



University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association
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GSA Election Policy

Policy Statement and Objective

The following document outlines the election guidelines of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) of the University of Calgary and aims to improve transparency in the election process. This document is designed to provide information about the electoral process to all Members of the Association. It outlines how the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and Candidates should act during an election.

It is the responsibility of all Candidates and other interested parties to ensure that they are aware of and adhere to this policy. They are encouraged to direct any questions or concerns relating to this policy, the bylaws of the Association that concern elections, or any other issue arising from the election process to the CRO.

Definitions

Definitions herein shall have the same meaning as in the Association's bylaws. Should there be a discrepancy between this policy and the Association's bylaws, the Association's bylaws shall prevail.

"All-Candidates Meeting" means a meeting scheduled by the CRO that is mandatory for all Candidates or Designates to attend.

"All-Candidates Forum" means a moderated forum in which Candidates address specific questions as posed by the moderator and/or Members at a predetermined time and place as identified by the CRO.

"Association" means The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary

"Banners" means multiple individual Posters hung together or near each other, where each subsequent Poster is a continuation of the previous. Posters hung together or near each other,

Non-Compliance

This document contains procedures that carry significant liability for the Association as it relates to the electoral process. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action up to and including disqualification.

Roles and Responsibilities

The CRO is accountable to the Elected Council for the proper conduct of the electoral process.

Candidates must adhere to this document in its entirety. The CRO oversees the electoral process and ensures its compliance with this document.

DRO(s) may be employed to assist the CRO with any provision herein.

Contacts

Contact	Email address
CRO	cro.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Executive Director	gsaed@ucalgary.ca
General Enquiries	askgsa@ucalgary.ca

Policies

1. Eligibility

- 1.1. All Members are eligible to run for office in an election subject to the provisions and limitations specified in the Association bylaws, the PSLA, and herein.
- 1.2. Staff who is also active member must take leave of absence before becoming a candidate.
- 1.3. Members seeking to run in the general election must be available to attend, or send a Designate to, the All-Candidates Meeting and the All-Candidates Forum as scheduled by the CRO. Candidates should inform the CRO of their Designate a minimum of 24

- 3.2.3. Sufficient information identifying and confirming eligibility of the nominee for the position being sought;
 - 3.2.4. Sufficient information to identify, contact, and confirm voting eligibility of five (5) Members who support the nomination, and who are eligible to vote for the position sought.
- 3.3. Members become Candidates in the General Election upon receiving confirmation from the CRO of their successful nomination:
 - 3.3.1. A nomination is deemed successful after all eligibility criteria are met as identified on the Nomination form, and verified by the CRO;
 - 3.3.2. The CRO must provide a response to the prospective Candidate within two (2) business days of the member submitting their nomination form. Any nominee determined to be ineligible will be provided with a written explanation via email and given one business day, or until the end of the nomination period, whichever is later, to rectify any deficiencies in the nomination form.
 - 3.3.3. Official Candidates will be listed on the Association's website once the CRO verifies the nomination.
- 3.4. Should the CRO or a member of the Election Committee decide to run for an elected position, they must resign from their current position at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first day of the nomination period. Notice must be provided, in writing, to the President and the CRO.
 - 3.4.1. Neither the CRO, nor a member of the Elections Committee, are eligible to be nominated for an elected position once the nomination period has started.

4. Candidate Conduct

- 4.1. No Candidate shall run or be a member of a Slate, share expenses for campaign materials, or use similar or identical slogans.
- 4.2. The Association places a high priority on open lines of communication between Candidates and electors. Candidates, or their Designate, are required to attend all All-Candidates Forums as announced by the CRO in the election announcement. If neither the Candidate nor a Designate attend the forum, the CRO reserves the right to disqualify the Candidate, except in extenuating circumstances.
- 4.3. A candidate must sign and submit the code of conduct policy before they begin campaigning.
- 4.4. If a Candidate is unable to attend a forum, their Designate may play a 2-minute video of the Candidate at the forum or present a speech, and answer questions on the Candidate's behalf.

- 5.2. All Candidates shall create a campaign platform (maximum 2 pages) which will be posted on the Association's website after the nomination period by the CRO. The CRO will provide examples of platform from previous years. The platform must be submitted by the time established by the CRO and communicated during the election announcement.
- 5.3. A Candidate may provide one photo and a platform summary with a maximum of fifty (50) words to the Association for election promotion purposes.
- 5.4. Campaign materials must not contain misinformation, slander, inappropriate endorsements, or inappropriate or discriminatory content that violates the University of Calgary or GSA code of conduct.
- 5.5. A Candidate must not misrepresent themselves in the campaign and/or on campaign materials. All campaign materials shall include, in a legible form, the name of the Candidate and the position being sought.
- 5.6. All campaign materials shall, where applicable, include in legible form, a statement declaring who paid to produce the campaign material. If campaign materials are paid for by the Association under Article 6.4 herein, such material must include the statement "paid for by the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary" on said materials.
- 5.7. A Candidate shall not make any reference to the identity of another Candidate either directly or indirectly on any campaign materials.
- 5.8. A Candidate shall not contact any other Candidate to review their platforms, ideas, campaign materials, etc., prior to the campaign period.
- 5.9. Candidates shall not use the logos of the Graduate Students' Association or the University of Calgary on any campaign material.
- 5.10. Candidates shall respect copyright law and avoid plagiarism in all campaign materials
- 5.11. A Candidate may have no more than two (2) Banners.
- 5.12. All Candidates shall:
 - 5.12.1. Comply with all building and safety regulations;
 - 5.12.2. Follow university regulations on posters, use of university grounds, and comply with all "no campaign" zones;
 - 5.12.3. Not use stickers, decals, or any adhesive material of a permanent or semi-permanent nature. If unsure if a material is permitted confirm with the facilities manager or department;
 - 5.12.4. Not campaign or post any campaign materials in any campus library;

- 7.4. If a position requires multiple people to be elected, such as for the Officer at Large position, and there are an equal number or fewer candidates, then each candidate shall be voted for separately as if it were a separate position.
- 7.5. If there is only a single candidate for a position, then voting shall be as above using the “None” pseudo-candidate, or equivalently a clear accept/reject question may be used.
- 7.6. If there are multiple candidates for a position, votes will be counted using the Single Transferable Vote method.¹
 - 7.6.1. Voters rank voting options in order of preference, from their first preference to their last preference.
 - 7.6.2. The quota to determine if a candidate is elected is calculated before tabulation begins using the Droop quota.
 - 7.6.3. Ranked ballots are counted as follows:
 - 7.6.3.1. On the first round of counting, each option shall receive a first preference vote for each vote indicating it as first preference.
 - 7.6.3.2. Should an option meet the quota of first preference votes after any round, it shall be declared elected. If there are several options meeting the quota the one with the most votes shall be elected. If there is a tie one of those options shall be elected by random draw. Multiple options are never elected simultaneously.
 - 7.6.3.3. If no option is elected or further winners are required, then the option with the fewest number of first preference votes shall be eliminated from the question. Should there be a tie for the fewest number of first preference votes, then among these, the option with the fewest number of second preference votes shall be eliminated. Should a tie persist, the procedure shall continue with third preference votes, et cetera. Should a tie still persist, an option shall be eliminated by random draw. Multiple options are never eliminated simultaneously.

¹ <https://help.simplyvoting.com/docs/preferential-voting-methods>

- 8.4. The initial results will be provisional until any outstanding policy violations by Candidates or others are resolved, campaign expenses are confirmed, and any other issue that may arise is appropriately dealt with. Once these issues have been addressed, the CRO shall then officially certify the results.
- 8.5. The CRO may take up to 2 weeks to certify the results of the election should an appeal take place. The CRO will sign a certification document and the official results will be announced on the GSA website.

9. Neutrality

- 9.1. Members of the Elected Council must announce a time slot for when they will be available to provide potential Candidates with honest information about the Association positions.
- 9.2. In the case of new positions any Council member or the Executive Director may provide potential Candidates with honest information about the Association positions.
- 9.3. Current Elected Council members may not use their position or influence to campaign on the behalf of another Candidate.
- 9.4. All members of the Elected Council and GSA staff must remain neutral in all matters pertaining to the election process.
- 9.5. Current members of the Elected Council may run in the election and campaign only for themselves without breaching neutrality.

10. Complaints, Infractions, and Penalties

- 10.1. Any Active Member who believes that any Campaign Materials violate Association bylaws, this policy, University policy, or any other election procedure, should contact the CRO.
- 10.2. Complaints must be submitted by email to the CRO.
- 10.3. Upon receipt of a complaint, the CRO shall provide an initial response to the Complainant within 48 hours. During the voting period the CRO shall provide an initial response to the Complainant within 24 hours. The CRO will investigate further if necessary and provide a written notice to both parties involved indicating the final decision which may include a warning or sanction. All complaints must include:
 - 10.3.1. Full name of the complainant
 - 10.3.2. Full name of the Candidate and any others involved.
 - 10.3.3. A description of the perceived violation including a reference to the section of the GSA Election Policy or Bylaw that has been violated

13. Election Reporting

13.1. The CRO will provide a written report to the Elected Council no later than thirty days after the election has been completed. This report will outline at minimum:

- 13.1.1. A summary of the election including:
 - 13.1.1.1. Number of eligible and ineligible nominees who ran for specific elected positions;
 - 13.1.1.2. Votes for each candidates, “no votes”, and abstentions. Abstentions should not be counted as a no vote;
 - 13.1.1.3. Number of Members who voted; and
 - 13.1.1.4. Election results.
- 13.1.2. A summary of any concerns, complaints, comments, observations, and issues that need to be addressed prior to the following year’s electoral cycle; and
- 13.1.3. Recommendations for changes to the Associations bylaws and/or election policy.