

Frequently Asked Questions Proper Elections Procedures for Local Sections and Divisions

1. Should everyone in the local section or division receive a ballot to vote?

Answer: All members in the local section and division per your bylaws are eligible to vote. Local section society affiliates and division affiliates do not vote nor can they hold an elected position. Ballots should only be sent to members of the local section or division, as they are the only ones eligible to vote. A current mailing list should be requested prior to your ballot mailing. Mailing lists should be maintained along with voted ballots and signed envelopes.

2. When conducting a mail ballot, how important is it to include an inner envelope (return envelope) in the ballot materials?

Answer: In the traditional mail balloting procedure, ACS members are required to seal their completed ballot in a signed envelope. The return ballot is separated from the signature envelope after the signature requirement is validated by the on-site election committee prior to counting the ballots. The signature requirement ensures that the vote is being cast by one eligible to vote. This separation assures that the ballot is confidential, and that no one knows for whom any specific individual voted.

3. What is the impact if one of the bios is missing from the ballot information?

Answer: Every effort should be made to include the bios from all candidates. A missing bio poses a serious problem for the election, as voters then have incomplete ballot information. Should a challenge arise, this violation could cause the ACS Committee on Nominations and Elections to declare the election void and order a new election. However, if a candidate fails to provide a bio after repeated requests, then a note should be included in the ballot information that states that the candidate did not provide a bio.

4. Can letters of endorsement be included in the official ballot mailing?

Answer: No. The Committee on Nominations and Election campaign guidelines discourage endorsements of candidates by individuals holding positions of significance, such as officers of the local section or division. There should be no appearance that an official ACS entity or individual prefers one candidate over another.

5. Can the nominating committee be chosen by someone other than the local section or division chair or the executive committee?

Answer: The local section or division bylaws should clearly state how the nominating committee is chosen. It is very important that the local section or division officers closely follow the bylaws.

6. How important is it that a designated period be determined for the mailing of ballots and their return? (Example: Can a division or local section mail ballots on October 10 and require their return on October 20?)

Answer: The bylaws should clearly state the period for which ballots will be out prior to return. A ten-day turnaround is not likely to be sufficient. Therefore, this period should be stated in the number of weeks for mailing and return.

7. “I am interested in transitioning my local section to electronic voting. What should I do?”

Answer: Local Section or Division officers must first check their bylaws to ensure that the bylaw is current and allows for electronic balloting. For example, ensure that “mail”, “in writing”, “envelope”, and other words are removed from local section/division bylaws. If changes are needed, officers can submit proposed bylaw changes to the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws at bylaws@acs.org. Additional information, including vendors, can be obtained by visiting www.acs.org/localsection under local section operations/volunteer resources or www.acs.org/divisions under officer information/volunteer resources. You may also check the document “Protocols for Conducting Elections in Divisions and Local Sections” at www.acs.org/elections.

8. “My division runs a hybrid election process wherein some members vote electronically and some vote by paper ballot. What suggestions can you offer to help ensure anonymity and confidentiality?”

Answer: Local sections and division can adopt a similar process used in national elections as stated in the steps below:

- a. The ACS national election uses an outside vendor to manage all aspects of the election. The vendor sends the ballots (paper & electronic), receives the ballots back to its office, and tallies the votes.
- b. Prior to the election period, the Society sends the vendor the list of all current ACS members, which qualifies those members who are eligible to vote in the election. The list contains the member’s name, mail and email address, and the membership number.
- c. The vendor uses the list of member numbers to generate Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) for each ACS member. These PINs are unique, randomly generated, and impossible to guess.
- d. The vendor tracks which PINs are used in voting online and by mail in order to detect and prevent attempts by a member to vote by both methods. There are several solutions to resolve double voting. The procedure used in the ACS national election is that the first ballot received (either by Internet or by mail) takes precedence and automatically prohibits the second ballot from being counted.
- e. The pins are encoded as a bar code, which allows the vendor to accurately scan and reconcile each returned mail ballot.

- f. After the ballots have been reconciled, any record of the association of the ACS member numbers with the PINS will be destroyed, which ensures confidentiality of the ACS member.
- g. During the election period, the vendor is required to set aside all paper ballots where the voter's intent is not clear. After the close of the election period, members of the Committee on Nominations and Elections try to resolve the questionable ballots for the final vote tally.

For more detailed information refer to the document "Protocols for Conducting Elections in Divisions and Local Sections" at [acs.org/elections](https://www.acs.org/elections).

9. "My bylaws need updating where can I get help?"

Answer: If bylaws need to be updated for election compliance, please contact the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws at bylaws@acs.org or 202-872-4071.

10. "I have a question about the election process in my local section who can help?"

Answer: Please contact the Committee on Nominations and Elections (N&E) at nomelections@acs.org or 202-872-4461.

11. What are the steps in certifying the local section or division election?

Answer: Per ACS bylaws, the secretary of each local section or division shall certify to the Executive Director of the Society (c_vockins@acs.org) not later than December 1 of each year, much earlier if possible, the names, addresses, and terms of the elected Councilors for the local section or division of the ensuing year. The local section or division secretary should seek to have their elections results before December in order to meet this deadline.

12. "How long do I need to archive ballots?"

Answer: The bylaws should state a period of time after an election that ballots will be archived. Should there be a dispute with the election, the ballots will be important in possible resolving the dispute. Ballots along with the signed outer return envelopes, and ballot mailing list should be archived for at least a year.

13. "What if there is no one willing to run in an election in my local section? How is this handled?"

Answer: Every effort should be made to encourage members to participate in the governance of the local section or division. The earlier one is able to start the search for candidates the better. However, should a situation like what is being asked arise, it would be a matter for the bylaws and the defined terms of those currently in office to present a decision.

14. "If I suspect an election violation in my local section or division election, what is my recourse?"

Answer: Any questions regarding a possible election violation should be reported to the ACS Committee on Nominations and Elections (N&E). N&E will provide an opportunity for a candidate whose election is challenged, and the challenger(s), to state their views and convey the comments with any correspondence to the committee. Opportunity will be provided for full discussion by all candidates before the committee, or a decision may be rendered by balloting if that course of action is preferred by all candidates involved. A positive vote by two-thirds of the entire committee is required to declare an election void.