

By-Election: Councillor Candidates Guide

This guide summarizes the key requirements, timelines, campaign rules, and responsibilities for students seeking election to a **CUSA Councillor position in the 2026 October by-election**. Candidates are still responsible for reading and understanding [Electoral Code X-01](#), any Nomination and Campaign Guidelines issued by the CRO, and all other applicable CUSA and University policies.

Key Dates

- **Nomination Period:** September 29, 9:00 AM – October 5, 2026, 5:00 PM
- **Validation Period:** October 5, 5:01 PM – October 9, 2026, 5:00 PM
- **Campaign Period:** October 13 – October 21, 2026, 5:00 PM
- **Voting Period:** October 19, 9:00 AM – October 21, 2026, 5:00 PM
- **Results:** Released upon the resolution of all outstanding complaints, appeals, or other actions which could realistically affect the results.

The Election Advisory Committee may alter the timeline based on university-scheduled holidays or delays with verification.

What Each Stage Means

- **Nominations:** During the Nomination Period, a prospective candidate seeking a faculty-based Councillor position must receive at least 20 and no more than 40 nominations from eligible electors in the Faculty for which they are seeking election. Nominators must provide their name, Carleton email address, and student number. [Prospective candidates must submit their completed nomination form before the end of the Nomination Period \(Deadline: October 5, 2026 5 PM\)](#)
- **Validation:** During the Validation Period, the eligibility of prospective candidates is validated and nominators are verified. Upon verification of nominators, the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will inform prospective candidates of their nomination status. Successful prospective candidates must then sign the Candidate Declaration to confirm their candidacy.
- **Campaign:** During the Campaign Period, candidates may campaign in accordance with the Electoral Code and any Nomination and Campaign Guidelines issued by the CRO. **Campaigning prior to the beginning of the Campaign Period is prohibited.**
- **Voting:** During the Voting Period, eligible voters cast their ballots electronically. Elections for Councillors are conducted using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method utilizing the Hare quota and Fractional Transfers when necessary. Results are released upon the resolution of all outstanding complaints, appeals, or other actions which could realistically affect the results.

1. CAN I RUN?

To seek election as a CUSA Councillor:

- You must be a Student-At-Large in the constituency you represent at the time of election or acclamation and remain a Student-At-Large in that constituency for the duration of your term.
- Councillors may serve no more than four one-year terms.
- You may only run for one office on any given ballot.
- Anyone disqualified from an election is not eligible to run for 11 months after the disqualification.
- Members of the Board of Directors are not eligible to run until one year has passed since their position on the Board ended.
- Association Executives, members of the Board of Directors, and CUSA office staff are subject to additional restrictions under the Electoral Code. Where an otherwise eligible individual in one of these positions seeks election, the Code requires an unpaid leave of absence beginning when their candidacy is confirmed by the CRO.
 - Anyone who has acquired or accessed student data through their official duties cannot use that data to advance or promote their candidacy, campaign, personal interests, or those of another candidate.

2. NOMINATIONS

- Faculty-based Councillor candidates need at least 20 and no more than 40 nominations from eligible electors in the Faculty they are seeking to represent.
- Each nominator must provide their name, Carleton email address and student number. You are responsible for ensuring each person intended to nominate you and consented to their information being used.
- If a nominator cannot be verified, that nomination does not count toward your minimum. Using a nominator's personal information without consent may result in rejection of your candidacy.
- If you are in a double-major crossing constituency, you may collect nominations only from the constituency in which you intend to run.
- A nominator may nominate multiple candidates for the same office, and a nomination is not an endorsement or permission to use the nominator's information for campaign purposes.
- **Upon verification of nominators, and when informed of nomination by the CRO, a prospective candidate must sign the Candidate Declaration.**
- By signing the Candidate Declaration, candidates confirm that they meet the eligibility requirements in Section 8 and agree to follow the election rules, act in good faith with integrity and transparency, treat competitors with respect and decency, and ensure individuals associated with their campaign do the same.
- Candidates are required to attend All Candidates Meeting with the CRO. Failure to attend is identified as an electoral offence in Schedule IV of the Electoral Code.
- **Special Students:** Prospective candidates for the Special Students seat need only submit an application to become a candidate.

3. CAMPAIGNING

- Campaign Materials: The Electoral Code permits the distribution of paper-based campaign materials only by Presidential candidates and their campaign team members. **Councillor candidates should not distribute paper-based campaign materials or put up paper posters.**
- Candidates should follow the Electoral Code and any instructions or Nomination and Campaign Guidelines issued by the CRO regarding permitted campaign materials.
- All candidates must use their name as presented on the ballot when interacting or campaigning online.
- Digital spaces, typed messages, and posts are treated in the same way as comparable in-person occurrences and conduct.

More information on campaigning guidelines is provided in the All Candidates Meeting.

4. YOUR CAMPAIGN TEAM

A **campaign team** includes anyone directly associated with your candidacy, including: anyone authorized to speak or post on your behalf; and anyone who, under your reasonable foresight, engages in official or unofficial campaigning beyond the level of a mere supporter or voter.

- Each candidate must submit a list of campaign team members to the CRO.
- Any changes to your campaign team must be provided in writing to the CRO within 48 hours.
- The Electoral Code applies to campaign team members, and demerit points are counted against you when you or any member of your campaign team is found responsible for an offence.
- Using non-electors or CUSA employees as part of a campaign is prohibited.

5. CAMPAIGN EXPENSES

Councillor candidates may incur campaign expenses up to and including **\$100**. All actual election expenses must be accounted for in **Canadian dollars**. The \$100 limit includes applicable taxes, and any in-kind gifts of goods must be recorded at their fair market value.

- A final, complete, and accurate report of all campaign expenses, including receipts and other evidence of expenditures, must be submitted to the CRO no later than 72 hours after the end of the Voting Period. If you did not incur any expenses, you must still inform the CRO.
- Council candidates receive an 80% reimbursement of their actual expenses if they receive 5% or more of the first-ballot vote.
- Council candidates receiving less than 5% are not reimbursed. Disqualified candidates are not eligible for reimbursement. Candidates receiving 1–5 demerit points have their reimbursement reduced by 25%, while candidates receiving 6–9 demerit points have it reduced by 50%.

6. IMPORTANT ELECTION RULES/REMINDERS

- No Campaigning before the Campaign Period begins

- No Posting campaign materials in prohibited areas
- No Distribution of prohibited material
- No Campaigning in CUSA offices, CUSA property, or university libraries
- No Damaging or obstructing CUSA or Carleton University property
- No Using the CUSA logo or insignia
- No Utilizing CUSA employees as part of a campaign team
- No Offering benefits or inducements in exchange for support
- No Using the personal information of CUSA employees or Students-At-Large
- No Using force or intimidation to influence support
- Candidates must fully disclose their campaign team, including changes within 48 hours
- No Publishing or communicating false or maliciously misleading information
- No Publishing or communicating false and defamatory information
- No Harassment of election officials, other candidates, or Students-At-Large
- No Using non-electors as part of a campaign
- No interfering with the actions of the CRO, Election Committee, or other election officials
- No Involvement with false or vexatious complaints to the CRO
- No Violating CUSA bylaws or posted policies, the Carleton Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy, or applicable municipal, provincial, or federal laws.

Candidates must co-operate with the CRO in the conduct of an investigation. Failure to cooperate is specifically identified as an electoral offence.

Failure to attend a candidate meeting with the CRO is identified as an electoral offence under Schedule IV. Candidates should attend any candidate meeting required by the CRO.

Candidates may voluntarily withdraw from the ballot until **72 hours before balloting begins** by emailing the CRO.

7. DEMERITS & DISQUALIFICATION

- Electoral offences may result in demerit points and/or other sanctions under the Code.
- Demerit points are counted against a candidate when the candidate or any member of their campaign team is found responsible for an offence.
- 10 demerit points is the threshold for disqualification.
- Schedule IV in Electoral Code (Page 28-29) classifies offences as minor, major, or automatic disqualification offences. Examples of automatic disqualification offences listed in the Schedule include violence or intimidation, harassment, data exploitation, impersonation, bribery, voter fraud, a false expense report, undermining the electoral process, and ballot tampering.
- Decisions on disqualification automatically go to the Appeals Committee for review and decision.
- Ignorance of the Electoral Code or another applicable Policy is not an excuse for committing an offence.

8. COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

- Reports of alleged electoral offences must be submitted to the CRO no later than 72 hours after the end of the Voting Period. If a candidate is penalized by the CRO and disagrees with the decision, they may appeal to the Appeals Committee within 72 hours of receiving notice of the penalty.

Questions? Candidates should direct election-related questions to the **Chief Returning Officer (CRO)** by email: cro@cusaonline.ca.