

AMS Referendum Guide

The president will call a referendum if Council passes a resolution to hold a referendum or if a referendum by petition is signed by at least 1000 active members and delivered to the elections administrator.

For a referendum to be held at the same voting time as the 2024 AMS General Elections (Voting March 1 to 8), it must be submitted between February 7th and February 20th (inclusive). However, just because a referendum is submitted during this time does not guarantee this is when the referendum will be held.

How to draft a referendum question:

All drafters of referendum questions must consult the AMS Elections Administrator and the Clerk of Council to ensure their referendum question meets the requirements to be put on the ballot. AMS Council ultimately decides whether questions meet these requirements. The requirements are as follows:

- (a) The question is capable of being answered “yes” or “no”, with the negative response corresponding to the status quo.
- (b) The question, including any preamble, is clear and unambiguous.
- (c) The question, including any preamble, is not predicated on materially untrue statements.
- (d) The actions that would be taken if the referendum is successful are not illegal.
- (e) In cases where the proposed question would break a contract, the intent to break the contract must be specifically stated and the penalty for breaking the contract must be included as part of the question.

How to collect electronic signatures for your referendum petition

Email the elections administrator (elections@ams.ubc.ca) with the subject line “Online referendum petition form request”.

Your email should include:

1. Your referendum question in its entirety
2. Contact information for the petitioners (you and those collecting signatures)
3. If you wish to have \$1000 of Yes-Committee funding, the names of five active members that will serve on the yes-committee (note: these names will appear on the petition)
4. Any other information relevant to your referendum question

You should get a response within the next two business days with a link to a form for people to electronically sign a petition to have your referendum question on the ballot.

How to collect paper signatures for your referendum petition

Email the elections administrator (elections@ams.ubc.ca) with the subject line “Paper referendum petition form request”.

Your email should include:

1. Your referendum question in its entirety

2. Contact information for the petitioners (you and those collecting signatures)
3. If you wish to have \$1000 of Yes-Committee funding, the names of five active members that will serve on the yes-committee (note: these names will appear on the petition)
4. Any other information relevant to your referendum question

You should get a response within the next two business days with a printable form for people to sign a petition to have your referendum question on the ballot. Please ensure you do not share any of the private information collected on these forms and that you follow the relevant AMS Privacy Policy when collecting signatures: <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SR1-Privacy-I-16-October-11-2023.pdf>

Submitting the Petition:

Once your petition has over 1000 signatures, you can email the AMS Elections Administrator to ask that the petition be validated. However, since often there can be duplicates and invalid signatures, we recommend waiting until you have at least 1200 signatures. It will take at least three business days for the referendum signatures to be validated, and then you will receive an email from the Elections Administrator letting you know if you have reached the required threshold.

FAQs:

Q: How many signatures will I need to place my question on the ballot?

A: 1000 verified signatures; however, often there are duplicates and invalid signatures so we recommend collecting at least 1200 signatures before you ask for the signatures to be validated

Q: How will I know how many people have signed my electronic petition?

A: You can email the elections administrator requesting to receive a signature count update. Please have the subject line “Online Petition Signature Update”, and include your question, the link to your form, your/your group’s name, and contact information in this request email. You should receive a response within three business days with how many signatures you have collected.

Q: Can I create an online or paper petition to collect signatures without consulting the AMS?

A: No. All petitions must at least consult the AMS Elections Administrator and/or Clerk of Council on the wording of their petition. This advice will be fair and impartial and focus only on the requirements for a referendum question to be successfully added to the ballot. Any signatures collected before this consultation will not be considered valid.

Q: Can I collect signatures on paper?

A: Yes. Please ensure that you follow the relevant privacy policy of the AMS when collecting paper signatures: <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SR1-Privacy-I-16-October-11-2023.pdf>

Q: If I don’t receive enough signatures by February 20th can a referendum still be held?

A: Technically, yes; however, the referendum will be held outside of the normal election period. Typically, when this has happened for past referendums, they have been unable to reach a quorum due to a lack of voter interest.

Q: I have previously collected student signatures for another issue can I use these signatures for a referendum petition?

A: No. Copying people's private information from one issue to another is unacceptable, and the signatures will not be valid.

Q: Will paper AND electronic signatures be accepted for one question?

A: Yes, however, the questions and petition online and paper forms must be identical. Try to avoid repeat signatures – but this can be a good way to collect enough signatures for a referendum.

Q: Who can sign the petition?

A: Active AMS Members who pay AMS fees – this includes UBC graduate students, UBC professional programs, UBC Vancouver ungraduated students, and those studying at UBC affiliate colleges.

Q: Can I receive money to campaign for a referendum?

A: Yes, by forming a Yes-Committee you can receive up to \$1000 of funding for campaign expenses. When petitioning for a referendum, be sure to include the names of five active AMS members you'd like to serve on the Yes-Committee; please note their names will be public on your petitions. However, if AMS Council endorses the Yes side of your referendum, you will not be eligible for funding. If you failed to do this when petitioning for your referendum, you must submit a petition for funding using an online or paper petition provided by AMS elections with the following:

1. the signatures and student numbers of at least fifty (50) Active Member;
2. a list of the five active AMS members for the Yes Committee identifying them as members of that committee; and
3. a draft budget outlining any proposed expenditures by the Committee

Q: Can I receive money to campaign against a referendum?

A: Yes, by forming a No-Committee you can receive up to \$1000 of funding for campaign expenses. However, if AMS Council endorses the No side of your referendum, you will not be eligible for funding. To receive funding you must submit a petition for funding using an online or paper petition provided by AMS elections with the following:

1. the signatures and student numbers of at least fifty (50) Active Member;
2. a list of the five active AMS members for the No Committee identifying them as members of that committee; and
3. a draft budget outlining any proposed expenditures by the Committee

Any further questions can be directed to the Elections Administrator (elections@ams.ubc.ca).