Guide to Student Organization Elections

YORK U

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Overview

The aim of this guide is to assist Student Organizations at York University to navigate the processes and timelines for coordinating **open and democratic elections** in collaboration with Student Community & Leadership Development.

Student Organizations in which student membership is mandatory or that receive a Levy, must conduct elections **at least once each academic year.** Student Organizations may have unique election procedures, which are prescribed in their respective constitutions. This guide contains information about general procedures that may assist in the planning of your elections.

Hire and Onboard Your Chief Returning Officer

Your Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will be responsible for all aspects of your elections, ranging from ruling on difficult election matters to completing the administrative tasks required to run an election. They will act as the official representative for your student organization when interacting with the Centre for Student Community & Leadership Development (SCLD) and other university administrators to ensure that the election runs smoothly.

What makes a good CRO?

A good CRO is someone that is organized, ethical, decisive, diplomatic, able to handle conflict, has great attention to detail, and can conduct themselves in an impartial manner. It is a bonus if they are already familiar with the elections process and your constitution.

(CRO's should be hired by June 30 for the fall elections and January 5 for winter elections (it is recommended to keep the same CRO for both voting periods.)

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Election Timelines

SCLD will provide student organizations with a recommended election timeline each term. Please see below for a sample timeline:

Stages in Election Process	Timeline
Promotional Period	Week 1
Nomination Period	Week 2/3
All Candidates Meeting	Final Day of Nomination Period
Campaign Period	Week 4/5
Debates (optional)	Held during Campaign Period
Voting Period	Week 6

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Promotional Period						
Nomination Period						
Nomination Period				**All Candidates Meeting**	**Campaign Period**	
Campaign Period						
Campaign Period			**Optional Debate**	**Campaign Period**		
Voting Period						

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Stages in the Election Process

Promotional Period

The period where you would begin to inform members of the upcoming elections. Typically, this would begin prior to the Nomination Period to inspire new candidates and will continue throughout the elections process to maximize voting turnout.

☐ **Action Required: Submit Election Intake Form**

CRO's are responsible for submitting an Election Intake Form that will be provided to them by SCLD in advance of elections. The information on this form will be used to populate the elections website, as well as provide SCLD with the necessary information to prepare for your elections (e.g., the positions up for election, the eligible voters for each position, rules for campaigning, etc.).

☐ **Action Required: Promotional Plan**

Create a Promotional Plan that outlines how and when you will inform your constituents about your elections. The goal should be to try to reach as many of your constituents as possible. Try to build your community by reaching out and connecting with those who are affiliated with your organization but may not be actively involved. Your Promotional Plan should include:

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Communications timeline for various stages in the elections process	**&**	**Promotional methods you will use:**

- Nomination Period
- All Candidates Meeting
- Campaign Period
- Debates (if applicable)
- Voting Period

- Postering
- Your organization's social media
- List serv
- Tabling or in-person promotions
- Reaching out to groups who have been involved with your organization in some capacity (e.g., orientation leaders, peer mentors, etc.)

Some ways SCLD can support promotions include:

- Posting on the York website
- Sharing on various social media channels
- Requesting use of hallway LCD screens
- Section in the student organization newsletter
- Sharing in Discord channels

You can start promoting your elections before your nomination period begins.

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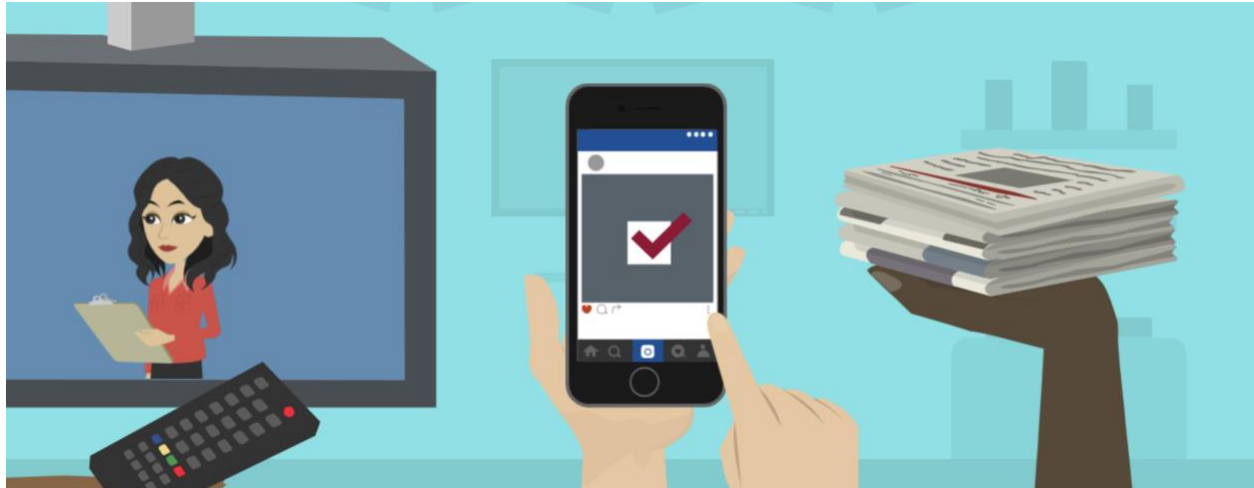
Nomination Period

The period where those students interested in becoming a part of your respective council collect signatures of fellow constituents.

☐ **Action Required: Prep Nomination Packages**

It is typical for the CRO or a member of your organization to take lead in preparing Nomination Packages. A sample Nomination Package can be found at the end of this guide as well as in the CRO handbook. If you already have one, make sure that it is up to date.

Your Nomination Package should include **all important dates and election timelines**, such as:

- Nomination Period
- All Candidates Meeting
- Campaign Period
- Debates (if applicable)
- Voting Period
- CRO's contact information
- Your organization's contact information
- Your organization's office location

Although not mandatory, it is a good idea to include other relevant information, such as **campaign rules and descriptions of the open positions** so candidates can familiarize themselves ahead of time.

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All Candidates Meeting

An All-Candidates Meeting is held to **inform all candidates of the rules** during the campaign and voting period. This meeting outlines the timeline for the remainder of the election, the terms for disqualification, as well as explaining the duties of each of the positions. By the end of this meeting, your CRO should have a confirmed list of all the candidates and the positions they are running for.

☐ **Action Required: Check Candidate Eligibility**

Once you have your confirmed list of candidates, the CRO should confirm candidate eligibility as outlined in your governing documents. (for example, "must be a current student taking at least 3 credits per term"). CRO may contact SCLD for support in this process.

Campaign Period
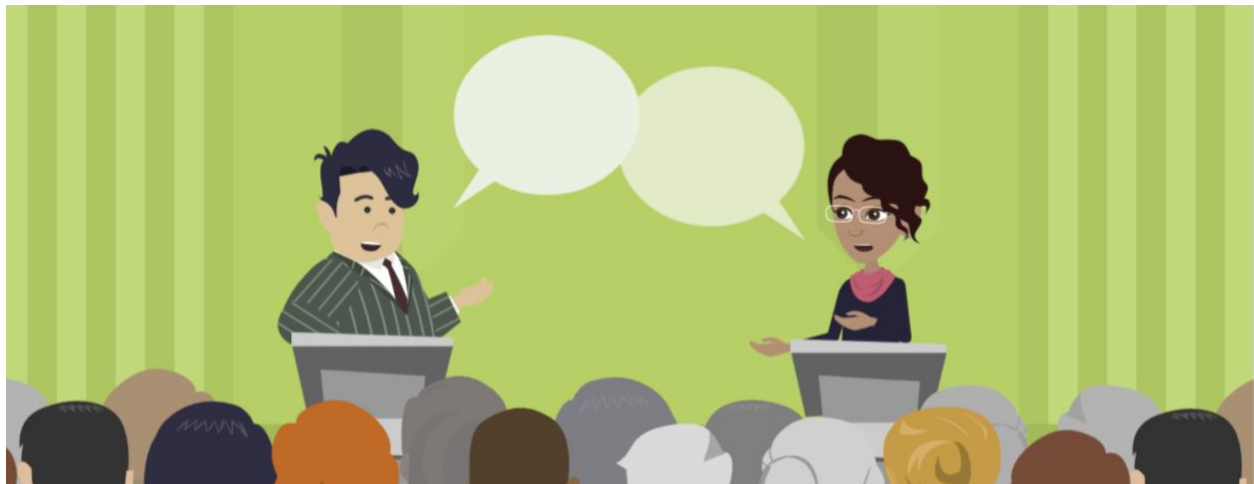
During the Campaign Period, students who have successfully completed the nomination process advertise around campus that they are vying for a position on a council.

Campaign rules may vary between student organizations. Be sure to consult the constitution for rules specific to your organization. **Common campaign rules** include:

- No campaigning in residence
- All promotional material must be removed (social media pages, posters) before the end of the campaigning period
- No discussing elections within the student organization's office (this is meant to be a neutral area)

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It is recommended to have an established demerit point system in place prior to elections to address any infractions that occur.

Voting Period

The Voting Period is the time allotted for constituents to vote members into the positions they are vying for.

Voting takes place on the **YU VOTE platform** where members log in using their Passport York. YU VOTE will only display the ballots in which a student is eligible for: **yuvote.yorku.ca**.
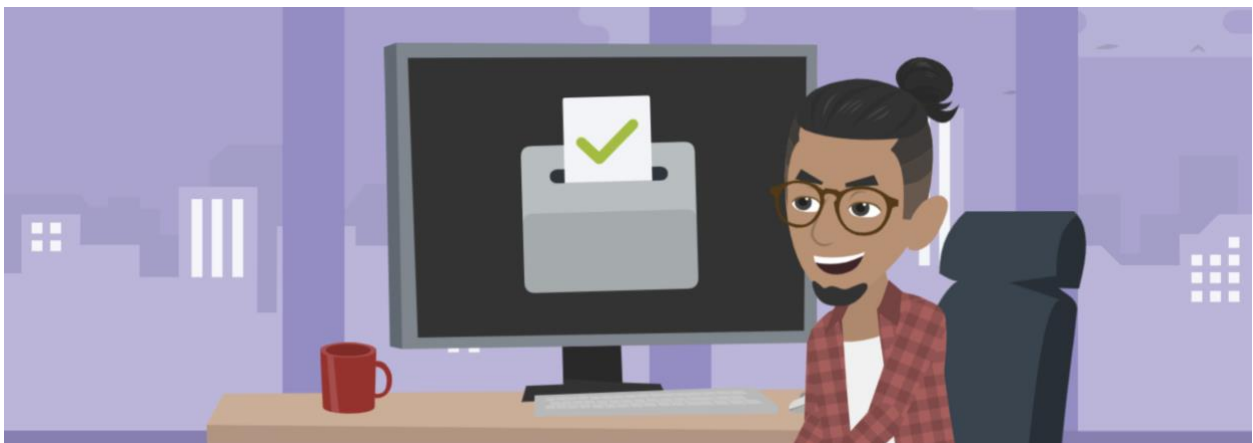
☐ **Action Required: Submit YU VOTE Ballot**

At least **5-10 business days** before the start of voting, the CRO must submit the elections ballot to SCLD. The ballot can be found on SCLD's YU Connect page under the Forms section.

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The ballot will list the positions being contested, the candidates who will be running for each position and the number of candidates that are to be selected for each position.

NOTE: administrative offices close at 4:30 p.m.

☐ **Action Required: Confirm Ballot**

Once the information on the ballot has been entered into the system, the CRO will receive a screenshot of the completed ballot to confirm accuracy.

NOTE: Information on the ballot cannot be changed once the election has started. Any changes will result in any votes that were already submitted being lost.

Wrap Up Your Elections

Getting your Election Results

SCLD will provide the election results to the CRO. Within one week of the conclusion of the election, the CRO should submit the results of the election to their student organization. The election results will list the **positions**, the **names of the candidates** and the **final vote count** for each candidate.

Elections Report

CRO's will typically generate a final report at the end of their elections to submit to their organization. It is recommended that organizations share this report with SCLD for record keeping. Reports may include:

- Election's timeline
- Names of all candidates
- Positions that were filled
- Vacant positions
- Election results
- Summary of any major issues and complaints that arose during the election period
- Voting statistics (percentage of eligible voters who participated)
- Any recommendations for future changes to the process

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Appendix

Example Nomination Package

Elections, Fall 2022
Nomination Package

Important Dates

Nomination Period
Open: September 19 at 9:00am
Close: September 26 at 12:00pm

All Candidates Meeting
Tuesday September 26 at 4:00pm

Campaign Period
Open: September 26 at 6:00pm
Close: October 3 at 10:00pm

Voting Period
Open: October 4 at 8:30am
Close: October 7 at 11:59pm

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Nomination Form

Elections Fall 2021

**Please return this fully completed form to the Winters College Council Office by no later than 1:00pm on Tuesday September 26, 2022. **

Candidate: _____

For the Winters College Council position of _____

_____

I, the undersigned, am an undergraduate student affiliated with Winters College, and hereby nominate the candidate listed above to the Winters College Council position also listed above:

Name:	Student Number:	Signature:
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____
11. _____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____

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Name:	**Student Number:**	**Signature:**
13. _____	_____	_____
14. _____	_____	_____
15. _____	_____	_____
16. _____	_____	_____
17. _____	_____	_____
18. _____	_____	_____
19. _____	_____	_____
20. _____	_____	_____
21. _____	_____	_____
22. _____	_____	_____
23. _____	_____	_____
24. _____	_____	_____
25. _____	_____	_____
26. _____	_____	_____
27. _____	_____	_____
28. _____	_____	_____
29. _____	_____	_____
30. _____	_____	_____

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Optional Extra Nominations

Name:	Student Number:	Signature:
31. _____	_____	_____
32. _____	_____	_____
33. _____	_____	_____
34. _____	_____	_____
35. _____	_____	_____

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To be completed by the candidate:

I, the undersigned, hereby:

    a.   accept the nomination referred to on the previous page.
    b.   certify that I am an undergraduate student affiliated with Winters College.
    c.   agree that I will comply with the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of Winters College Council, as amended from time to time.

The following information is required by Article XII, section 24(2) of the Winters College Constitution:

Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Office Use:

Date Received: _____ Time: _____ By: _____

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