



Brock University Graduate Students' Association

Document 042B

The Graduate Students' Association Returning Officer Policy

Name:

1. This Document shall be known as the "Returning Officer Policy"

Purpose:

2. Pursuant to the GSA Bylaw, this policy shall define the role of the Returning Officer of the GSA. This policy may be further supplemented by specific procedures approved by the GSA Executive or guidelines within the GSA/BUSU Omnibus Agreement.

Definitions:

3. "BUSU" shall refer to the Brock University Students' Union
4. "RO" shall refer to the Returning Officer.
5. "DRO" shall refer to a Deputy Returning Officer.

Timeline and Recruitment:

6. The RO shall normally be appointed for a term from October 1st until April 30th of the following year.
7. The GSA shall normally post the position of RO on the organization's website and through other communication channels for a period of no shorter than two (2) and no longer than four (4) weeks to solicit applications. If circumstances of initial recruitment efforts do not result in viable, eligible applicants of which the joint hiring committee can move forward with, this recruitment can be extended or reposted under the discretion of the joint hiring committee.
8. The posting shall normally include a job description and relevant timelines for both the GSA and BUSU elections.

Appointment:

9. Appointment of the Returning Officer (RO):
 - a. The Returning Officer (RO) shall make application to the joint hiring committee between the GSA and BUSU, pursuant to the GSA/BUSU Omnibus Agreement and any other relevant legislation.
 - b. Only current members of the GSA shall be eligible for appointment. If no eligible, current member of the GSA can be appointed, a candidate selected by the joint hiring committee shall be present as alternative. The selected RO shall be approved by the GSA Board of Directors.
10. Appointment of a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO):
 - a. Pursuant to the GSA Bylaw and other relevant legislation, once the RO has been appointed by the Board of Directors, they shall select one (1) and up to two (2) DROs and present them at a meeting of the Executive Committee for approval.



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- b. DRO appointment(s) shall normally commence prior to the start of an election's nomination period.
11. Appointment of Election and Referendum Committee (ERC):
- a. Pursuant to Document 040, the committee shall be struck and approved by the Board of Directors prior to the start of the nomination period.

Eligibility:

12. An applicant for the position of RO or DRO must be a member in good standing at the time of application and for the duration of the appointment.
13. The member shall normally be registered graduate student at the time of appointment and for the duration of the appointment.
14. No individual seeking election during a GSA election, or participating in a referendum, may serve as RO or DRO during an election they are contesting/participating in.
15. No individual serving as Brock University Senator, or executive position jointly acting as a Brock University Senator may serve as RO or DRO.
16. Should an appointed RO or DRO choose to run for an executive position, or campaign for/against a referendum, they shall be immediately disqualified from the position of RO or DRO.
17. Current members of the executive team, defined as those in office during an election, shall not normally be eligible to serve as RO or a DRO. However, in circumstances such as the sudden resignation or removal, or if no eligible applications are received, sitting Executive Committee members that are not precluded due to other eligibility limitations may be considered and appointed.

Qualifications:

18. RO and DRO applicants must exhibit the ability to handle the tasks involved in the position, including capability to work closely with both the Executive Director of the GSA and relevant parties within BUSU to manage the election/referenda processes for the GSA and BUSU.
19. The RO must be able to coordinate volunteers and relevant direct reports and communicate effectively, while ensuring general rules and regulations are adhered to by all participants in the election/referenda process.

Responsibilities:

20. The authority and responsibilities of the RO and any DRO(s) will be defined by:
 - a. The GSA Bylaw, Documents 040, 041, 042, 046 and any other relevant legislation.
 - b. The BUSU Bylaw, Policies 400, 401 and any other relevant legislation.
 - c. Contract and terms signed between the GSA and BUSU, as employers, and employee.



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21. The DRO's shall report directly to the RO and the RO shall be accountable for their performance and activities.
22. The RO shall oversee all electoral logistics including but not limited to:
 - a. Running elections and referenda as per Document 040 (GSA) and Policies 400 and 401 (BUSU);
 - b. Organizing polls during elections/referenda, including appointing adequate poll staff and situating polls at appropriate locations across campus, and advertising the poll locations;
 - c. Overseeing the physical count of paper ballots, when required, as well as the confirmation of online ballot reports during elections/referenda;
 - d. Reporting the result of an election/referenda to the appropriate parties;
 - e. Enforcing all elections/referenda rules and regulations along with appropriate penalties if necessary;
 - f. Arbitrate in any dispute that may arise during the course of an election or referenda;
 - g. To assess the monetary value of all candidate and referenda campaign materials and apply a fair market value; and
 - h. Begin the process, when required, of referendum invalidation outlined in Document 040.
23. The RO shall be available to all parties during elections/referenda for a minimum of four (4) hours per day from the first day of polling until the last day of polling.
24. The RO must organize at least one (1) scheduled public forum, in-person and/or virtual, to be held during the period of campaigning for candidates running for President & CEO; Vice-President, External Affairs; Vice-President, Student Engagement; Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion; and Vice-President, Communications & Advancement.
25. The RO must organize at least one (1) scheduled public forum, in-person and/or virtual, to be held during the period of campaigning for the campaign leaders of any referenda.
26. The RO shall collect all expense forms for election and referenda by 12 p.m. EDT on the last day of polling, to be submitted to the GSA Executive Director.
27. The RO shall submit to the GSA Board Chair and the GSA Executive Director, prior to April 30, a final report of the year's activities and recommendations for the next cycle of elections/referenda.
28. The RO shall report to the GSA Board of Directors or the Executive Committee on elections/referenda activity when necessary.
29. The RO may be asked to attend internal meetings of the GSA, where appropriate, to provide feedback and consultation on processes related to organizational management of elections/referenda.