

=

AMS Referenda Policy

ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Responsibility	Secretary of Internal Affairs
Approved by	Assembly
Date initially approved	December 2, 2021
Date last revised	April 6, 2023



Table of Contents

Contents

Purpose.....	4
Terminology and definitions.....	4
Statement.....	6
Scope.....	6
Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
Policy.....	9
Part A: Elections Team.....	9
1. Mandate.....	9
2. Membership and Appointment.....	9
Part B: General.....	10
1. Assembly.....	10
2. Conflicts of Interest.....	10
3. Policy and Rulings.....	10
4. Notification of the Referendum.....	11
5. Polling Procedures.....	12
Part C: Referendum Process.....	12
1. Mandate.....	12
2. Timetable for Referenda.....	12
3. Notification.....	13
4. Validation.....	13
5. Information Session.....	13
6. Eligibility.....	14
7. Nominations.....	14
8. Approval by the Assembly.....	15
9. Campaigning.....	16
10. Referenda Expenses.....	19
11. Ballots.....	19

12. Tabulations, Results, Approval Thresholds, and Announcements19

13. Violations, Penalties, and Disqualifications20

Part D: Other Fee Questions and Special Referenda21

1. Non-Fee Related Questions 21

2. Plebiscite Questions 22

3. Special Referenda 22

Monitoring 23

Purpose

The purpose of this policy manual is to provide a clear and concise set of rules to be used for conducting referenda at the Alma Mater Society (AMS). The policy manual ensures that all members of the AMS have a consistent and accessible reference document for contesting, organizing, and regulating referenda.

Terminology and definitions

“Boothing” is defined by the presence of campaign representatives at a table or tent for the purposes of campaigning. This may include, but is not limited to, visible representation of the campaign such as posters, banners, etc. Campaign organizations may only booth at locations and times allocated to them by the Elections Team.

“Campaign Organization:” is defined as the individual(s) responsible for or involved in running a campaign in an AMS referendum

“Campaign Manager” is defined as the individual designated by the campaign organization to represent the campaign to the Elections Team

“Campaigning” is defined as any activity that, in and of itself, serves to publicize or promote an individual, organization’s candidacy in an AMS referenda. Campaigning includes, but is not limited to, use of booked rooms for public gatherings, public appearances, issue of policy statements, distribution of promotional materials or candidate information, paid advertising in campus media, online material including social media, websites, etc.

“Campaign materials” are defined as any items that, in and of themselves, publicize or promote an organization’s position. Stickers are prohibited as campaign materials.

“Consultations” are defined by the gathering of public information, recommendations and feedback from individuals, student groups and community members.

“Establishing or Increasing Fee Groups” are defined as clubs, groups or organizations that

have declared their intention to run for a student fee or to increase an already existing fee.

“Triennial Review Groups” are defined as clubs, groups or organizations that have a pre-established fee, where the electorate must vote to renew reviewable every three years.

Statement

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. This separate Referenda Policy is to provide clarity to organizations and internal to the AMS. This policy provides information to students considering becoming involved in student government through referenda that the AMS supports their endeavours. Further, this policy documents the protocols to be followed to manage a fair and truly representative result for the benefit of all students.

Scope

This policy covers all aspects of AMS Referenda, including policies on nomination, validation, campaign, finances, polling, and violations and penalties. This policy has influence over the AMS Elections Team, Campaign Organizations involved in an AMS Referendum, and the electorate.

Roles and Responsibilities

Campaign Organizations: Shall be responsible for understanding this policy as it relates to them, and for abiding by it during a referendum.

AMS Secretary of Internal Affairs: The Secretary of Internal Affairs shall provide budgetary oversight and signing authority for Elections Team finances. They shall prepare contracts between the AMS and other groups. The Secretary shall carry-out basic logistical preparation that takes place over the summer months, when the Elections Team may not be available. Finally, the AMS Secretary shall set the dates of the fall and winter election and referenda and spending limits, to be passed at the Assembly.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) shall be responsible for the following:

- Managing the Elections Deputies and ensuring all delegated tasks are completed
- Conducting a marketing campaign to advertise the Referenda and any associated important dates.
- Preparing the Nomination Package for the Fall and Winter Referendum
- Ensuring groups know their Triennial Review Status at the beginning of each semester
- Updating fee and referendum data

- Holding Information Sessions in both the fall and winter to outline rules, regulations and procedures surrounding campaigning for the Referendum and/or Elections
- Ensuring space for the advertisement of club/organization descriptions in the Journal during the Referendum period
- Compiling the relevant statistics
- Being the Official Spokesperson of the Elections Team and Announcing the Referenda results to the groups
- Any and all matters relating to campaigning expenses including setting pricing for campaign materials
- Settling and recording all violations and disputes
- Being the final authority on interpretations of AMS Elections and Referenda policy and procedure
- Ensuring that the committee and its events are in accordance with the AMS Mission Statement
- Adhering to all applicable policies of Senate, the AMS, Room Booking Offices, and other Queen's administrative bodies
- Any additional tasks as outlined in the AMS Constitution, Policy Manuals, or as delegated by the AMS Secretary

Logistics and Finance Deputy shall be initially responsible for:

- Overseeing general logistics and advertising efforts
- Preparing nomination and validation forms
- Coordinating information session meetings and preparing material for distribution
- The logistics and coordination of the polling stations
- Coordinate room-bookings, table space, and banner space for the referendum periods
- Assist with the Information Sessions and All Groups Meeting in both the fall and winter to outline rules, regulations and procedures surrounding campaigning for the Referendum
- Any other tasks as delegated by the CEO

Marketing and Engagement Deputy shall initially be responsible for:

- Coordinating with Studio Q and the Marketing and Communications Offices to develop coherent strategic marketing plan for all referenda
- Assist with the Information Sessions and All Groups Meeting in both the fall and winter to outline rules, regulations and procedures surrounding campaigning for the Referendum
- Advertise the Referenda nomination dates, campaign period and voting days in a manner that encourages students to vote

- Completing or organizing graphic design work for the elections team
- Working with campus publications and media outlets to advertise
- Any other tasks as delegated by the CEO

Disputes and Policy Deputy shall initially be responsible for:

- Assisting with the Information Sessions and All Groups Meeting in both the fall and winter to outline rules, regulations and procedures surrounding campaigning for the Referendum
- Approving all campaign materials
- Monitoring all teams' online social media sites to ensure compliance with elections and referenda rules and regulations
- Reviewing and identifying policy gaps within Elections and Referenda Policy
- Monitoring on-campus campaigning to ensure compliance with referenda rules and regulations
- Assisting the CEO in making rulings on policy infractions and complaints
- Creating complaint forms and distributing them to candidates
- Receiving complaints from candidates and corresponding with the complainants
- Any other tasks as delegated by the CE

Policy

Part A: Elections Team

1. Mandate

- a. There shall be an AMS Elections Team formed annually as a standing Committee under the AMS Secretary of Internal Affairs. This committee shall:
 - i. Be responsible for conducting and overseeing all society wide elections and referenda processes in an unbiased and impartial manner;
 - ii. Aim to increase the awareness of and participation levels of the student body elections and referendum;
 - iii. Prepare a budget for its operations in conjunction with the AMS Secretary;
 - iv. Report the results of any election or referenda in accordance with this policy;
 - v. Have the power to interpret elections policy and procedures;
 - vi. Have the power to create additional rules and regulations for the running of elections and referenda to be published in the nomination package;
 - vii. Have the power to penalize candidates for violations of the policy.

2. Membership and Appointment

- a. The Elections Team shall consist of a Chief Electoral Officer and up to five Elections Deputies in the following portfolios: Logistics, Marketing, Engagement, Finances, and Disputes. Portfolios and positions may vary from year to year at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer and Secretary. The Chief Electoral Officer shall be hired by an ad hoc Assembly committee that will be chaired by the incoming AMS Secretary of Internal Affairs and include two other members of Assembly who have declared their intention not to run in an election the following year and must be ratified by AMS Assembly before the last assembly of the academic year.
- b. The Elections Deputies shall be hired by the incoming AMS Secretary, Chief Electoral Officer, and one member of Assembly who has declared their intention not to run in an election in the following year.
- c. Both the Chief Electoral Officers must be ratified at the first AMS assembly after they have been hired.

d.

Part B: General

1. Assembly

- a. Assembly shall during the Fall Term ratify dates for the AMS referenda and elections held within the year.
- b. The campaign spending limit for the AMS elections and referenda shall be ratified by Assembly during the fall term, prior to the commencement of the validation period of the fall referendum.
- c. Assembly will act as a neutral body with respect to all elections and referenda.

2. Conflicts of Interest

- a. The Chief Electoral Officer shall declare any potential personal conflict of interest, including with Triennial Review, Establishing or Increasing Fee Groups to the Secretary and the AMS Assembly prior to validation day. Where a conflict of interest has been determined to exist, the Chief Electoral Officer shall be required to appropriately alter their responsibilities, take a leave of absence or resign.
- b. The Elections Deputies shall declare any potential personal conflict of interest to the AMS Secretary and the CEO prior to validation day.
- c. Where a conflict of interest has been determined to exist for any member of the Elections Team, either by the AMS Secretary of Internal Affairs or by the AMS Assembly, that person shall be required to appropriately alter their responsibilities, take a leave of absence or resign.
- d. In the event that the CEO is unable to complete the duties required of them, responsibilities shall be jointly assumed by the Logistics Deputy and Disputes Deputy until a new CEO has been hired.

3. Policy and Rulings

- a. AMS Policy contained within the Constitution and the Policy Manuals shall be the ultimate source of authority for all referenda procedures.
- b. The CEO is vested with the authority to interpret such policy and apply it and shall have the final say on all such decisions.
- c. The CEO may make additional rules or stipulations not contained within policy in accordance with the spirit of AMS Policy. When a situation arises that is not explicitly considered by this document, the CEO shall interpret the policy in a manner consistent with its intentions.
- d. The CEO shall, during the entire election period, be available to receive any disputes or complaints.
- e. The Disputes Deputy shall identify policy infractions and notify the offending

party and the CEO. The CEO shall ensure that all allegations of campaign violations are officially recorded and signed by the complainant. Any subsequent dispute or imposition of penalties shall fall under the purview of the CEO.

- f. The CEO shall also be responsible for resolving any disputes or alleged violations of the policy by candidates or teams submitted by other candidates or individuals. The CEO shall only make a ruling after a proper investigation has been conducted and shall only issue a sanction where the CEO has determined that a violation has occurred and has compelling evidence regarding the identities of the perpetrators. The CEO shall interview any individuals deemed relevant and ensure that the offending party or parties have the opportunity to respond to any allegation made.
- g. The CEO may delegate such interviews of individuals involved in a violation or complaint to the Disputes Deputy
- h. When a team becomes aware of a potential violation of elections policy, they are permitted 24 hours to report the alleged violation to the AMS Elections Team.
- i. Should it be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances to alter, extend or cancel previously set election dates, the CEO shall be empowered to do so.
- j. All rulings by the CEO may only be appealed to the AMS Judicial Committee.
- k. All rulings by the CEO in the case of deciding who may run a 'No' Campaign may not be appealed to the AMS Judicial Committee.

4. Notification of the Referendum

- a. It shall be the responsibility of the Elections Team to advertise upcoming society referenda including deadlines for validation or nomination and other pertinent information in campus media well in advance of any deadlines.
- b. The CEO shall issue on the first day of the nomination period a proclamation opening the election or referenda period and specifically outlining the following:
 - i. The opportunities to place referendum questions on the ballot.
 - ii. The dates and times of the nomination period and due dates.
 - iii. Where elections or referenda material can be obtained and deposited.
 - iv. The dates of the vote
- c. The Elections Team shall contact relevant University organizations to inform them of the upcoming Games election or referenda and to determine regulations concerning campaigning on campus. These regulations shall be enforced by the CEO.
- d. The Elections Team must ensure that there is notification of a referendum in the Queen's Journal at least one (1) week prior to the first day of voting.
- e. Groups that are looking to place a fee-related question may engage in consultations at any point, except during a blackout during the nomination to approval at Assembly.

5. Polling Procedures

- a. All AMS members shall have the opportunity to cast a vote on the polling days.
- b. Any student unable to vote during the scheduled voting period may proxy their vote.
- c. Not limiting the foregoing, the CEO is empowered to cancel the proxy voting and/or distance voting programme(s) should he/she feel that these programmes might compromise the integrity of the election. These programmes shall be cancelled, should it be deemed necessary, prior to the ballots being opened.
- d. The CEO shall not cancel proxy and/or distance voting on the grounds that any one faculty has not cooperated in administrating distance voting, for this shall not impinge the ability of other faculties' distance students to vote.
- e. In the event of any failure with the online voting system, the CEO shall be authorized to run a paper ballot election in accordance with Society procedures on this process.
- f. There shall be an option to abstain on all referendum questions. Abstentions shall not be permitted on plebiscite questions.
- g. Abstentions shall not count as a vote for or against a question but shall be included in voter turnout.

Part C: Referenda Process

1. Mandate

- a. Society wide referenda shall be held at least once a semester with the purpose of asking the following types of questions:
 - i. To establish, alter or continue student activity fees (for additional information on student fee questions, see AMS Society policy on Student Activity Fees)
 - ii. Binding non-fee related questions
 - iii. Non-binding plebiscite questions

2. Timetable for Referenda

- a. Referenda that are run in conjunction with an Executive, Trustee or Rector election shall follow the election's polling dates.
- b. The referendum timeline shall be based on the following formula, adjunct to the Winter Election in January, and in the Fall:

Day	Event
1	Information Session
4	Nominations Open
8	Nominations Due at noon
11	Validation As sembly

15	Campaign period opens
22	Campaign period closes
23-24	Voting days

3. Notification

- a. The Elections Team shall publicize pertinent referendum information, including deadlines for validation, in advance of the first deadline for validation packages.
- b. It is the ultimate responsibility of the referendum campaign organizations to familiarize themselves with relevant policy, deadlines, and requirements.
- c. The Elections Team shall contact relevant University organizations to inform them of upcoming AMS referenda and to determine regulations concerning campaigning on campus. These regulations shall be enforced by the CEO.
- d. The Elections Team must ensure that there is notification of the referendum period in the Queen’s Journal at least one (1) week prior to the first day of voting.
- e. The CEO shall negotiate a signed agreement with the editor(s)-in- chief of the Journal each year to secure free space for the advertisement of a campaign statement submitted by each campaign organization at least once during the referenda period.

4. Validation

- a. Organizations that wish to partake in the AMS Fall Referendum shall submit the validation package no later than the third Friday of September at 12:00 PM.
- b. Organizations that wish to partake in the AMS Winter Referendum shall submit the validation package no later than the first Friday of November at 12:00 PM.
- c. Upon submission of the package, the Student Activity Fee Review Committee will make recommendations to groups as per Student Activity Fee Policy.

5. Information Session

- a. The Elections Team shall organize a mandatory information session meeting during the first week of the referendum period.
- b. Should a team of candidates miss the all-groups meeting, the Elections Team may permit them to schedule a meeting with the CEO to go over the material covered in the meeting.
- i. Campaign organizations failing to contact the Elections Team within 24 hours of

missing the All-Groups meeting shall be disqualified from contention in the referendum.

6. Eligibility

- a. Eligibility to place a student fee question on the ballot shall be determined in accordance with AMS policy on student fee eligibility.
- b. Non-fee related referendum questions and plebiscite questions may only be placed on the ballot by a member of the AMS.

7. Nominations

- a. Consultations may not take place from the beginning of the nomination period until approval at AMS Assembly.
- b. The nomination period is purely for organizational purposes and for collecting nomination signatures. No campaigning shall occur during the nomination period.
- c. Prior to receiving the Nomination Package, each campaign will be required to sign a document indicating their responsibility for the contents of the material, and their agreement to abide by it. Each campaign organization shall designate a Campaign Manager to liaise with the Elections Team. The Campaign Manager shall be responsible for receiving and disseminating relevant information from the Elections Team to his/her campaign organization.
- d. Nomination Forms must be signed by 1% of AMS members.
 - i. Triennial review student fee questions are not required to collect signatures as there has already been demonstrated support through the establishment of the fee.
- e. All campaigns will be required to submit statement, not to exceed 300 words, about the organization, student fee request or question, to be published in the Queen's Journal. Failure to submit a write-up constitutes a failure to submit a complete Nomination Form.
- f. Rooms may be booked for organizational purposes, such as planning sessions, campaign material preparation, etc., during the nomination period.
- g. Nomination signatures may not be collected in classrooms, campus pubs, cafeterias, AMS Offices, or AMS Services, both on and offline.
- h. A campaign organization may withdraw its referendum question at any time before the end of the nomination period, without penalty. Should a campaign organization withdraw during the campaign period, it may lose its deposit, subject to the discretion of the CEO. A notice of withdrawal shall be given in written form to the CEO.

8. Approval by the Assembly

- a. Assembly shall 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 Vice President (Operations) at the Assembly immediately following the nomination period.
- b. For those groups that meet the validation and nomination requirements, Assembly shall be notified of which questions shall be placed on the ballot.
- c. The following types of questions need Assembly approval to be placed on the ballot:
 - i. New or changing student fee questions
 - ii. Non-fee related questions
 - iii. Plebiscite Questions
- d. 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 AMS Secretary and the Vice President Operations failed to properly vet the fees in the validation period.
- e. Approval by the Assembly shall not be required for triennial review student fee questions approval as the Assembly has already voted on the legitimacy of the fee during its establishment. The Assembly shall only vote (in accordance with policy on establishing or changing fees) to place a triennial review question on the ballot where the VPOPS has determined one of the following through the validation period:
 - i. The status of ratification or affiliation of the group has substantially changed since it last went to referendum.
 - ii. The mandate or operations of the group has substantially changed since it last went to referendum.
 - iii. The way the fee is expended by the group has substantially changed since it last went to referendum.
 - iv. 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.
- f. Assembly shall not have the authority to reject or fundamentally change the substance of a plebiscite or non-fee related referendum question unless it finds clear and compelling reason to believe that the question itself constitutes or otherwise suggests or endorses a violation of the mission or operating statement of the Society; a violation of law; a violation of contractual, financial or other obligations undertaken by the Society; or would otherwise pose a clear, well-defined and significant threat to the best interests of the Society and the welfare of the Queen's undergraduate student body. Any such rejection shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote in support from all voting members of the Assembly. Assembly shall have the authority to remove or amend misleading statements or extraneous promotional content; correct errors of fact; and

edit technical errors of spelling and grammar.

9. Campaigning

- a. Campaigning shall not commence until the beginning of the campaign period.
- b. There shall 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 shall be permitted. (For more information, please see the section on Plebiscite Questions).
- c. Should an event, organized prior to the nomination period for reasons unrelated to the referendum, be scheduled to take place during the campaign period, the campaign organization responsible for it can submit a request to the CEO asking that the event be considered a non-campaign event. If the CEO determines that the event cannot be rescheduled, the request may be granted, so long as no mention of the campaign is made at the event. All campaign materials and promotions are subject to the approval of the CEO or authorized designate.
- d. A sample of all campaign materials shall be submitted to the CEO to be kept on file for the duration of the campaign. All posters must be stamped to indicate approval. All websites and social media accounts must be approved by the CEO prior to posting. All updates shall be closely monitored by the Disputes Deputy.
- e. The content and methods of campaigning shall be beyond reproach. Campaign organizations shall not misrepresent the character or policies of other campaign organizations, nor shall they interfere in any manner with the campaign materials of other groups. Campaign organizations shall not make statements that they know are untrue. All campaigning is subject to the approval of the CEO.
- f. Giveaways of gift-cards, cash, or other financial instruments by a campaign organization shall not be permitted.
- g. All posters must be printed on recyclable paper and must be recycled after the end of the campaign period.
- h. Posters may not be affixed to painted areas, doors, or glass. Campaign organizations are responsible for ensuring that campaigning conforms to individual building policy.
- i. There shall be a limit of 50 posters per campaign organization. Posters larger than 11" x 17" shall be considered a Banner. There shall be no more than two banners permitted per campaign organization.
- j. Campaign organizations shall book all table space for use during the campaign period through the Elections Team. The Elections Team will also co-ordinate the booking of banner spaces in the John Deutsch University Centre (JDUC). The allocation of table and banner space will be done through a lottery process. If, prior to the campaign and for reasons unrelated to the campaign, an organization books

table/JDUC banner space for use during the campaign period, it may forfeit its right to allocated banner space, provided that the space it previously booked is roughly equivalent to the space it would be allocated.

- i. Campaign organizations shall be entitled to a maximum of 35 hours of table space for the duration of the campaign period.
- k. Campaign tables or booths must be staffed by the parties involved, at all times. Promotional materials may not be left unattended.
- l. Groups may speak to a class only with the prior permission of the instructor in the classroom. This permission may be sought during the nomination period.
- m. No form of off-campus campaigning shall be permitted. Groups shall not place campaign materials on trees or utility poles either on or off campus. This includes stringing banners from utility poles.
- n. Campaign/promotional materials may not be distributed any residential or off-campus mailbox, nor shall any form of door-to-door campaigning be permitted.
- o. All campaigning in Residence must conform to Residence policies. No room-to-room campaigning in Residence shall be permitted.
- p. No campaign organization may campaign inside pubs or cafeterias. Campaigning shall be permitted in line-ups but shall not occur past the point where patrons are requested to provide identification for entrance. Campaigning in line-ups shall also be subject to any applicable residence or university regulations.
- q. Campaign materials shall not be distributed in campus pubs, cafeterias, AMS offices and AMS services. In addition, no AMS employees shall display campaign materials while on duty.
- r. All email content shall be consistent with previously approved campaign material and shall be above reproach. Campaign organizations may request an individual with a reasonable level of authority within an organization to forward an email to their organization using a mass email list. Use of AMS mass email lists shall be restricted to campaigns initiated by the AMS.
- s. All websites and social media accounts must be approved by the CEO prior to posting. All updates shall be closely monitored by the Disputes Deputy.
- t. Each campaign organization shall be required to remove all physical campaign material produced on their behalf for the purposes of the referendum by 8:00pm on the day preceding the first day of voting. Campaigning through the use of websites and other online media may continue for the duration of the voting days. Teams will not be allowed to physically campaign on campus during the voting days.
- u. No polls or surveys of public opinion regarding AMS referenda shall be published

or broadcast on the day(s) of voting.

- v. Participation by non-AMS members shall be strongly discouraged, in order to ensure referendum issues are decided by the Queen's student community in an environment free from external influence. External participation may be permitted at the CEO's discretion, provided that it is limited to the provision of factual information and does not include financial assistance or campaigning. The AMS and its component parts, including Council, Commissions and Services, shall be entitled to run fees and referenda questions under the following conditions:
 - i. Upon participation in a campaign, the salaries and offices of AMS employees shall be excluded from counting as campaign expenses. Use of any other resources in the AMS must be approved by the CEO and/or be expensed as normal campaign expenditures.
 - ii. Upon approval of an AMS-run campaign, AMS Assembly shall reserve the right to establish further guidelines or alter existing rules regarding the campaign activities and referendum expenses of the AMS:
 - 1. These further guidelines or alterations shall supersede this policy manual.
- w. Any AMS member or AMS-affiliated group shall be eligible to campaign against any question providing written notice of their intent to do so to the CEO. Notice may be provided at any time during the nomination or campaign periods.
- x. Only one party may campaign against any question. In the event that more than one party provides notice of their intent to run a "No" campaign against the same question, the CEO shall request that these parties merge to run a single campaign.
- y. If the parties are unable to reach agreement, the CEO shall determine which party shall run the "No" campaign. The CEO shall rule in favour of the first party to provide written notice of intent, unless he/she determines that a subsequent applicant has a significantly greater interest in the outcome of the question, or significantly greater willingness and ability to affect the outcome. The CEO's ruling in this matter is not subject to appeal. "No" campaigns shall be provided with the same resources made available to the group placing the question.
- z. No member of the Society shall be eligible to run multiple "No" campaigns at the same time.
- aa. Campaign organizations are responsible for the conduct of their members and volunteers. Any violation of referenda policy by said members and volunteers shall be regarded as a violation by the campaign organization. Individuals who are not members of a specific campaign organization and who are found to have violated referenda policy shall be referred to the AMS Judicial Affairs Office for prosecution under the AMS non-academic discipline system.

- bb. Campaign organizations are responsible for providing the CEO with an up-to-date list of all individuals associated with their campaign within 8 hours of notice from the CEO.

10. Referenda Expenses

- a. The spending limit for the AMS referenda shall not be affected by alterations or extensions of polling or campaigning dates. The spending limit shall remain constant from year to year unless otherwise specified by AMS Assembly.
- b. The CEO shall be empowered to assign a cost to any campaign materials and services received for free or at a discounted price that is not offered to all campaign organizations (e.g., employee discounts). The total cost of campaign materials used in support of the referendum campaign shall include the assigned costs of all gifts, donations, and any other materials already owned by campaign organizations or their campaign volunteers.
- c. In assigning costs, the CEO shall normally be guided by what he/she determines would be the cost incurred by another campaign for obtaining the same materials or services. Where only one campaign organization has access to a discount, the full price shall be applied against the spending limit.
- d. An individual’s campaign organization’s expenditures shall be reimbursed by the AMS Secretary for all authorized campaign expenses for which they provide a receipt or bill, so long as they receive more than 10% of the non-spoiled ballots and comply with the Referendum Finance Procedure as set by The AMS elections Team.

11. Ballots

- a. The CEO or authorized designate shall prepare the online ballot for the Referendum following procedures and deadlines in accordance with the online voting system.
- b. The Chief Electoral Officer shall vote twenty-four (24) hours in advance and place his/her ballot in a signed, sealed envelope to be deposited with the AMS Secretary.

12. Tabulations, Results, Approval Thresholds, and Announcements

- a. In cases where at least twenty (20) percent of the eligible student electorate have cast ballots, a fee or question shall be considered approved if it receives fifty percent plus one (50% +1) of the total non-spoiled ballots cast. In cases where less than twenty (20) percent of the electorate have cast ballots, approval of each individual fee shall be subject to the following sliding scale based on total voter turnout:

Voter Turnout Percent	15% to 19.9%	10% to 14.9%	5% to 9.9%	Less than 5%
--------------------------	-----------------	-----------------	---------------	--------------

Percentage Needed to Pass (per individual question)	55%	60%	65%	70%
---	-----	-----	-----	-----

- b. The CEO shall publicly announce the referendum results only after each campaign organization has been so informed. Should representatives of a campaign organization not be available the results will be made public no less than two (2) hours after they have been confirmed by the CEO.
- c. Any ballot that is spoiled or rejected, including a blank ballot, shall be considered in the total number of ballots cast. Where multiple questions appear on a ballot, each question shall be considered as a separate ballot.
- d. 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.
- e. Any campaign organization requesting clarification about the referendum results must do so by submitting a formal written request to the CEO within 48 hours of the release of the results.
- f. The CEO shall compile a recording of the results of the referenda to be made available to Assembly and retained in the AMS Secretariat.

13. Violations, Penalties, and Disqualifications

- a. In the case of questions that can be answered by an explicit reference to policy, or in events of frivolous complaints, the Disputes Deputy may offer a decision.
- b. Where this is not the case and interpretation are required, or the decision is not satisfactory to the complainant, written documentation signed by the complainant should be served to the CEO.
- c. Any violation with this policy, as determined by the CEO, may result in sanctions by the CEO. The CEO shall be empowered to exercise any combinations of the following:
 - i. Issue a warning.
 - ii. Issue a meeting between the Candidates and the CEO.
 - iii. Invalidation of Nomination signatures
 - iv. Issue a campaign blackout period.
 - v. Demand a formal apology
 - vi. Levy a loss of bond.
 - vii. Levy a fine, not to exceed \$400.00. A portion of this fine may be levied against the campaign spending limit.
 - viii. Disqualify a campaign organization:
 - 1. This may include, but is not limited to, the removal of the question from the ballot.
 - ix. Invalidate a referendum.
- d. Disqualification is subject to appeal to the AMS Judicial Committee. Any appeals of disqualification must be heard by the AMS Judicial Committee

within 24 hours of notice pending. The AMS Judicial Committee reserves the right not to hear an appeal if it believes such an appeal is not rooted in policy or is deemed otherwise frivolous.

- e. In the event of repeated, reckless or willful campaign policy violations by a side whose desired result is the same as the result if the question had not been asked, commonly referred to but not necessarily being the “No” side, and in recognition that disqualifying a referendum question from a ballot can constitute an adverse consequence only for the “Yes” side, the offenders shall be held individually accountable. The CEO shall refer such conduct to the AMS non-academic misconduct system, consistent with the Queen’s Code of Conduct that defines “a violation of published rules and regulations of the University or of any authorized rule-making body within the university” as “unacceptable” and constituting an offence.
- f. The AMS Judicial Committee may only overturn a decision of the CEO on the following grounds:
 - i. If the appellant can establish to the Committee's satisfaction that the cited violation(s) occurred as a result of actions or factors outside the knowledge and beyond the control of the appellant or the CEO. All members of a campaign organization shall be held equally accountable for any of their actions (i.e., an individual's actions cannot be said to be outside of an organization’s campaign).
 - ii. If it can be deemed to the Committee’s satisfaction that the CEO had a clear and definitive bias in making his/her ruling.
 - iii. Where there is clear and compelling evidence that the appellant has been treated unjustly. The appeal does not constitute an opportunity for the committee to simply second guess the judgment of the CEO but rather exists to ensure there has not been a miscarriage of justice based on the facts.
- g. The Judicial Committee shall have the authority to impose a lesser penalty than disqualification in overturning a decision of the CEO.
- h. The AMS Judicial Committee shall be the only level of appeal in cases of referenda policies.
- i. Leaves of absence, endorsements, and conflicts of interest must follow AMS Elections Policy.

Part D: Other Fee Questions and Special Referenda

1. Non-Fee Related Questions

- a. Non-fee related referendum questions shall be so indicated on the ballot, and it shall be made clear on the ballot that the question is binding.
- b. All non-fee related questions are subject to approval by the Assembly and Assembly shall have the authority to remove or amend misleading

Statements or extraneous promotional content; correct errors of fact; and edit technical errors of spelling and grammar.

- c. 'No' campaigns may register as per the previously stated policy. AMS representatives working in their capacity may register and run 'No' campaigns governed by any rules that already apply to referenda.

2. Plebiscite Questions

- a. There shall be no official or recognized campaigning for or against plebiscite questions.
- b. Plebiscite questions shall be so indicated on the ballot with "AMS Plebiscite" appearing before the specific question.
- c. Plebiscite questions shall be voted on in the same way as referenda questions, but they shall not be deemed to "Pass" or Fail"; rather the number and percentage of "Yes" and "No" votes shall simply be reported.
- d. The AMS Assembly shall have the authority to place a Plebiscite Question directly on the ballot. All plebiscite questions approved for a referendum ballot shall be published in The Queen's Journal at the same time that referendum questions/write-ups appear. The Elections team shall 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.
- e. The CEO shall have the discretion to disqualify any plebiscite question, where the CEO finds 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.

3. Special Referenda

- a. The AMS Assembly reserves the right to call a special referendum on a matter within the purview of the Society at any time, as per the AMS Constitution.
- b. Campaigning and expenses for such a referendum may deviate from Society policy on Referenda subject to a simple majority vote of AMS Assembly.

Monitoring

Compliance with this policy shall be monitored as necessary by the AMS Secretary of Internal Affairs to ensure that groups and the Elections Team are complying with its stipulations. Annual compliance reviews shall be undertaken, generally prior to the Fall Referendum, to ensure that the policy still acts in accordance with best practices and current policies and procedures of the AMS. However, policy changes may occur whenever a policy gap is identified. Any substantial changes to this policy shall be approved initially by the Secretary and the President. All substantial changes must be approved through a simple majority vote of the Assembly in order to take effect.

Contact person	Secretary of Internal Affairs
Date of next review	January 2023
Related policies, procedures, and guidelines	AMS Constitution (Section 4), AMS Elections Policy, AMS Student Activity Fee Policy
Policies superseded by this policy	AMS Elections and Referendum Policy