



Subject:	Elections Policy of the Dalhousie Student Union
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Note - All terms will hold the same definition as outlined in the Dalhousie Student Union Constitution

1) SCOPE

- a) The provisions of this Policy shall apply to Dalhousie Student Union elections and by-elections.

2) DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Section,

- a) Volunteer – means an individual registered with a particular campaign team.
- b) Candidate – any individual who declares themselves to be running for any of the positions listed in Section 4 and has successfully completed all necessary documentation and submitted it by the deadline set by the Elections Committee in each academic year.
- c) Campaign – refers to a coordinated effort to elect any candidate during the Union's elections.
- d) Campaigning: advertising by any campus medium (including class talks) or the distribution and/or posting of any material including but not limited to social media platforms designed to influence voters.
- e) Campaign worker – a person who has been asked by a candidate and has agreed to assist that candidate with campaigning in any capacity.
- f) Chief Returning Officer – CRO.
- g) Dalhousie Student Union – DSU.
- h) Official polling station – any polling station, whether stationary or mobile, that is operated by the Elections Committee or Elections Committee volunteers.
- i) Resource – any material or asset that provides a benefit to a person or organization.
- j) Business Hours – shall refer to the hours between 8:00am - 8:00pm Atlantic Standard Time

3) UNION MEMBERS' ELIGIBILITY:

- a) Any Union member may run for office. It is the responsibility of the CRO to authenticate student status and candidate eligibility with the Registrar's Office or Student Accounts. Candidates running for office may not sit on the elections committee.

4) NOMINATIONS

- a) Application for Nominations
 - i) Nominations for each position shall be made by the completion of the nominations forms as developed by the Elections Committee each year and in accordance with Union policy.
 - ii) Nominations of all candidates shall be effective only if the required nomination forms have been submitted completely and accurately and have been verified by the CRO.

- iii) All candidates must attend the all candidate's meeting. Any candidate who does not attend without making prior arrangements with the CRO will have their nomination revoked, at the discretion of the Elections Committee.
 - iv) Appeals regarding the validity of a nomination shall be made in writing to the elections committee no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the close of nominations, once a list of the names all candidates has been posted online. The committee will render a decision before the beginning of the campaign period.
 - v) The nomination process for the Vice-President Finance and Operations shall also have the following requirements:
 - (1) The CRO shall post a questionnaire on the DSU elections website no later than two weeks before the beginning of the nomination period containing questions relating to the technical requirements of the position which shall be approved by the Elections Committee.
 - (2) Candidates must submit a completed questionnaire to the CRO no later than the close of nominations.
 - (3) The CRO shall post the completed questionnaires on the elections website before the start of campaigning.
- b) Nominations for Faculty Representatives
- i) The Bylaws of the Dalhousie Students Union provide for twelve faculty constituency seats:
 - (1) Faculty of Agriculture Representative
 - (2) Faculty of Architecture and Planning Representative
 - (3) Faculty of Arts and Social Science Representative
 - (4) Faculty of Computer Science Representative
 - (5) Faculty of Dentistry Representative
 - (6) Faculty of Engineering Representative
 - (7) Faculty of Graduate Studies Representative
 - (8) Faculty of Health Professions Representative
 - (9) Faculty of Law Representative
 - (10) Faculty of Management Representative
 - (11) Faculty of Medicine Representative
 - (12) Faculty of Science Representative
 - ii) Eligibility to run for these seats is based on the student's membership in a given faculty.
 - iii) Representatives are responsible to the general faculty constituency they are elected to serve, and are required to consult with the constituency-level society on a monthly basis.

c) Nominations for Community Representatives

- i) The By-laws of the Dalhousie Students Union provide for seven constituency seats:
 - (1) an Indigenous Students' Community Representative,
 - (2) a Black Students' Community Representative,
 - (3) a Women's Community Representative,
 - (4) an International Students' Community Representative,
 - (5) a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Two-Spirited, Asexual and Intersex(+) Community Representative,
 - (6) a Disabled Students' Community Representative,
 - (7) a Residence Community Representative.
- ii) Eligibility to run for these seats is based on the student's self-identification as part of a given community. No one member is permitted to hold or run for more than one Community Representative Seat at any given time.
- iii) Representatives are responsible to the constituency they are elected to serve and are required to consult with the constituency-level society on a monthly basis.

d) Withdrawal of Nominations

- i) Until such a time that the ballots are officially created, a candidate may withdraw their nomination form and have their name removed from the election. Upon declaration of their intent to withdraw, a candidate must immediately and at the first possible opportunity meet with the CRO to sign a declaration of withdrawal in their presence. The CRO retains the right to remove a candidate's name from the ballot once that candidate has confirmed their intent to withdraw, with the approval of the Elections Committee.
- ii) A person who, before or during an election, for the purpose of preventing the election of a candidate, knowingly publishes a false statement of withdrawal of another candidate at the election is guilty of an offence as defined by the offenses section of these policies.

e) Death of a Candidate

- i) If a candidate dies before the close of nominations, during the election, or on election days, a by-election will be held for this position.
- ii) If the candidate dies on the Election Day and the final results favour the deceased, the results will be void and a by-election must be held to fill the position.

5) CAMPAIGN REGULATIONS

a) General Rules

- i) No campaigning shall take place prior to the campaign period as established by the Elections Committee.
- ii) The foregoing shall not impede any officer or member of the DSU from carrying out all duties reasonably incident to their portfolio.
- iii) Incumbent candidates running for executive positions shall take a leave of absence for the duration of the campaigning period.
- iv) Incumbents shall be permitted to carry out job duties internal to the Union with the permission of the CRO.
- v) The facilities of the offices of the Union or any society under its jurisdiction and any resources or promotional materials owned by the Union and its societies are NOT to be made available to candidates for campaign purposes unless those resources are made available to all candidates as deemed by the CRO.
- vi) The Elections Committee shall set the date and time that campaigning is to cease and set the yearly parameters regulating post-campaigning.
- vii) Candidates shall be responsible for the actions of their campaign workers and candidates shall be strictly liable for campaign violations.
- viii) Candidates must submit the names of all campaign workers to the CRO no later than 12 pm on the day prior to the commencement of campaign period.
- ix) Under extenuating circumstances, if a person becomes or ceases to be a campaign worker after the deadline mentioned above, the Elections Committee must be notified immediately via e-mail and a reasonable explanation, as determined by the Elections Committee, must be provided.
- x) There shall be no campaigning of any kind at any of the University Libraries, on-campus bars or residences except where the Elections Committee is hosting an official elections event.
- xi) Campaigning shall be restricted to Dalhousie University campuses, only. Public sidewalks adjoining campus buildings are considered for the purposes of this policy to be part of the University.
- xii) Electronic balloting provides opportunities for abuse, intentioned or not, by voters, candidates and campaign workers. Abuse of electronic balloting includes, but is not limited to, the following types of action:
 - (1) efforts by voters to vote more than once

- (2) efforts by candidates or their campaign workers to influence votes by holding parties or social events at which individuals are encouraged to vote on the premises.
 - (3) offering favors or gifts in exchange for votes
 - (4) pressuring individuals to vote in the presence of a candidate, campaign worker, or any other individual
 - (5) bringing the means of electronic voting to a voter
- xiii) In determining whether abuse of electronic balloting has occurred, the CRO must consider potential abuses on a case-by-case basis. Abuse is not limited to the types of actions outlined above but must be interpreted in the spirit of this section and in the spirit of upholding the principle of an anonymous, secret-ballot vote. The CRO shall exercise the right to determine whether abuse of electronic voting has taken place and shall have the discretion of imposing or recommending any and all punitive actions as necessary, including disqualification from the election or by-election.
- b) Poster Regulations
- i) It shall be the responsibility of the CRO and the Elections Committee to secure poster display space in as many university buildings as possible.
 - ii) Poster display spaces secured by the CRO and Elections Committee shall house one poster per candidate. These posters shall be grouped, when possible, by position.
 - (1) Poster space shall be distributed evenly at the discretion of the Elections Committee.
 - iii) Posters in the poster display areas shall be the only legal candidate posters.
 - iv) It shall be the responsibility of the CRO and the Elections Committee to obtain and print candidate posters, display them in regulated poster display spaces and monitor them.
 - v) Candidates and campaigns shall provide the Elections Committee with a maximum of three different posters, of a maximum size determined by the Elections Committee, either by acceptable electronic means or in hard copy. These shall be the posters used by the Elections Committee.
 - vi) All posters shall be taken down by the Elections Committee no earlier than the end of the voting period.
- c) Other Forms of Campaigning
- i) All forms of media may be used during the campaign period except where explicitly prohibited by the Elections Committee. Advertisements placed in The Gazette and The Sextant, however, are subject to limitations by The Gazette and

The Sextant to be made clear to candidates by the CRO at their respective forums.

- ii) Candidate displays and the distribution of literature on campus are subject to the approval of the Elections Committee. All candidates shall inform and have the approval of the CRO for any such activity that they plan to undertake.
 - iii) Media restrictions on campaigning shall include:
 - (1) All emails and candidate campaign materials must include a link to the official DSU elections website as stated by the Elections Committee
 - (2) The Elections Committee shall, on a yearly basis set the guidelines for online campaigning that will be available to candidates and registered campaign teams before the beginning of the campaign period.
 - iv) The use of posters or campaign materials within the classroom is forbidden
 - v) Verbal campaigning within the classroom requires the express permission of the presiding faculty member, permission must be given in advance of the in-class campaign and presented to the CRO.
 - vi) The use of Union or University facilities not available to all candidates is forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - (1) The Student Union Building's front marquee.
 - (2) The University's 'tiger mascot' costume.
 - vii) The use of Society resources by candidates is forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to society funds, websites, e-mail accounts and distribution lists.
 - viii) The use of stickers is forbidden.
 - ix) Handbills shall be no larger than 4.25 inches by 5.5 inches in size.
 - x) All candidates are obligated to follow University policy as well as municipal, provincial, and federal laws in the course of campaigning.
 - xi) No candidate shall engage in libel, nor distribute material which could be construed as slanderous towards an opponent.
 - xii) Any new interpretation or clarification of election rules or policies by either the CRO or Elections Committee shall be noticed to all candidates and the entirety of the Elections Committee within 24 hours of being made. The decision will come into effect once all candidates have been notified.
- d) Campaign Expenditures
- i) The total cost of a candidate's campaign shall have a value of no greater than two hundred dollars (\$200), excluding the cost of printing official posters. The Vice President (Finance and Operations) can provide each candidate an advance equal to the amount specified in that candidate's application projecting their campaign expenses, in any case not to

exceed \$200.00, for the purpose of facilitating their campaign. Candidates will be required to return unused funds to the Vice-President, Finance and Operations within one week of the close of the elections period.

- ii) No candidate shall receive discounts that are not available to all students.
 - iii) Any in-kind good or service given to a campaign will be assigned a 'market-value' price as determined by the Elections Committee and included as part of the total campaign spending limit.
 - iv) Goods or professional skills belonging to the candidate are exempt from this regulation.
 - v) An itemized account of all expenditures must be submitted to the CRO or their appointed agent within twenty-four (24) hours after the closing of the polls, and these accounts must include a written receipt or bill for each separate item of campaign material;
 - vi) All candidates who receive more than twenty percent (20%) of the vote in an election race with two or less candidates or more than ten percent (10%) of the vote in an election with three or more candidates will be reimbursed for campaign expenses up to \$200. For election races with five or more candidates, the Elections Committee may set an alternate threshold, which shall be announced prior to the start of the campaign period.
 - vii) Any fines incurred by the candidate will be collected by the Vice-President, Finance and Operations upon the recommendation of the CRO within one (1) week following the close of campaign period.
 - viii) Receipts and bills shall be submitted to the Vice President (Finance and Operations) for all expenditures for which candidates seek reimbursement under Section 5(d)(i) above.
 - ix) Any infractions of this Regulation by a candidate shall be investigated by the CRO, and candidates and/or their agents in violation of this regulation may be penalized according to the seriousness of the breach, which may result in the candidate owing the DSU funds equivalent to the amount fined by the CRO under section 6 (b) of this policy.
- e) Harassment

All members of the Dalhousie Students Union are subject to the Dalhousie University Student Code of Conduct. Offences against persons and property as defined in the Code of Conduct are strictly prohibited. Candidates and their representatives are expected to adhere to the Code, and should be aware that the CRO and Elections Committee reserve the right to sanction violators of the Code as is deemed appropriate, and may apply punishments ranging in severity up to and including expulsion from the election.

6) OFFENSES

a) Responsibilities:

- i) Only the CRO shall have the authority to enforce the provisions of this Policy unless in the case of an appeal.
- ii) Charges of violation shall be submitted in writing to the CRO who shall rule on the charge.
- iii) The Elections Committee may also lay charges of violations of campaign rules on its own initiative.
- iv) Charges of violation must be laid in writing within five (5) school days of the close of voting to the CRO.
- v) The Elections Committee shall meet according to its pre-publicized meeting schedule as publicized at the all candidates' meeting to discuss any requests for appeal, and to decide on the appropriate actions to be taken.
- vi) For a decision of the Elections Committee to be valid, three (3) of the Committee members and the CRO must be present at a meeting and the decision must have two-thirds majority.
- vii) A written report of any Elections Committee minutes will be made available to the public on written request within a forty-eight (48) hour period. Any discussion that may lead to a candidate being disqualified from the election shall be done in camera.

b) Fines

- i) Fines shall be assessed on the following basis:
 - (1) poster outside the regulated Elections Committee display area: \$5.00 per poster.
 - (2) illegal displays: \$20.00 per display.
 - (3) pre/post campaign period campaigning: \$20.00 per incident
 - (4) e-mail violations: \$20.00 per incident ("incident" shall be defined as one e-mail "sent" up to 100 recipients. Additional recipients shall incur further fines at \$20/per 100).
 - (5) the CRO shall reserve the right to levy a fine up to \$50 for any violation not described above or for any gross violations of the aforementioned subsections.
- ii) Fines are not refundable.
- iii) The CRO must inform a candidate of any fines received via email within 24 hours of the decision. The candidate will be considered to have been informed, six (6) business hours after the email is sent. The email must inform the candidate of their right to appeal. The CRO will also publish a list on the outside of the DSU Election Office doors, concerning the decisions of the CRO or Elections Committee with regards to violations committed by candidates or volunteers, except those that will result in disqualification.

c) Expulsion

- i) Violations of the following nature will result in AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION of the candidate:
 - (1) Non-attendance by the candidate or pre-designated representative (by prior arrangement of the candidate with the CRO) at the mandatory all

- candidate's meeting for candidates prior to the campaign period;
 - (2) Tampering with the Elections Committee poster display;
 - (3) Spending over the maximum spending limit as outlined in this policy;
 - (4) Accruing greater than \$100 in fines;
 - (5) Any attempted interference in the process of voting in an election carried out under this resolution;
 - (6) Any slanderous statements towards another candidate;
 - (7) The failure of Vice-President Finance and Operations candidates to comply with the questionnaire component of this policy.
- ii) Decisions to disqualify any candidate shall not be made known to any party during the voting period. If a decision to disqualify is taken during the campaign period, the candidate will be notified immediately.
 - iii) Where the Elections Committee finds there has been an egregious violation, it may:
 - (1) declare that an election in its entirety or the election of a specific candidate be ruled void;
 - iv) In the event any candidate in the election is disqualified, the runner-up will take the place of the disqualified candidate.
- d) Appeals
- i) A candidate or volunteer is deemed to be informed of an Elections Committee decision six (6) business hours after the decision is emailed.
 - ii) Appeals regarding decisions made and/or sanctions levied by the CRO shall be made in writing to the Elections Committee within seventy- two (72) hours of the candidate or volunteer being informed of the decision.
 - iii) Appeals from a CRO decision shall be made in writing to the Judicial Board only after an appeal to the Elections Committee has been made. Appeals to the Judicial Board shall be made in writing within five (5) days of being informed of the results of their appeal to the Elections Committee. The Judicial Board shall then investigate.

7) VOTING

- a) General Procedures
- i) Voting shall be done using a secret, online ballot.
 - ii) The purpose of providing electronic balloting is to increase voter participation by making voting more convenient while ensuring that the process remains anonymous, democratic, and free. Any one member's vote belongs to that member alone – as such, online voting should not be done in a group setting or in the presence of persons who might influence the direction of a member's vote.
 - iii) For the days of voting of the election, all Dalhousie University computer rooms and terminals for the purposes of the election shall be considered to be polling stations for the purpose of restricting candidates' activity around these sites.
 - iv) The Online Voting system shall be in operation continuously from the start of the voting period until closing of the polls at 9pm on the second day of voting with

the exception of system downtime that will occur during the night of Day 1.

v) The methods of voting for all DSU General Election and By-election councillor positions shall be as follows:

(1) The names of all candidates shall be placed on each ballot in random order at each page view.

- (2) Each voter shall indicate their first choice upon the ballot opposite the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote, and consecutively rank the remaining candidates as they so choose;
 - (3) Each candidate shall be credited with the number of first choices marked opposite their name;
 - (4) Where no candidate receives more than fifty percent of the total number of first choices then the candidate with the least number of first choices shall be struck off the list and the second choices marked on that candidate's ballots shall be credited to the candidates for whom they were cast;
 - (5) This process will continue until one candidate has a majority of the votes cast, or until only two candidates remain, in which case the one with the greater number of votes is elected;
 - (6) Where a candidate whose name has been struck off the list is the next choice on the ballot, then that ballot shall be counted in favour of the candidate subsequent in choice to the candidate whose name has been struck off;
- vi) Where two or more candidates are tied with the lowest number of votes, both or all shall be dropped from the remaining ballots;
 - vii) If the procedure in subsection (iii) above results in only one candidate remaining on the ballot, then that candidate shall be declared elected.
 - viii) In the event of a tie for any positions, a run-off election will be held between the tied candidates. The timeline for the run-off will be as follows:
 - (1) Nominations will not be reopened.
 - (2) The campaign period shall begin no less than two school days following the announcement of the election at 8 a.m. and end at 8 p.m. the day preceding voting.
 - (3) The campaign period shall be no longer than five (5) school days.
 - (4) The voting period shall be at least two (2) school days.
- ix) Executive, Senate, Board of Governors, and any other Councilor position appearing in DSU General Election or By-election shall be elected by a preferential ballot
 - x) Candidates' names on the ballots shall be their surname and one or all of their given or chosen names or a generally recognized abbreviated version thereof.
 - xi) In the event that a candidate is unopposed for any of the positions elected via any form of balloting there shall be a yes/no option after the candidate's name on the ballot.
 - xii) Ballots will include an option to spoil the ballot.
 - xiii) The campaign period shall begin no less than two school days following the announcement of the election at 8 a.m. and end at 8 p.m. the day preceding voting.

- (1) The campaign period shall be no longer than five (5) school days.
- (2) The voting period shall be at least two (2) school days.
- xiv) Persons elected to the Senate or Board of Governors are subject to approval and appointment by those bodies.
- xv) Each candidate is entitled to see a print-out of the official results from the voting software.
- xvi) There shall be no voting by proxy.
 - (1) In the event that a member with a disability requires assistance to use the online voting software, they should seek it from Dalhousie's Accessibility Services rather than the DSU in order to ensure impartial assistance.

b) **Indigenous Students Community Representative Selection Process**

- i) As the Dalhousie Students Union recognizes and respects the protection and promotion of Indigenous forms of governance, the determination and execution of an appropriate selection process for the Indigenous Students Community Representative shall be the responsibility of the Dalhousie Indigenous Students Collective.
- ii) The Dalhousie Indigenous Students Collective shall provide the results of their selection process both orally and in writing to the CRO no later than the final day of voting in the General Election.

8) **ELECTION OFFICIALS**

- a) The Elections Committee
 - i) Elections sponsored by the DSU shall be conducted and supervised by an Elections Committee as provided for in the By-laws and polices of the Union.
 - ii) The Election Committee will be available at all times during the election to provide advice and guidance to the CRO or Deputy Returning Officer
- b) The CRO:
 - i) Shall be autonomous from the Executive of the Dalhousie Students Union.
 - ii) Shall be appointed by the Council no later than September 30 of each year.
 - iii) Shall not be an Executive Officer, Councilor, Committee member, or employee of the Union for the duration of their term, except for sitting on the Elections Committee.
 - iv) Shall serve in this role no later than April 30th.
 - v) Shall not be permitted to vote in the DSU elections.
 - vi) Has the authority to interpret election policies and/or rules where necessary.

vii) In addition, the CRO shall:

- (1) Appoint a Deputy Returning Officer from among the Elections Committee members who shall assume the responsibilities of the CRO in their absence;
- (2) Authorize all official notices and elections publicity;
- (3) Set up the elections schedule, subject to the provisions in this policy;
- (4) Compose the ballot subject to this policy and supervise the voting process;
- (5) Receive and analyze the official election results from the official voting software;
- (6) Issue official election results to candidates, Council and the media for the Union;
- (7) Submit an electronic copy of a post-election report to the DSU. The CRO shall not be paid until this report has been submitted.
- (8) Set and administer an all candidate's meeting for candidates on the school day following the close of the Nominations period, and monitor the conduct of participants at such forums;
- (9) Set and administer any all-candidate forums and monitor the conduct of the candidates at such forums;
- (10) Give a mandatory pre-election briefing for polling clerks and/or any other elections staff;
- (11) Reserve rooms for the election;
- (12) Authenticate Union member eligibility before the campaign period.
- (13) Send out one campus wide email on the first day of elections that highlights all candidates and contains links to their websites, and social media platforms.
- (14) Send out one campus wide email on the last day of campaign period notifying members when the voting period will open and how they can vote.

viii) Ensure the secure collection and destruction of personal identification materials, whether virtual or physical.

9) BY-ELECTIONS,

- a) If any executive position remains unfilled following the Union's annual general election or becomes vacant before October 15, there shall be a by-election held by October 31. If necessary, Council shall appoint an interim Executive until the time where a by-election can be held.

- b) Should any executive position remain unfilled following a by-election, the Council shall make an appointment.
- c) Should a vacancy arise in any executive position after October 15 Council shall strike a Nominating Committee which shall make recommendations to Council regarding filling the vacant positions, and Council shall make the appointments.
- d) Should any:
 - i) Faculty Representative position remain unfilled after the Union's annual elections or become vacant at any point after the Union's annual elections, the representative Society shall make recommendations to Council regarding filling vacant positions, and Council shall make the appointments.
 - ii) Community Representative positions remain unfilled after the Union's annual elections or become vacant at any point after the Union's annual elections, the Council shall ratify the Community's choice of representative.

10) APPEALS OF ELECTION RESULTS

- a) Any student may challenge the validity of an election result in a written submission to the Elections Committee within two (2) school days after the close of voting.
- b) Written submissions appealing election or recount results shall contain the appellant's name, student number, telephone number and address, as well as a detailed explanation of the reason(s) for challenging the results.
- c) The Elections Committee shall investigate the appeal and decide on the appropriate action.
- d) No record of vote shall be destroyed until thirty (30) days after the close of voting.



Appendix 1: General Election Timetable

The CRO shall determine and present to Council for consideration and approval the date of the annual general elections no later than November 1. Subject to necessary changes by Council, the annual election timetable shall be as follows:

NOMINATIONS AND CAMPAIGN REGISTRATION:

- 1) Open no earlier than the first week of school in January; and close, in any event, not less than two school days prior to the commencement of the campaign period.
- 2) The school day following the close of Nominations Registration, the CRO shall facilitate a meeting of each candidate.

CAMPAIGNING:

- 3) The campaign period shall begin no less than two school days and no more than five school days after nominations close each year and close at 8:00 p.m. the school day preceding the official voting days.
- 4) All campaign periods shall be no longer than twelve (12) school days and no shorter than five (5) school days.
- 5) No campaign may be undertaken prior to the designated "Campaign Period."



Appendix 2: By-election Timetable

Nominations shall open at 10:00 a.m. one week prior to the commencement of the campaign period and shall close at 10:00 am the day prior to the commencement of the campaign period.

- 1) The campaign period shall begin the school day following the close of nominations at 8:00 a.m. and end at 8:00 p.m. the day preceding voting.
- 2) The campaign period shall be no longer than ten (10) school days and no shorter than five (5) school days.
- 3) The school day following the close of Nominations Registration, the CRO shall facilitate a meeting of all Candidates.
- 4) The campaign period shall begin no less than three calendar days and no more than three school days after Nominations Registration closes, and close at 8:00 pm the school day preceding the official voting days.
- 5) No campaigning shall be undertaken prior to the start of this period.
- 6) The voting period shall be at least two (2) school days.

