

# **Voting on Campus**

## **Report on the Survey of Campus Electors for the 43rd General Election**

Research Division

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## Acknowledgments

This research was undertaken by Elections Canada's Research division, on behalf of the Alternative Voting Methods and Operational Outreach (AVMOO) directorate within the Operations and Field Governance branch. The Research division led the research design and analysis, while an external research firm, Advanis Inc., managed the data collection.

Ongoing collaboration, consultation and expertise-sharing between the Research division and the AVMOO team enabled the co-creation of the survey and report.

## Background and Objectives

During the 2019 general election, to help increase access to voting for youth, Elections Canada launched the Vote on Campus program. This program, which had been piloted in 2015, resulted in the establishment of 119 Vote on Campus offices on 109 post-secondary campuses in 86 electoral districts across the country. These voting places were open for five consecutive days, from October 5 to 9, 2019. Anyone was able to cast their vote at one of these voting places, whether they were a student or not.

To support the development and evaluation of the Vote on Campus program, two surveys were designed: the Survey of Campus Electors and the Survey of Campus Administrators. Additionally, a broader survey, the Survey of Special Ballot Voters, served to capture the experiences of different types of special ballot voters, including campus voters. This report pertains to the Survey of Campus Electors. This is the first time that an online survey of campus electors, both voters and non-voters, has been conducted by reaching students through direct contact with post-secondary institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Campus electors are individuals who had the opportunity to vote at a post-secondary institution as part of the Vote on Campus program in the 2019 general election. For the purpose of this survey, the target audience was students of those post-secondary institutions. While staff and other electors were permitted to take this survey, the majority of respondents were students.

The Survey of Campus Electors was designed for the purpose of collecting campus electors' opinions, attitudes and experiences in relation to the Vote on Campus program during the 2019 federal general election. Its results will be used to inform future Elections Canada programs and services as they relate to campus electors, and for evaluation purposes.

The survey included questions around the following themes:

- Awareness of the opportunity to vote on campus and sources of information
- Voting method used
- Reasons for not voting at the campus office
- Awareness of the opportunity to vote on campus and sources of information
- Socio-demographic information and level of political interest

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<sup>1</sup> In 2015, an exit survey of campus voters was conducted. A separate online survey was distributed to students through student associations, but it yielded a low sample size. The 2015 report for voting at select campuses, Friendship Centres and community centres for the 42nd general election is available [here](#).

## Methodology

The experiences of campus electors were evaluated using an online survey.

To distribute the survey, Elections Canada first produced an list of email addresses of campus representatives for each post-secondary institution that had participated in Vote on Campus. Campus representatives were individuals at these institutions who had direct lines of contact with the student population. Of the 109 institutions that had participated, Elections Canada collected contact information for 103 campus representatives.

Elections Canada contacted these representatives by email and asked them to distribute the survey link to campus electors (both voters and non-voters) at their respective post-secondary institutions. While the primary intended respondents for this survey were students, staff, faculty, and other non-students were also able to complete it. This was a non-random sample; therefore, no margins of error are applicable, and it is not generalizable to the general population. The survey was in field from October 16 until October 30, 2019.

A total of 12,097 surveys were completed, from 40 institutions, and at least 10 surveys were completed for each post-secondary institution. The survey took respondents an average of 3.2 minutes to complete. The results of this survey have not been weighted.

To read the full Methodological Report, containing details of the research sample, fieldwork, data management and other relevant information, click [here](#).

## Key Findings

- The majority of respondents (62%) indicated that they were aware of the option to vote on campus.
  - Electors who resided on campus were more likely to be aware of the option to vote on campus (74%) compared with electors who lived off campus with their parents or guardians (65%) and electors who lived off campus on their own (59%).
- Approximately one-fifth (22%) of respondents who were aware of the option to vote on campus indicated that they were made aware by Elections Canada posters. This was the largest response category.
- The majority of respondents (87%) indicated that they had voted in 2019.
- Among voters who were aware of the option to vote on campus:
  - Nearly four in 10 (37%) said that they had voted on campus as part of the Vote on Campus program.
  - Over one-third (35%) indicated that they had voted at a regular poll on election day.
  - Nearly one-quarter (23%) said that they had voted at an advance poll.
- Of those who had not voted on campus, the most common reason provided was that they had preferred to vote in their home riding (35%).
- While approximately one-fifth (18%) of respondents said that they would not have voted if campus voting had not been available, nearly a third of these individuals (30%) lived on campus compared with those that lived off campus without parents or guardians (18%) or with parents or guardians (9%).

## Notes to the Reader

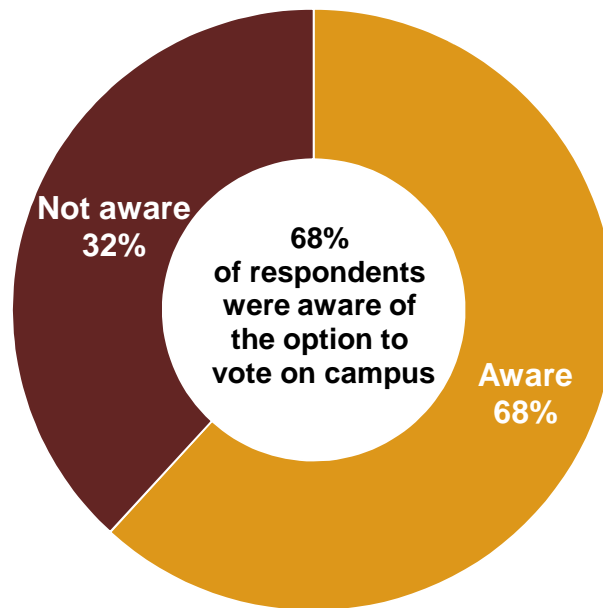
1. While students were the primary target audience for this survey, staff and other respondents were able to take the survey as well. Nearly all (97%) respondents who completed this survey identified as a student, while 2% identified as an employee of a post-secondary institution, and 1% identified as neither a student nor a staff member.
2. Certain questions allowed respondents to select multiple responses; these questions included a note to that effect.
3. The results for the proportion of respondents in the sample who either said "don't know" or did not provide a response may not be shown.
4. The results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
5. Comparisons reported among socio-demographic groups are meaningful because they have a statistically significant relationship at the 95% confidence level.

## Detailed Findings

### Awareness Levels

All respondents (100%) said that they were aware that a federal general election was taking place and that election day was on October 21, 2019.<sup>2</sup> The majority (68%) indicated that they were aware of the option to vote on campus.

#### Awareness of option to vote on campus<sup>3</sup>



#### Age

Electors aged 18 to 20 were more likely to be aware of the option to vote on campus (72%) compared with an older age group, such as those aged 25 to 34 (61%).

#### Place of residence

Electors who resided on campus were more likely to be aware of the option to vote on campus (79%) compared with electors who lived off campus with their parents or guardians (68%) or on their own (66%).

<sup>2</sup> Q1ab. Were you aware that there is a federal general election taking place now/that a federal general election recently took place, with election day on October 21, 2019? Base:  $n = 12,098$ : all respondents.

<sup>3</sup> Q13. Were you aware that you could vote on campus between October 5 and 9, 2019? Base  $n = 12,098$ : all respondents. New variables were created to combine those who had voted on campus (any type of poll), those who indicated being aware of the opportunity to vote on campus and non-voters (those who indicated that they had planned to vote on campus but had not voted).



## Interest in politics

Over two-thirds (73%) of respondents who were very interested in politics were aware of the opportunity to vote on campus, compared with those who were not at all interested in politics (53%).

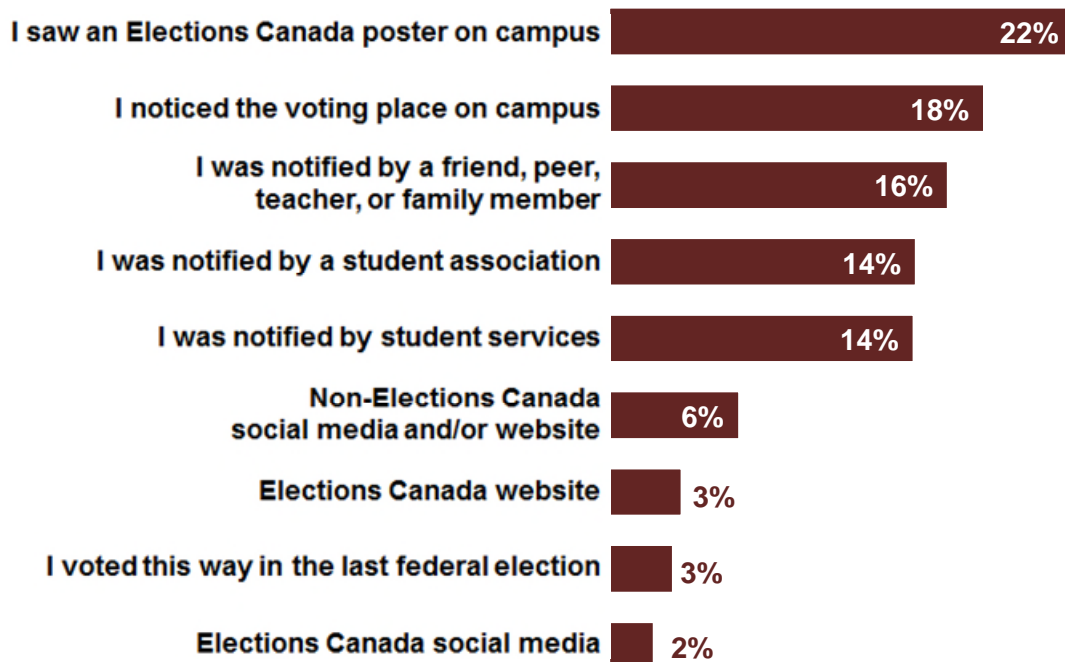
## Voted in 2015

Respondents who had voted in the 2015 general election were more likely to have been aware of the opportunity to vote on campus (65%) when compared with electors who had not voted (56%).

## Knowledge about voting on campus

Approximately one-fifth (22%) of respondents who were aware of the option to vote on campus indicated that they had been made aware by Elections Canada posters. Noticing the voting place on campus (18%); being notified by a friend, peer, teacher or family member (16%); being notified by a student association (14%); and being notified by student services (14%) were other sources of information that were frequently cited.

## Sources of information about option to vote on campus<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Q14. How did you know that voting was offered on campus? Base  $n = 8,610$ : respondents who were aware of the option to vote on campus.

**Age**

Younger respondents, aged 18 to 20, were more likely to have learned about voting on campus by seeing an Elections Canada poster on campus (46%) compared with those aged 25 to 34 (36%).

Elections Canada social media was identified more often as the source of information for knowing about voting on campus for those aged 18 to 20 (5%) and 21 to 24 (4%) compared with those aged 25 to 34 (2%) and 35 to 54 (2%).

Non-Elections Canada social media was a method more frequently cited as a source of information by those aged 18 to 20 (12%) and 21 to 24 (12%) than those aged 35 to 54 (11%) and 25 to 34 (10%).

Younger respondents, aged 18 to 20 and 21 to 24, were more likely to have heard about voting on campus through a student association (31% and 28%, respectively) compared with those aged 25 to 34 (24%).

Being notified by student services was also a method more frequently cited by those aged 18 to 20 (30%) and 21 to 24 (27%) than those aged 25 to 34 (24%).

**Place of residence**

Respondents who resided on campus (36%) were more likely to have been notified about voting on campus by a friend, peer, teacher or family member compared with those who resided off campus with their parents or guardians (28%) or on their own (31%). Campus dwellers were also more likely to have been notified by a student association (42%) compared with electors who resided off campus alone (27%) or off campus with parents or guardians (22%).

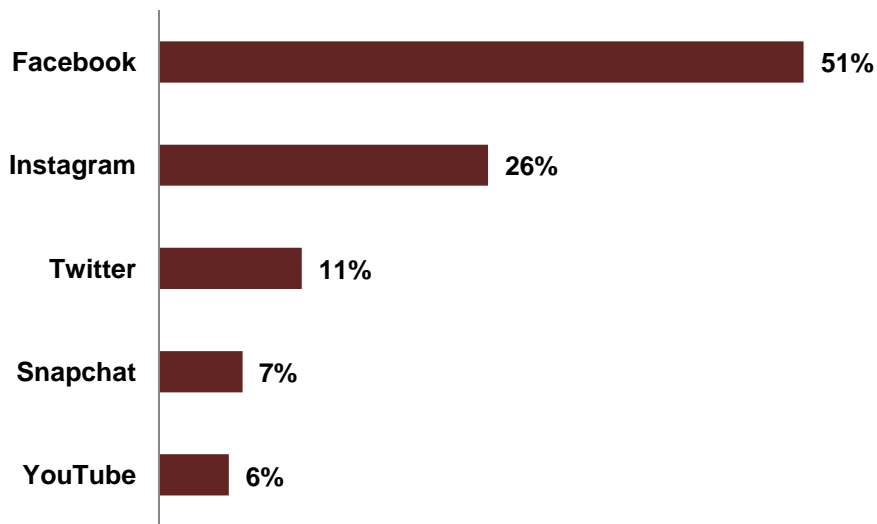
**Functional disability**

Respondents who identified as having a disability were more likely to have been notified by a student association (32%) about the option to vote on campus compared with respondents who did not (26%).

## Elections Canada social media use

Among respondents who identified Elections Canada's social media accounts as a source of information for learning about voting on campus, about half (51%) said that Facebook was the source that they used. Approximately one-quarter (26%) of these respondents identified Elections Canada's Instagram account as the source of information that they used.

### Elections Canada social media platforms where voting on campus was noticed<sup>5</sup>



### Age

Respondents who were 21 to 24 years old were more likely to have noticed the option to vote on campus through Elections Canada's Facebook account (83%) compared with the younger cohort of those aged 18 to 20 (72%).

Respondents aged 18 to 20 were much more likely to have noticed the option to vote on campus through Elections Canada's Instagram account (53%) compared with the older age cohort of those 21 to 24 years old (35%).

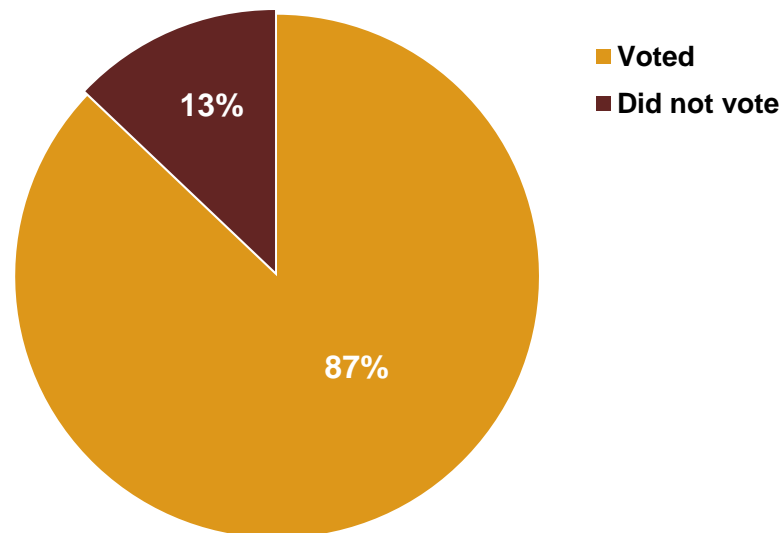
<sup>5</sup> Q15. On which of the following Elections Canada social media accounts did you notice the promotion of voting on campus? Multiple response option. Base:  $n = 471$ : responses for those who noticed the promotion of voting on campus through Elections Canada's social media accounts.

## Voting Status

### Voted in 2019 general election

The majority of respondents (87%) indicated that they had voted in 2019;<sup>6</sup> 13% indicated that they had not voted. A small proportion – 8% – of those who had not voted indicated that they had not yet voted but planned to.<sup>7</sup> Another small proportion (5%) of respondents claimed that they did not plan to vote.

### Voted in 2019<sup>8</sup>



### Age

Older individuals were most likely to say that they had voted in the 2019 general election, with 98% of those aged 55 to 74 indicating that they had voted. Conversely, respondents aged 18 to 20 were the least likely to say that they had voted (84%).

### Disability

Respondents who identified as having a functional disability were less likely to say that they had voted (84%) compared with those who had not (88%). Individuals with a functional disability were more likely to indicate that they had not voted (10%) compared with those without a disability (7%).

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<sup>6</sup> Surveys tend to overestimate voter turnout figures due to a combination of the social desirability effect and sampling bias. In this survey, respondents were self-selected; therefore, there is an increased likelihood that those who completed the survey were voters; this contributes to potential sampling bias.

<sup>7</sup> For Q1 and Q6, two variations of questions were asked, one between October 16 and 21, and the other between October 22 and 30, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Q6ab. Have you already voted/did you vote in the 2019 federal general election? Base  $n = 12,067$ : respondents who were aware of the 2019 general election.

**Education**

Those who claimed a higher education level were more likely to say that they had voted; 91% of those who had completed university or college indicated that they had voted compared with those with some post-secondary or college (86%) and those with high school or less (78%). Respondents who had completed high school or less were much more likely to indicate that they had not voted (13%) compared with those with some post-secondary or college (9%) and those who had completed university or college (4%).

**Place of residence**

Those who lived off campus with their parents or guardians were less likely to indicate that they had voted (84%) compared with those who lived on campus (89%) and those who lived off campus without parents or guardians (88%).

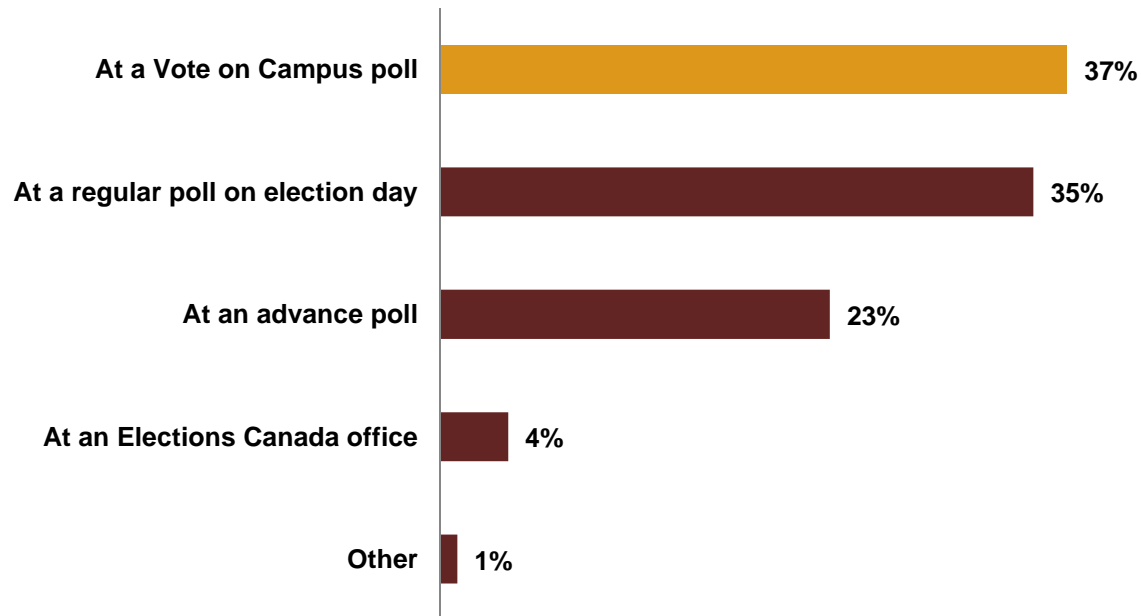
**Indigenous status**

Indigenous respondents were less likely to say that they had voted in the 2019 federal election (75%) compared with non-Indigenous respondents (88%).

## Voting method used for those who were aware of Vote on Campus

Of voters who were aware that voting on campus was an option, approximately one-third (35%) indicated that they had voted at a regular poll on election day. Nearly one-quarter (23%) said that they had voted at an advance poll,<sup>9</sup> and 37% said that they had voted on campus as part of the Vote on Campus program.<sup>10</sup>

### Voting method used among all voters who were aware of the option to vote on campus<sup>11</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Those who were included in the “at an advance poll” category consisted of:

- Q12 = “at an advance poll”; or
- Those who indicated that they had voted on campus but during the advance poll days (October 11–14, 2019).

<sup>10</sup> A respondent was considered to have voted at a Vote on Campus office if:

- Q8a/Q8b/Q8c = “Yes” (Question: Was the respondent a campus ESP voter? Base  $n = 12,067$ : all respondents); and
- Q10 = “Between Saturday, October 5 and Wednesday, October 9, 2019” (Question: When did you cast your vote?)

<sup>11</sup> This graph consists of the following responses:

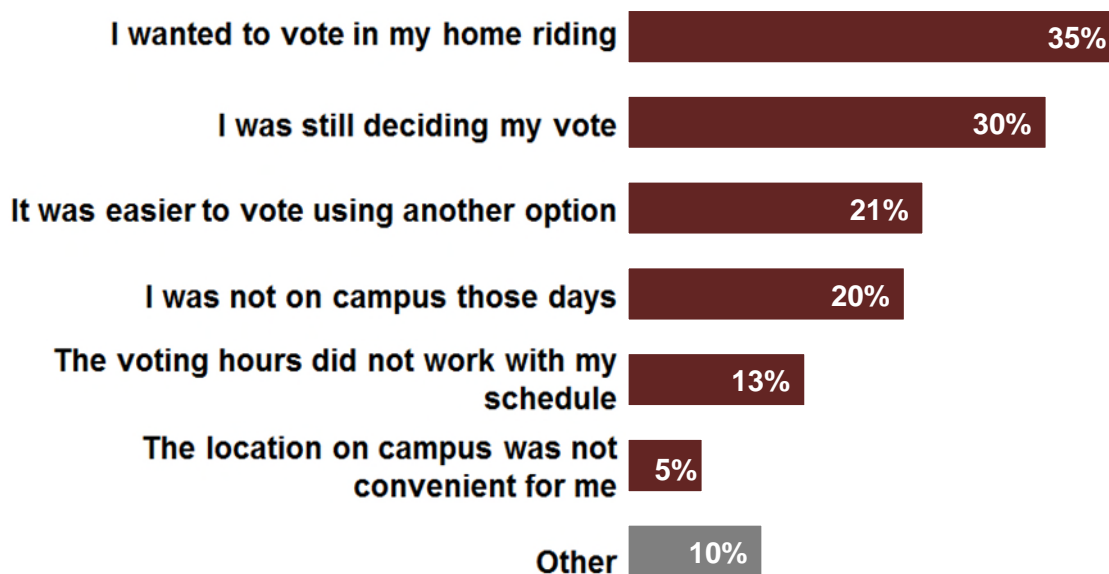
- Q12. Where or how did you cast your vote? Base  $n = 7,239$ : respondents who had voted but not on campus.
- Vote on Campus variable (see note 8 above).
- Q13. Were you aware that you could vote on campus between October 5 and 9, 2019? Base  $n = 12,098$ : all respondents. New variables were created to combine those who had voted on campus (any type of poll), those who indicated being aware of the opportunity to vote on campus and non-voters (those who indicated that they had planned to vote on campus but had not voted).
- Total combined base for this graph:  $n = 7,264$ : respondents who were aware of the option to vote on campus and voted in 2019.

## Reasons for not voting on campus

Among those who were aware of the option to vote on campus but had not voted,<sup>12</sup> the most frequently cited reason was that they had wanted to vote in their home riding (35%). Another commonly cited reason was that they were still deciding how to vote when voting on campus was occurring, from October 5 to 9 (30%).

One-tenth (10%) of responses made up the “Other” category, which included reasons such as long wait times, too busy, forgot, wanted to vote on election day, difficulty finding the voting place on campus, already voted and wanted to vote with a family member or friend.

### Reasons for not voting on campus<sup>13</sup>



### Functional disability

Respondents with a functional disability were more likely to say that they had not voted on campus because the voting hours did not work with their schedule (16%) compared with those without a disability (12%).

### Indigenous status

Indigenous respondents were more likely to say that they had not voted on campus because they had wanted to vote in their home riding (46%) compared with non-Indigenous individuals (35%). Non-Indigenous respondents were also more likely to say that they had not voted because they were not on campus on the voting days (20%) compared with Indigenous respondents (13%).

<sup>12</sup> This includes individuals who had voted off campus and those who had not yet voted but planned to vote on campus.

<sup>13</sup> Q16. Why did you choose not to vote on campus? Base  $n = 4,723$ : respondents who had voted off campus and were aware of the option to vote on campus or those who had not yet voted but planned to vote on campus. Multiple responses accepted.

**Place of residence**

Those who lived off campus without parents or guardians were more likely to say that they had not voted on campus because they were not on campus on the voting days (25%) compared with those who lived off campus with parents or guardians (15%) as well as those who lived on campus (9%).

Respondents who lived on campus were most likely to say that they had not voted on campus because they had wanted to vote in their home riding (54%) compared with those who lived off campus with parents or guardians (37%) or without parents or guardians (31%).

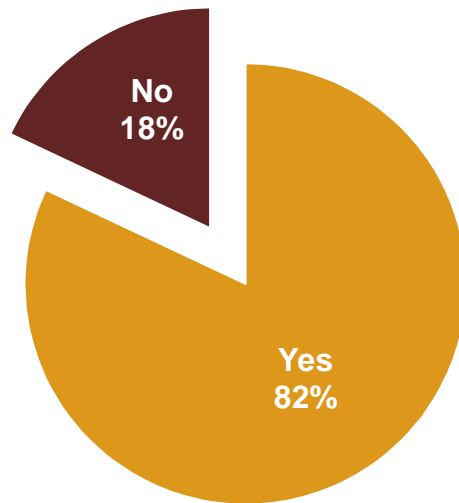
Those who lived off campus with their parents or guardians were more likely to say that they had not voted on campus because they were still deciding how to vote (37%) compared with those who lived off campus without their parents or guardians (26%) or on campus (23%).



### Likelihood of voting without campus office

Less than one-fifth of respondents (18%) said that if voting on campus had not been available, they would not have voted at all.

### Likelihood of voting without campus office<sup>14</sup>



### Age

Respondents aged 18 to 20 and 21 to 24 were more likely to say that they would not have voted at all if voting on campus had not been available (21% and 18%, respectively) when compared with respondents aged 35 to 54 (7%).

### Place of residence

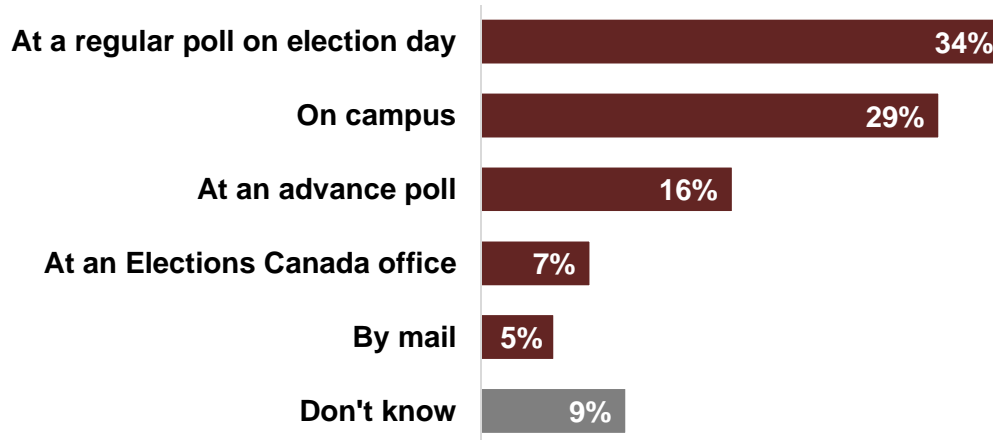
Respondents who lived on campus were most likely to say that they would not have voted at all if voting on campus had not been available (30%) compared with those who lived off campus without parents or guardians (18%) or off campus with parents or guardians (9%).

<sup>14</sup> Q11. If voting on campus were not available, do you think you would have voted otherwise? Base  $n = 2,851$ : respondents who had voted on campus.

## Preferred voting method for non-voters

Among respondents who had planned to vote but did not, nearly one-third (34%) indicated that they would have voted at a regular poll on election day, while nearly another third (29%) indicated that they would have voted on campus.

### Preferred voting method for non-voters<sup>15</sup>



### Functional disability

Individuals with a functional disability were more likely to say that had they voted, they would have done so on campus (40%) compared with those without a functional disability (27%).

### Place of residence

Those who lived off campus with parents or guardians were most likely to say that they would have voted at a regular poll on election day (45%) compared with those who lived off campus without parents or guardians (32%) and those who lived on campus (25%).

Respondents who lived on campus were most likely to say that they would have voted on campus (55%) compared with those who lived off campus without parents or guardians (27%) or with parents or guardians (21%).

<sup>15</sup> Q7. Where would you have voted? Base  $n = 389$ : respondents who had not voted but had planned to.

## Profile of Survey Respondents

This appendix provides a profile of the respondents who completed the Survey of Campus Electors.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage, %
Female	8,178	68
Male	3,663	31
Non-binary	78	1
Other	15	1
Prefer not to answer	164	1

Age	Frequency	Percentage, %
18–20	3,830	32
21–24	4,393	36
25–34	2,238	18
35–54	721	6
55–74	88	1
75+	8	0
Prefer not to answer	820	7

Language spoken at home	Frequency	Percentage, %
English	5,393	45
French	6,101	50
Other	517	4
Prefer not to answer	87	1

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage, %
Student	11,740	97
Employee	263	2
Other	95	1

<b>Indigenous</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage, %</b>
Indigenous	433	4
Non-Indigenous	11,530	95
Prefer not to answer	135	1

<b>Functional disability</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage, %</b>
Yes	1,679	14
No	10,052	83
Prefer not to answer	367	3

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage, %</b>
High school or less	1,662	14
Some post-secondary/college	5,328	44
Completed university/college	4,987	41
Other	2	0
Prefer not to answer	119	1

<b>Place of residence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage, %</b>
On campus	1,189	10
Off campus, with my parents or guardians	3,894	34
Off campus, without parents or guardians	6,402	56
Other	7	0

Province	Frequency	Percentage, %
Newfoundland and Labrador	60	1
Prince Edward Island	58	0
Nova Scotia	472	4
New Brunswick	229	2
Quebec	6,842	57
Ontario	783	6
Manitoba	799	7
Saskatchewan	1,205	10
Alberta	1,006	8
British Columbia	618	5
Yukon	6	0
Northwest Territories	5	0
Nunavut	2	0
Prefer not to answer	13	0

Interest in politics	Frequency	Percentage, %
Very interested	3,112	26
Somewhat interested	6,215	52
Not very interested	2,363	20
Not at all interested	354	3
Prefer not to answer	54	1

Voted in 2015	Frequency	Percentage, %
Yes	5,358	80
No	692	10
I was not eligible to vote in 2015	567	8
I can't recall	125	2