

A Handy Guide to Writing a Referenda Question

Updated as of 2019-10-31





What is a Referenda?

- A Referenda Question acts as a way for students to establish a Fee, poll the SSMU's Membership or edit one of the Society's Governing Documents ([Constitution, Internal Regulations, or Policies & Plans](#)).
- To initiate a student run referenda a Member must first write the question (with or without help from the Society's President), submit the question to the CEO for review (elections@ssmu.mcgill.ca), then receive 100 signatures on a package provided by the CEO.

What is a Motion?

- A Motion acts as the argument for why your fee or edit needs to be adopted.
- Motions read from top to bottom, each "Whereas clause" leading into the next

What is are Whereas Clauses & How Do They Work?

- A **WHEREAS**, clause can be thought of as a bullet point. Each highlights a fact related to the necessity of the actions that will be laid out at the end and.
- **WHEREAS**, clauses end with semicolons ";" unless they are continuing into a sub-point (quotation from a relevant internal document), in which case you would end the clause with a full colon ":"

What is a Be It Resolved Clause?

- After you have written your **WHEREAS** clauses and laid out your argument, it's now time to put those words to action! That is what a "**BE IT RESOLVED**," clause is for.
- Following a **BE IT RESOLVED** (or **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**) clause is where you place the action items that you'd like seen done; be it the creation of a new fee, or the editing of a Governance Doc.
- The final **BE IT RESOLVED** clause ends with a period.

You can find examples of a previous Referenda Question: [here!](#)

[Motion Referenda Question Template](#)



Example Motion

MOTION REGARDING [Referenda Question Name Here]

[Date]

WHEREAS, the SSMU is an organization with a long history of leadership on [insert topic here]. As stated in the [insert relevant clause] of the [insert [relevant governing document](#)];

WHEREAS, the Society has an ability to use Economies of Scale to help with the purchasing of [insert product here] to help reduce the overall cost of this product to its members;¹

WHEREAS, the [VP Finance] is mandated to spearhead and coordinate items related to the [Financial Accessibility];

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the following question be approved for the [Winter 2017] referendum period:

Do you agree to the creation of a [non opt-outable] [Xyc] Fee of [\$0.85 per student per semester], payable by all undergraduate members of the SSMU, starting in [Fall 2017] and ending in [Winter 2022] (inclusive) at which point it will be brought back to the membership for renewal?

Moved By Petition

¹ Citations in a Motion work the same way they do in an essay and are necessary if you want your Motion to be both accurate and accessible. Feel free to use one of any number of citation websites to help you with that process. [Here](#)'s an example of one!