



Elections

Rationale

Regulations that detail the existence and responsibilities of elections officers and the processes whereby elections are carried out ensure that the election of student leaders is transparent, accountable, and fair.

Definitions

Campaign events include gatherings, by public invitation or announcement, in which promotion of a candidate's campaign or the distribution of campaign materials takes place.

A **Campaign expense** is anything used during a campaign, excluding volunteers, that has a monetary value whether purchased or donated. The CRO will determine monetary value, based on fair market value, where an itemized receipt is not submitted.

Campaign materials include posters, banners, and other materials or services claimed on an expenditure report.

A **candidate** is an individual campaigning for the purpose of being elected.

Disciplinary action can be a warning, fine, and/or disqualification.

An **Extraordinary Event** is any situation that arises that limits the normal or regular physical access to the MacEwan University campus over an extended period of time for a majority of the SAMU membership and is determined by official motion of Executive Committee. This motion must include the both the reasons for its implementation and state that it is only valid for one election period (Fall Student Council or Spring Executive Committee election period).

Regulations

Impartiality

- 1 All elections officials are required to sign a pledge of impartiality in the performance of their duties.
- 2 Elected representatives may not officially endorse a candidate or campaign.
- 3 All SAMU employees and elected officials may not volunteer for a candidate or campaign during work hours, or use SAMU resources to support a candidate campaign.

Chief Returning Officer

- 4 The term of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) is from the date of appointment to the end of April.
- 5 The CRO receives an annual honorarium of \$1500.



- 6** No voting member or SAMU staff member may serve as the CRO.
- 7** The CRO is responsible for ensuring the operation of open, fair, and impartial elections in accordance with bylaws, policy, and procedure.
- 8** Subsequent to each election, the CRO is responsible for submitting a written report to Students' Council that confirms the results of the election, reports on the processes used, gives suggestions for future improvements, and provides any additional information the CRO deems relevant.
- 9** The Governance Advisor serves as the Returning Officer (RO).
 - 9.1** In the event that the CRO cannot fulfill their duties the responsibilities will temporarily fall to the RO until the CRO returns or is replaced.
- 10** The CRO may appoint a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) in consultation with the General Manager.
- 11** The RO/DRO is responsible for the hiring of polling clerks. If requested, the General Manager provides support to the CRO/RO in obtaining candidates for the position of polling clerk.
- 12** The CRO receives complaints and interprets bylaws, policies, and procedures pertinent to the operations of elections.
- 13** The CRO may impose disciplinary action against a candidate.
- 14** The CRO responds to all interpretation and approval requests within 24 hours.
 - 14.1** Interpretations will be communicated to all candidates.
- 15** The Governance Office liaises with the CRO during the budgeting process to ensure adequate funding is in place for the operation of elections.

Nominations

- 16** The nomination period for elections begins on a date determined by the CRO and ends no sooner than two weeks thereafter. Nominations must close at least nine days prior to the first polling day.
- 17** Individuals wishing to nominate themselves for candidacy may do so during the nomination period. Candidates are nominated when the CRO verifies that their nomination forms have been completely and correctly filled out. Nomination forms are not accepted after the end of the nomination period.
- 18** A valid nomination requires potential Councilor and Executive Committee election candidates to submit information, in hard copy form or via approved electronic method, demonstrating eligibility, the endorsement from 10 members nominating them for election, and a declaration of intent to stand for election, to hold office should they win the election, and to abide by the bylaws, policies, and procedures of SAMU.



18.1 During an Extraordinary Event the Chief Returning officer may approve an alteration to the hard copy submission requirement.

18.2 Any alteration must be communicated publicly.

Campaigns

19 Candidates must act in a professional manner that reflects the values of SAMU during all stages of the election process.

20 Campaign materials may not be distributed until 6:00 a.m. on the Monday of the week prior to polling.

21 Candidates must adhere to the bylaws, policies, and procedures of SAMU.

22 Participation in prohibited activities during the campaign period may lead to the disqualification of a candidate.

22.1 Candidates may not use, nor may they knowingly allow others to use, SAMU or MacEwan University resources for campaigning, except those designated by election officials.

22.2 Candidates or supporters may not disburse items that have value beyond their campaigning function.

22.3 Candidates and their supporters may not knowingly campaign within 5 meters of a student who is voting in order to maintain the integrity and secrecy of individual ballots.

22.4 Candidates may not campaign during class time without prior approval from the instructor. It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform the instructor that equal opportunity to campaign must be given to all candidates.

22.5 Candidates may not incur campaign expenses of more than \$250 in their campaigns.

22.6 Candidates and their supporters may not misrepresent fact or deface another candidate's campaign materials.

22.7 Candidates may only campaign on social media platforms approved by the CRO

22.7.1 A list of approved social media platforms will be provided to all candidates prior to the start of campaigning.

23 Any campaign event that requires MacEwan University assistance is facilitated through SAMU. Where the CRO deems a campaign event to be inappropriate, that event may not take place.

24 Using campaign materials off-campus is not permitted.

25 Campaign events may not take place off campus.



Campaign Expenses

26 Candidates must maintain and submit records, in hard copy form or via approved electronic method, of all campaign expenses, including itemized receipts, to the CRO. Candidate expense records are due to the CRO prior to voting beginning. On submission of expense reports, the candidate may incur no further campaign expenses. Candidates found incurring extra campaign expenses face disciplinary action from the CRO. Failure to submit expense reports results in disqualification.

26.1 During an Extraordinary Event the Chief Returning officer may approve an alteration to the hard copy submission requirement.

26.2 Any alteration must be communicated equally to all candidates.

27 The campaign expenses of eligible candidates are reimbursed. Reimbursement may be withheld if candidates do not remove their campaign materials on time, or, if elected, fail to attend at least 80% of the training for their positions.

Campaign Materials

28 Materials to be displayed or distributed to students must be approved by the CRO or their appointed designate. Copies of all campaign material must be submitted to the CRO for approval prior to the campaign expense report deadline. Candidates found distributing unapproved campaign material face disciplinary action from the CRO. The CRO has the right to refuse authorization of campaign materials for reasons of appropriateness and legality.

29 Campaign posters and banners are placed in accordance with the requirements of MacEwan University, as outlined by the CRO.

30 Candidates may put up no more than 30 campaign posters. Campaign posters may not exceed 11" by 17" in size and must include the name of the candidate, the position being sought, the voting dates, and information about where to vote.

31 Candidates may display no more than three banners. Banners may not exceed 6' by 3' in size and must include the name of the candidate, the position being sought, the voting dates, and information about where to vote.

32 Candidates may not distribute any campaign material prior to submitting their campaign expense report.

33 Campaign materials that shall not be permitted include food, drinks, money in any form, gift cards, or anything deemed inappropriate by the CRO.

34 Candidates are responsible for recycling all campaign materials where applicable.

Election Periods

35 Councilor elections take place in October and Executive elections take place in March.

35.1 The CRO confirms the election dates.



Candidate Withdrawal

36 A candidate may withdraw their name from an election by submitting to the CRO a signed letter declaring that they are withdrawing.

Election Marketing Requirements

37 The nominations period, campaigning, formal interaction with candidates, voting days, and election results are marketed by SAMU including:

37.1 posters on all SAMU bulletin boards and in other areas within MacEwan University;

37.2 banners within MacEwan University;

37.3 information on the SAMU website; and

37.4 updates to SAMU social media.

38 SAMU provides a forum for candidates to be heard and for the membership to speak with the candidates. The moderator of the forum is impartial.

Polling Stations

39 The RO/DRO, in consultation with the CRO, is responsible for determining the location of polling stations operated by an impartial polling clerk appointed by SAMU.

39.1 Polling stations may either be fixed or mobile.

40 The CRO ensures that polling stations provide voters with an opportunity for votes to be cast privately.

41 On voting days, election officials remove all campaign material found within 10 meters of a fixed polling station.

42 In the case of paper ballots, two election officials operate each polling station. One election official operates each polling station in the case of electronic ballots.

43 In the case of paper ballots, the CRO provides absentee ballots for students who cannot vote on scheduled polling days. Absentee ballots are available one week prior to the first day of polling.

Tiebreak

44 In the event of a tie, the CRO facilitates a coin toss to decide the winner, as witnessed by the tied candidates.



Complaints

45 Complaints regarding candidates violating bylaw, policy, or procedure are submitted to the CRO in writing before or during the campaign. Complainants should provide evidence and should reference the bylaw or policy that they feel has been violated.

46 The CRO will investigate all complaints and provide a written response to the complainant with a decision within 24 hours from the receipt of the complaint.

46.1 If a decision cannot be reached within the prescribed 24 hours the CRO will inform the parties involved in the complaint of the circumstances and may extend this deadline once by an additional 24 hours.

46.2 Decisions will highlight facts of the complaint and the relevant policy or procedure.

Appeals

47 Any SAMU member may appeal a decision of the CRO or the election results, in writing, to the governance office no later than two business days after the last day of polling.

47.1 The appeal must be specific in identifying what bylaw, policy, or procedure was broken, or why a decision was made incorrectly.



Appendix A: Infraction Guidelines

*This appendix provides guidelines for the CRO but is not to be considered exhaustive.

Example Infraction	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
Defacing other candidates campaigning material	Disqualification		
Exceeding \$250.00 on campaigning materials	Disqualification		
Distributing campaign material prior to campaign period	Disqualification		
Not reporting all campaign expenses	Disqualification		
Failure to pay fine	Disqualification		
Slander or harassment of opponents publicly or on social media	Up to \$150 or disqualification		
Utilizing promotional items with intrinsic value	Up to disqualification		
Campaigning off campus with campaigning events	\$100 up to disqualification		
Failure to adhere to postering guidelines	Warning	Up to \$25	Up to disqualification
Knowingly campaigning within five meters of a student who is currently voting	Warning	Disqualification	
Moving other's materials	Warning	Disqualification	
Not removing campaigning marketing materials after election	\$20 + \$5 per poster, etc.		

Please note: Committing multiple offences may result in disqualification.

Fact Sheet**Approvals:**

First Approval – April 30, 2014

Last Approval – July 28, 2021

Date of Last Review: July 28, 2021

Source and Updates:

April 30, 2014: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2014-04-30-2 on the recommendation of the Procedure Review Ad Hoc Committee. Source material drawn from *Procedure 4 – Elections*.

June 10, 2015: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2015-06-10-6 on the recommendation of the Procedure Sub Committee.

July 15, 2015: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2015-07-15-3 on the recommendations of the Procedure Sub Committee. Updates based on upcoming change to MacEwan poster policy.

April 27, 2016: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2016-04-27-2 on the recommendation of the Procedure Sub-Committee. “Appeals” section removed as it is now covered in the Governance Investigation Committee Terms of Reference in Appendix C of the *Committees* policy.

July 5, 2017: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2017-07-05-2 on the recommendation of the Procedure Sub-Committee. Changes made to acknowledge CFAC campus moving to City Centre Campus as well as identifying Appendix A as guidelines instead of ‘sample’ guidelines.

December 18, 2019: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2019-12-18-7 on the recommendation of the Procedure Sub-Committee. Major updates include prohibiting elected SAMU representatives from endorsing candidates or campaigns, prohibiting elected SAMU representatives or employees from volunteering for a candidate or campaign during work hours or to use SAMU resources to support a campaign, and clarifying submission and distribution deadlines.

July 29, 2020: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2020-07-29-6 on the recommendation of the Procedure Sub-Committee. Major updates include the addition of “Extraordinary Event” references as well as the addition of the Appeals section.

July 28, 2021: *Elections* approved by Executive Committee motion E2021-07-28-3 on the recommendation of the Procedure Sub-Committee. Updates include the reduction of endorsements from ‘25’ to ‘10’, having the CRO approve and identify which social media platforms can be used during campaigning, and extending the deadline for expense records to be submitted to ‘prior to voting beginning’.



**STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY**

Related Documents and Forms:
Election Nomination Package

Procedure