



University Students' Council Of Western University

Referendum Policy

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	Next Review Date: September 2026
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Related Document(s):	
Review Committee(s): Elections Governance Committee, Governance Committee	
Delegates:	

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **CRO** shall also be known as the Chief Returning Officer and is accountable for student elections and referendums;
- 1.2. **Elections Calendar** is the timeline for elections released each year as outlined in By-Law 2.

2. GENERAL

- 2.1. The administration of this policy is vested with the CRO, who may delegate to a Deputy Returning Officer at their discretion.
- 2.2. The results of any referendum shall be binding on the USC unless the results affect the **Letters Patent** of the USC or unless, by implementing the directive of the referendum, the Board of Directors would be breaching its fiduciary obligations to the corporation.
 - 2.2.1. To change the USC's corporate objectives via referendum, first Council must pass a motion supporting the change.
- 2.3. The results of any referendum shall be binding only if a minimum of 20% of the undergraduate student body votes in the referendum.
 - 2.3.1. Declined and spoiled ballots shall count toward the vote count for quorum. The number of students in the student body shall be the November FTE count provided by the Western University Registrar.

2.4. The passing of a referendum motion by Council will trigger the creation of a Referendum Subcommittee of the Elections Governance Committee.

2.5. All referendums will be included in the Spring Election and follow the same timeline for nominations, campaigning and balloting as outlined in the Election Calendar.

2.5.1. Council may resolve to hold a special referendum on a timeline that differs from the timeline outlined in the Election Calendar if, at the discretion of Council, the referendum topic requires immediate action.

2.6. Voting for all referendums shall use the same service provider as the USC Elections.

3. INITIATION OF REFERENDUMS

3.1. All referendums are initiated by Council.

3.2. Council may initiate a referendum on any issue through a motion of Council duly passed by a simple majority of those present and voting.

3.2.1. The process for initiating a referendum is as follows:

1. A Councillor or group of Councillors must consult a minimum of 200 students across a minimum of three faculties. The referendum proposal presented to Council must include proof and results of consultation. Signatures of participating students should be included in the proposal.
2. The Councillor or group of Councillors seeking to bring forward their referendum proposal must consult with the USC President, the Chair of the Board of Directors, and the Senior Manager, Advocacy and Government Services before bringing forward their proposal. Note that this consultation process does not guarantee support for the referendum or the proposal's success.
3. The Councillor or group of Councillors must present a referendum question in the form of a yes or no question.

3.3. A referendum must be brought no later than the November Council cycle.

4. REGISTERED INTEREST PARTY

4.1. Registered interested parties are entitled to campaign for any side in any referendum or plebiscite. More than one registered party may represent each official side.

4.2. Any group may request recognition as a registered interest party provided that the following conditions are met:

4.2.1. They are Western University undergraduate student(s) approved by the Committee, autonomous from the USC

4.3. Non-Western students and other third parties are not permitted to join a registered interest party.

4.4. All applications for status as a registered interest party must be submitted to the CRO by the end of the candidate nomination period, as noted in the Elections Calendar released by the CRO.

4.4.1. The Committee will refer to the **Registered Interest Party Procedure** when approving applications.

4.5. Subject to the following, all registered interest parties, including the USC, when applicable, are deemed candidates and bound by the campaign rules in By-law 2, Elections Governance Committee Policy and by this policy when representing their side of the issue.

4.5.1. All Campaign Materials produced by a registered party, including electronic materials, must clearly indicate that a registered interest party authors them.

5. **USC-SPONSORED SIDE**

5.1. Where the USC is interested in the outcome of a referendum, the Council can campaign or appoint someone to campaign on behalf of a particular side.

6. **INFORMATION-BASED CAMPAIGN**

6.1. Where the Council supports the provision of information to the electorate, the USC, by a simple majority vote of Council, may provide financing for an information-based campaign in accordance with election financing rules.

7. **FINANCES**

7.1. Registered interest parties may apply to the Committee for the funding available for their official side.

7.2. Each official side shall be entitled to funding up to 100% of the Presidential campaign limit as established.

7.3. Registered interest parties shall be entitled to spend 20% of their allowed budget on research material and administrative costs.

7.4. All official sides and registered interest parties shall present a complete financial statement to the CRO within 72 hours of the close of balloting.

8. **APPEALS OF REFERENDUM RESULTS**

8.1. Any appeals of the validity of any referendum results shall be heard by the Appeals Board and governed by the procedures in the **Appeals Board Policy**.

8.1.1. Notice and grounds for appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Appeals Board no later than 4:30 PM, two (2) days after referendum results are released to the public.