interest, the AMS should protect the best interests of the Society by applying the stipulations as found in this policy. Please refer to Part J for further details.

Section 3: Nominations

Nominees do not have to receive signatures, although completion of the Nomination package is mandatory.

1. **Extending Nominations:** Should any elected position receive one Candidate or less, an extended Nomination Period will be extended to start at noon of day 5 of week 2 and conclude at noon on the same day of the Ratification Assembly.
2. **Withdrawals after Nominations (Day 1 or 2 of Campaigning):** If only one Nominee completes the nomination requirements for any position and is ratified by the Assembly and withdraws their candidacy on the first or second day of the campaign period, the following condensed timeline will be adopted.

Week	Day	Event
3&4	5	Information and Ratification Assembly
	6-10	Campaigning period for the Election
	11-12	Voting Days
	12	Expense Forms Due

3. Should only one Nominee be ratified by Assembly, a vote of confidence will be held at the set election dates.
4. If no Nominee fulfills nomination requirement during the set dates or extended window, and no nominees are ratified at the above timeline, the AMS Assembly reserves the right to appoint the Executive at a Special Assembly Session, which is governed by the Appointment Policy. Secretary of Internal Affairs

Section 4: Ratification

1. All nominees contesting for AMS Executive positions must be ratified by the AMS Assembly following the procedures outlined by the Assembly Policy.

Section 5: Ballot

1. The ballot for the Executive election must be prepared in accordance with the procedure in Part F of this policy.
2. If at the conclusion of the Executive election period the entire executive or a position in the executive remain vacant, the Assembly will have the authority as outlined by the Constitution, to make the appropriate appointments at a Special meeting of Assembly.
 - a. No person may be appointed to the Executive in a session of Assembly in which they have been defeated in a confidence vote. If the outcome of the vote is positive, the Nominee will be acclaimed to the nominated position.

Part C: Undergraduate Trustee Election

Section 1: General

1. The Undergraduate Trustee is a position described by Part 13 of the Constitution, and by the By-Laws of the Queen's University Board of Trustees.
2. The AMS shall elect one member of the AMS to the Queen's University Board of Trustees ("Queen's Board") for up to two years through a process that is in accordance with the AMS by-laws, which may not conflict with the By-Laws of the Queen's University Board of Trustee.
3. Advertising for the Trustee elections should normally take place at least three weeks before the start of the Election Period in which the position is contested, to allow students to learn about and understand the position.
4. When a vacancy in the position of AMS Trustee has occurred or is imminent, the Civic Affairs Office will invite nominations for the position of Undergraduate Trustee and an election to fill the vacancy will take place in accordance with this Policy. If successfully elected, the newly appointed Undergraduate Trustee shall serve for the balance of the period remaining in the term of the individual whose position has been vacated.
5. The Undergraduate Trustee shall serve for up to two years commencing on June 1 following their acclamation or election and shall retire from office on May 31. The Undergraduate Trustee shall hold office only while remaining

registered as a student and a member of the AMS and shall be considered to have resigned from office upon withdrawal or graduation from the University, taking a position on the executive of the AMS, the executive of an association or a collective bargaining unit representing Queen's employees, or on the Senate.

Section 2: Eligibility

1. A student who is a member of the executive of the AMS, or the executive of an association or a collective bargaining agent representing Queen's employees, or serving as a member of the Senate, will be eligible for nomination and election, subject to Section 6 of the By-Laws of the Queen's University Board of Trustee.
2. Eligibility to run in an AMS Election is restricted to the following:
 - a. Students who have paid their AMS Membership Fee in the year they are participating in an election, and who would be considered as "AMS Members" as defined by the Constitution.
 - b. Are not constitutionally prohibited from running in elections.
 - c. Are not simultaneously running in any other campus election
 - d. Attestation that the Candidate has not been found of a violation of the Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen's University Students, or the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy.
3. The Trustee shall be eligible for re-election to the Queen's Board provided they remain a registered student and member of the AMS and will not, prior to commencing the elective term, have served on the Board for six or more consecutive years. Where an Undergraduate Trustee will, after commencement but before completion of an elective term of office, have served on the Queen's Board for six consecutive years, they may be re-elected provided that their seat shall be deemed to be vacated upon the incumbent having served a total of six consecutive years on the Queen's Board and the AMS President shall plan subsequent elections accordingly.
4. Students who are members of the executive of the AMS, or the executive of an association or a collective bargaining unit representing Queen's employees, or serving as a member of the Senate who have been elected to the Board shall, prior to June 1 in the year of their election, resign such position(s) and shall not, for the duration of their tenure of service on the Queen's Board, serve on the executive of the AMS, or the executive of an association or a collective bargaining unit representing Queen's employees or on the Senate.

Section 3: Nominations

Nominations for the Undergraduate Trustee position will follow the same procedures as

nominations for the AMS Executive positions as outlined by Part B, Section 3 of this policy.

Section 4: Ratification

All nominees contesting for the positions of Undergraduate Trustee must be ratified by the AMS Assembly following the procedures outlined by the *Assembly Policy*.

Section 5: Transparency and Conduct

- 1. All Candidates are required to provide an estimate of their expected commitments for the Voters to review on the ballot.
- 2. Candidate commitments will be presented in the format of the following table and estimated (on the assumption that they are elected) to the best of the candidate’s ability. If a term does not cover a semester, that semester column should be excluded from the estimate. The blanks in the table will be filled with numbers corresponding to the hours per week that the Candidate expects to commit to that category averaged over the semester.

	Summer	Fall	Winter
Extracurriculars			
Academics			
Work			

Section 6: Ballot

1. The ballot for the Undergraduate Trustee election must be prepared in accordance with the procedure in Part F of this policy.
2. In the event that an election results in no successful candidate due to disqualification or lack of confidence, or for whatever other reason, the University Secretary of Internal Affairs must be notified and consulted.
3. The President of the AMS shall report the election result to the University Secretary.

Part D: Student Activity Fees

Section 1: Mandate and Eligibility

1. This section applies to the questions to establish, increase or continue Student Activity Fees which are governed by the Student Activity Fee Policy of the Board of Directors.
2. Eligibility to place a student fee question on the ballot will be determined by the Student Activity Fee Policy (SAF) of the AMS Board of Directors.

Section 2: Validation Period

1. The Validation Period refers to the period of time from the date that a statement opening the Validation Period is made on the AMS website, until the day that the validation package is due. To align with the Society timeline on referendums, the timeline(s) are as follows:
 - a. All groups seeking to continue a fee must submit their validation package by 12:00 PM on the third Friday of September. All such groups must participate in the Fall referendum.
 - b. All groups seeking to increase or establish a fee must submit their validation package by 12:00 PM on the first Friday of November. All such groups must participate in the Winter referendum.
2. Upon submission of the package, the Student Activity Fee Review Committee will make recommendations per Student Activity Fee Policy. The Validation Period is fully within the scope of the purview of the Board of Directors.

Section 3: Nominations

1. Nominations are governed by the type or affiliation of the group as defined by the *Student Activity Fee Policy*. All relevant definitions below should be referenced with the Board policy.
2. The Chief Returning Officer will communicate nomination requirements with the release of the decision of the Student Activity Fee Review Committee.
3. All groups undergoing a Triennial Review where their fee is not increasing, are exempt from the nomination requirements as there has already been demonstrated support through the establishment of a fee. All groups seeking to increase a fee, regardless of whether this occurs in the year of their Triennial Review, must follow nomination requirements that are applicable to their group type as outlined in this section.

Internal Groups (AMS or Faculty Societies)

4. The AMS or its Faculty Societies, or groups affiliated with either who receive approval by the Student Activity Fee Review Committee to establish or increase a mandatory fee are exempt from the nomination requirements.
5. The AMS or its Faculty Societies, or groups affiliated with either who wish to establish or increase an optional fee, must receive nomination signatures by 0.6% of the membership of the Society. The exact number is subject to determination by the Civic Officers.

University & External Groups

6. All other groups, including groups affiliated with the University and/or groups considered as “External” by the *Student Activity Fee Policy* must receive nomination signatures by 1% of the student population.

Section 4: Ratification by Assembly

1. Assembly will be notified of any Campaign Organization which failed to meet the validation or nomination requirements and why through a written and oral report given by the Chair of the Student Activity Fee Review Committee at the Ratification Assembly.
2. For those Nominees that meet the nomination requirements, Assembly should be notified of which questions will be placed on the ballot.

3. Assembly reserves the right and the authority to reject any new or changing student fees to be placed on the ballot only where there is clear and sufficient evidence brought forward that the Student Activity Fee Review Committee failed to properly vet the fees in the validation period.
4. Approval by the Assembly is not required to approve the addition of triennial review student fee questions as the Assembly has already voted on the legitimacy of the fee during its establishment. The Assembly will only vote (in accordance with the Student Activity Fee Policy) to place a triennial review question on the ballot where the Student Activity Fee Review Committee has determined one of the following through the validation period:
 - a. The status of Ratification or affiliation of the Nominee has substantially changed since it last went to referendum.
 - b. The mandate or operations of the Nominee has substantially changed since it last went to referendum.
 - c. The way the fee is expended by the Nominee has substantially changed since it last went to referendum.
 - d. There has been a significant change to AMS policy on eligibility requirements for student fees which would affect that fee since it last went to referendum.

Section 5: Faculty Societies

1. This section applies in the event that a Member Society or an affiliated group, as defined by the AMS Constitution is participating in a fee referendum and whose participation in the referendum is only of interest to the members of that Society (not the entire undergraduate body).
2. All rules and regulations outlined by the *Civic Engagement Policy* relating to participation in a referendum must be followed. In addition to this, each Faculty Society may have additional rules that also apply and must be followed.
 - a. In the event there is a discrepancy between this policy, the *Civic Engagement Policy* and the policies of a Faculty Society, this policy prevails. The Civic

Officers may make exceptions to this clause at their discretion, subject to Part A, Section 2.

3. **Timeline:** Faculty Societies, and affiliated groups (if applicable) may deviate from the AMS Elections and Referenda Timelines, with:
 - a. 2/3 Approval of the Student Activity Fee Review Committee, made at the time the fee's validation was approved.
 - b. For the purpose of aligning fee referendums with the executive elections of their Society. Where this occurs, the Chair of the Student Activity Fee Review Committee may send ratification motions via an e-vote.
4. **Ratification:** The AMS Assembly retains the final authority to reject any question that goes on the ballot of any Faculty Society per Part D, Section 4.
5. In all cases, the Chief Returning Officer is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to by all Faculty Societies. This authority is not delegated to the electoral officers of the Member Society under any circumstance as only the Civic Affairs Office is vested with the authorities under this policy.
6. In the event that a group affiliated with a Faculty Society wishes to add a fee to the fee slate to of that Faculty Society, the group may be permitted to follow procedures outlined in this section at the discretion of the Chair of the Student Activity Fee Review Committee, who retains the final authority to make such determinations.

Section 6: Ballot Questions

1. All fee-related referendums within the purview of the Society should follow the formula for questions as outlined below. When a situation arises that is not covered by this policy, the Secretary of Internal Affairs will have the jurisdiction to make recommendations to Assembly on how to proceed.
2. Per the Constitution, the wording of student activity fee questions shall be subject to the Society Policy on Elections and Referenda and as such, the Assembly jurisdiction for approval of such deviations are limited by the Constitution. The Assembly should not approve question(s) or proposed wording that may constitution as Campaigning under the *Civic Engagement Policy*.
3. The Chief Returning Officer, in Appendix A of this policy, should maintain a list of previous referendum questions that have deviated from the formulas below. This may be updated by the Chief Returning Officer subject to approval by the Secretary

of Internal Affairs. The purpose of this appendix is to create a list of precedence and institutional memory within the Society. This list should be used to guide any fee-related questions that, from time to time, may need to deviate from the formulae outlined below.

New and Continuing

4. **Establishment:** Do you agree to the establishment of a \$(insert fee amount)___ fee (mandatory, subject to annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment, subject to individual opt out) to support the _(insert group name)___?
5. **Continuing Fees:** Do you agree to the continuation of the _(insert group/fee name)___ fee of \$_(insert fee amount)___ (mandatory, subject to annual Consumer Price Index adjustment, subject to individual opt out) for the next three years. This fee was originally established in _(insert year)___ and last went to referendum in ___(insert year)___?

Fee Increases

6. **For fees that are already approved for CPI:** Do you agree to an increase in the ___(insert group/fee name)___ fee (mandatory, non-reviewable*) from \$_(old fee amount)___ to \$_(new fee amount)___, subject to annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment?
7. **For fees looking to be indexed to CPI:** Do you agree to an automatic yearly increase based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the _(insert group/fee name)___ applied to the fee of \$_(fee amount)___ (mandatory, non-reviewable*)?
8. **For all other fee increases:** Do you agree to an increase in the _(insert group/fee name)___ fee (mandatory, non-reviewable*) or (subject to individual opt out) from \$_(old fee amount)___ to \$_(new fee amount)___, an increase of \$_(net increase)___?

Part E: Non-Fee Referenda Questions

Section 1: Mandate

1. “Non-Fee Referenda Questions” may include either one of the following question types:
 - a. Binding non-fee related questions (“binding questions”)
 - a. Non-binding questions (“plebiscite questions”). The purpose of such questions is to survey AMS undergraduate opinion or gauge support in relation to a specific issue, policy, proposal, or advocacy position.

Section 2: Eligibility

1. Plebiscite and Binding questions may be requested by a member of the AMS who has paid the full slate of mandatory fees and who provides the Chief Returning Officer with a written request signed by five percent (5%) of current Society members. The Chief Returning Officer, in consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer, will determine the exact number(s) needed to call a referendum.
2. Plebiscite and Binding questions may be placed on the referendum directly by the Assembly if the request is made by a member of Assembly.

Section 3: Ratification by Assembly

1. All non-fee referendum questions are subject to approval by Assembly following the policies and procedures outlined by the Constitution and Part D of the *Assembly Policy*, All

Section 4: Ballot Requirements

1. Binding questions must be indicated on the ballot, and it should be made clear that the question is binding.
2. Non-binding questions must be indicated on the ballot with “AMS Plebiscite” appearing before the specific question or section.

Section 5: More on Binding Questions

1. ‘No’ campaigns may register and follow regular campaign policies.
2. AMS representatives working in their capacity may register and run ‘No’ campaigns governed by this policy, and will be treated as any other ‘No’ campaign.

Section 6: More on Plebiscite Questions

1. There can be no official or recognized Campaigning for or against Plebiscite questions. However, the facilitation of a certain level of educational information dissemination for the benefit of an informed student vote is to be permitted, at the direction and discretion of the Civic Affairs Office.
2. The AMS Assembly reserves the authority to place a Plebiscite Question directly on the ballot. All Plebiscite questions approved for a referendum ballot are to be published in The Queen's Journal at the same time that referendum questions/write-ups appear. The Election Team will endeavor to widely publicize the existence of any Plebiscite Questions immediately upon their approval for the ballot. This will include posting the Plebiscite question(s) on the AMS website.
3. The Civic Officers, through unanimous approval, have the discretion to disqualify any Plebiscite question, where they find clear grounds to believe that the nature of any unofficial "campaign" activity has compromised the integrity of the Plebiscite process and/or skewed the vote or opinion of the student body rendering the result unrepresentative of student opinion. Disqualification may entail the removal of the question from the ballot or a decision to not count/publish the vote. This is subject to approval by the Judicial Council.

Part F: Balloting and Polling

Section 1: General

1. **Right to Vote:** All members of the Society shall have the opportunity to cast **one** vote on the polling days through SimplyVoting or a method approved by Secretary of Internal Affairs. The preparation of the ballot is normally the responsibility of the Chief Electoral Officer.
2. **Right for Notice:** Any changes in polling days, as ordered by the Secretary of Internal Affairs must be made known at least twenty-four (24) hours before the time normally scheduled for the opening of polls.
3. **Right to Inspect:** Any online voting/ballot services and/or software used shall be available to any member of the society on demand for the purpose of inspecting it and perusing its constituting code.
4. **Failure in the System:** In the event of a failure with the online voting system, voting will be postponed for one (1) week from the scheduled voting days to allow

technical support to address the failure of the system. The Secretary of Internal Affairs will retain full authority on the new Voting Days, which must respect the *Right to Notice* under Part policy, Section 1.

- a. In the event the failure persists, the Civic Affairs Office is authorized to run a paper ballot election with terms and guidelines established by the Civic Officers, subject to a 2/3 approval of Assembly. Terms and conditions of paper balloting will be made available no later than (3) days prior to the start of the paper ballot poll published through the AMS website and Queen's Journal.

Section 2: Randomization

1. All ballots for elections and referendums within the purview of the Alma Mater Society must be randomized if:
 - a. There are multiple groups seeking to place a fee-related questions;
 - b. There are multiple candidates in an election within the purview of the Society.
2. Where there are multiple Candidates set to appear on the ballot, the order must be determined by lottery. The method of randomization shall be determined by the Civic Officers, with oversight from the Secretary of Internal Affairs. The method used and the resulting ballot order shall be reported by the Secretary of Internal Affairs at the Ratification Assembly.
3. The randomization process must take place in the presence of the Civic Affairs Office and the Secretary of Internal Affairs, who shall serve as witnesses to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

Section 3: Election Ballots

1. **Contested Vote:** Ranked ballots are to be used in the event two or more Candidates are contesting an election.
 - a. The ballot must include a “none of the above” option, which counts as a vote against all Candidates and is included in the Voter turn out.
 - b. There shall also be an abstain option.
 - c. These must be tabulated using the **Single Transferrable** vote system.
 - d. If a Candidate is disqualified, the ballot is interpreted as if the disqualified team had been removed from contention in the first counting round.

2. **Confidence Vote:** In the event a confidence vote needs to occur, the wording should be: *“Do you have confidence in [names] to fulfill the duties of (position name)?”*.
 - a. The question will be asked with a **Preferential Voting system**
 - b. The question will have an abstain option.

Section 4: Referendum Ballot

3. In general, the order of items that appear on the ballot will follow the order below:
 - a. Society-wide election questions
 - b. Binding questions
 - c. New Fees (Mandatory)
 - d. New Fees (Optional)
 - e. Increasing Fees (Mandatory)
 - f. Increasing Fees (Optional)
 - g. Triennial Fees (Mandatory)
 - h. Triennial Fees (Optional)
 - i. Plebiscite questions
 - j. Any question(s) restricted to a subset of the Society’s membership ex. Faculty society election questions.

4. The order in which questions appear in paragraphs (a), (b) and (i) are at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer.

5. The order in which questions appear in paragraphs (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), and (h) should be randomized subject to Part F, Section 2 of this policy. For further clarity, the randomization will determine the order in which questions appear on each of the sections aforementioned.

Section 5: Ballots and Results

1. **Contested Vote:** A Candidate shall be declared elected upon receiving a majority (50% + 1) of valid votes. Votes shall be redistributed in successive rounds in accordance with voter preferences until one (1) Candidate achieves a majority.
 - a. If the “None of the Above” option receives the majority of valid votes at any stage of counting, no Candidate shall be elected, and the position shall be deemed vacant.
2. **Confidence Vote:** A Candidate shall be declared elected upon receiving a majority (50% + 1) of valid votes in favour (“Yes”) of the confidence question.
 - a. If the Candidate does not receive a majority of valid votes in favour of their candidacy, the Candidate shall be deemed not to have obtained the confidence of the electorate, and the position shall be deemed vacant.
3. Abstentions shall not count toward the total number of valid votes for the purpose of determining a majority but shall be included in overall voter turnout.
4. All binding referendum questions (fee or non-fee) require a simple majority to pass, unless quorum, which shall be fifteen percent (15%) of the general members of the Alma Mater Society, is not met. If quorum is not met, fees will be subject to the scale presented below.
5. Non-binding Plebiscite questions will not be deemed “Pass” or “Fail”. Instead, the number and percentage of votes for each option will simply be reported.

Referendum Sliding Scale

- i. **Ballot Sliding Scale:** Approval of each individual fee shall be subject to the following sliding scale based on total Voter turnout:

Turnout Percentage	Percentage Needed to Pass
Less than 5%	65%
5% to 9.9%	60%
10% to 14.9%	50+1%
15%+	50%+1

6. Abstentions will not count as a vote for or against a question, but are included in the Voter turn out.
7. When the sliding scale is used, the percentage of Voters must be at or above the threshold stipulated above. Numbers may not be rounded up or down or changed in any way that could affect the results. The final interpretation of this is within the purview of the Judicial Council.

Ties and Even Votes

8. In the event of a tie, the Election Team must announce that there is a tie. There should be an All-Candidates meeting that takes place with the presence of 2/3 of the Judicial Council members within 24 hours to review and view the results of the election.
 - a. Should the AMS Judicial Council approve and confirm that there is a tie, the Judicial Council Chair and Vice-Chair will sign an order to re-open the ballot.
 - b. The order to reopen the ballot will be submitted to the SimplyVoting Support Team by the Secretary of Internal Affairs, and the ballot will be reopened at a time for a full **twenty-four (24) hours** to allow students who have not voted to cast their vote.

9. No Campaigning (in-person or online) will be permitted in any form. Any attempts will result in a disqualification subject to approval of the Judicial Council per guidelines and terms established by the *Civic Engagement Policy*.
10. This procedure would be repeated until the election results in no ties and/or everyone has voted.

Announcement of Results

11. The Civic Officers shall review the ballot and confirm the results with oversight from the Secretary of Internal Affairs before public release.
12. The Civic Officers shall compile an official report of the Elections and Referenda results upon review to be retained in the Internal Affairs Office records.
13. The Civic Officers retain full jurisdiction over when the results are announced, so long as this occurs no less than two (2) hours after they have been reviewed and within twelve (12) hours of the end of the voting period.
14. The Civic Affairs Office shall publicly announce the results only after each Candidate and Campaign Group have been informed of the results.
 - a. Any Campaign Group requesting clarification about the referendum results must do so by submitting a formal written request to the Civic Officers within forty-eight (48) hours of the release of the results.
15. **Election Reveal Night:** The Internal Affairs Office may facilitate the Election Reveal Night for the purpose of publicly sharing outcomes in a centralized and accessible student-facing setting. Where held:
 - a. The event shall constitute the official public release of results, provided all requirements outlined in this policy have been satisfied, and shall occur within the prescribed announcement timelines as determined by the Civic Officers.
 - b. Notwithstanding the notification requirements set out in this policy, where all Electoral Candidates are present at the event, results may be communicated to the public concurrently. Attendance of Referenda Groups is optional and shall not affect the timing or validity of the announcement of the results.
 - c. All results presented at Election Reveal Night must be consistent with the official results report of the Civic Affairs Office

Part G: Miscellaneous

Section 1: University Rector

1. The election for the University Rector will follow the *Rector Election Policy*. This policy and the *Civic Engagement Policy* work in tandem to the *Rector Election Policy*. For greater clarity, the Rector Election Policy supersedes both.

Section 2: Other Elections

1. When an election for a position other than the Society Executive is being conducted by the Society, the above describes rules and regulations for Executive elections should be followed as closely as possible or reasonable. The Civic Officers are empowered to deviate from these rules for other elections if it is required by the Constitution, the University or the reality of the situation.

2. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for co-ordinating logistics and communication with Faculty Societies for the running of the elections; and may act as an interim CEO for the Faculty Societies if needed.
 - a. Faculty Societies are responsible for notifying the Chief Electoral Officer of a planned election at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled voting days through the method indicated by the Secretary of Internal Affairs.
 - b. Faculty Societies may have their own rules and procedures governing their ballot questions. However, in the absence of policies at the Faculty Society, ballot procedures under this policy will be followed.

Monitoring

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the AMS to ensure that groups and the Election Team are following all proper procedures and rules. Generally, this policy should be reviewed at least (1) Assembly prior to an Assembly where Candidates or groups are being ratified to ensure that the policy reflects best practices and is fully up to date. Every effort should be made to ensure that the fall and winter Referenda follow a similar process and procedure, and that rules do not substantially change between the two periods in any academic year except for addressing serious and pressing issues. In motioning for changes, the Secretary of Internal Affairs will attempt to ensure that there is consistency between the two Referenda periods as much as possible.

Any changes for this policy must be approved by a simple majority vote of the Assembly in order to take effect. Additional rules or stipulations not included in this policy may be added during an active election or Referenda cycle, as outlined by Part A of this policy. The AMS Judicial Council may only reject an additional rule or stipulation if the rule or stipulation violates another section of this or another AMS policy in a manner which is inconsistent with the spirit of this policy. The AMS Assembly will review any additional rules made at the Assembly following the conclusion of the election cycle and should have the right to uphold the rule by adding it into policy or reject it, in which case, that rule may not be implemented again for 1 academic year.

Any substantial changes to this policy must be reviewed by the Council of Order prior to their presentation to Assembly. The Council may issue a statement of support, opposition or choose to remain impartial with respect to the change(s) being proposed.

Contact person	<i>Civic Affairs Office (civic@ams.queensu.ca)</i>
Date of next review	<i>April 2027</i>
Related policies, procedures and guidelines	<i>AMS Constitution Student Activity Fee Policy Appointment Policy Rector Elections Policy Elections and Referenda Policy Charter of the Judicial Council</i>
Policies superseded by this policy	<i>Civic Engagement Policy</i>

Appendix A: Fee Referendum Questions

This list may be updated by the Chief Returning Officer at any time, with approval from the Secretary of Internal Affairs to reflect any unique question(s) approved by Assembly. The Secretary of Internal Affairs must notify the Assembly of any change(s) to this section at the subsequent meeting. All additions should follow the template below:

1. **Winter 2025** **Reviewable,**
Mandatory, Increasing “Do you agree to the continuation of the Bus-IT Fee (mandatory) for the next three years at \$165 for 2025-26, \$180 for 2026-27, and \$195 for 2027-28. This fee was originally established prior to 1974, and last went to referendum in 2022.