



**Liberal Party of Canada
Leadership Debates Rules**

As modified by the Co-Chairs of the Leadership Vote Committee, February 23, 2025

1. **Basis.** These rules are made by the Leadership Vote Committee pursuant to Section 5.1.1 of the Leadership Vote Rules as of the date first noted above. The structure and logistics of the leadership debates were previously approved by the Leadership Vote Committee and communicated to Leadership Contestants on February 8, 2025.
2. **Interpretation.** Capitalized terms used but not otherwise defined herein shall have the meaning given to them in the Leadership Vote Rules. The intention of the Leadership Vote Committee in establishing these rules is to create a format that, as closely as possible, simulates the format of a national federal election debate as established by the Leaders Debate Commission (the “**Commission**”), and they shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with that.
3. **Debates.** There will be two debates hosted by the Liberal Party of Canada in respect of the 2025 Leadership Vote, one in the French language, and one in the English language (collectively, the “**Debates**” and each a “**Debate**”).
4. **Attendance.** Attendance by each Leadership Contestant at (and participation in) each Debate is mandatory, except with the collective consent of the Co-Chairs and the National President. Failure to attend may result in a sanction under the National Leadership Rules, including financial penalties and up to and including disqualification.
5. **Unofficial Debates.** One or more Leadership Contestants may choose to organize a debate other than the Debates, which may be subject to whatever rules as the organizers thereof may establish. Attendance at such an unofficial debate is optional.
6. **Debate Site.** Each Debate will be held in a studio sound stage at the MELS Cité du Cinéma campus located at 1777 Carrie Derick St, Montreal, Quebec. A walk-through opportunity of the location will be made available to each Leadership Contestant prior to the start of the first Debate.
7. **Date and Time.** The French language Debate will be held on Monday, February 24th at 8:00 PM Eastern time for two hours at the studio located at the Debate Site. The English language Debate will be held on Tuesday, February 25th at 8:00 PM Eastern time for two

hours at the studio located at the Debate Site. There will be no commercial breaks during either Debate. Each Leadership Contestant and their teams must arrive by no later than 5:00 PM Eastern time on the day of each Debate.

- 8. Moderator.** There will be one moderator selected by the Party (the “**Moderator**”) for each Debate. The Moderator shall have the authority to manage the flow, timing, speaking order and questions of each Debate. Pierre Jobin is expected to be the Moderator of the French-language Debate. Hannah Thibedeau is expected to be the Moderator of the English-language Debate.
- 9. Language.** The entirety of each Debate shall be conducted in the language of such Debate. No translators shall be provided by the Party and no persons other than the Moderator and the Leadership Contestants shall be allowed on the stage.
- 10. Audience.** There will be no studio audience in attendance at either Debate, other than accredited members of the press, Party staff, officials and agents.
- 11. Format.** Consistent with approach of the Commission, the intent is to follow a simple format “that encourages meaningful exchanges” between the Leadership Contestants, which includes “a number of themes and number of questions within each theme which provide an opportunity for a substantive discussion on policy issues”, and “ensures a natural flow rather than predetermined one-on-ones between (Leadership Contestants)”. Candidates shall be unassisted, and no props or communications or electronic devices or shall be allowed on stage. Leadership Contestants may bring six 8.5” x 11” pages of notes, a pen, and water on stage with them.
- 12. Time Management.** Consistent with approach of the Commission, “there should be overall fairness for the (Leadership Contestants) rather than a strict enforcement of equal time”, and the Moderator shall “have the flexibility to dedicate more time on a theme or question that becomes engaging or needs more clarity”. Strict times will be enforced for opening and closing statements. There will be timers visible to the Moderator and each Leadership Contestant. 90 seconds will be allocated to each Leadership Contestant’s opening statement, and 90 seconds to each Leadership Contestant’s closing statement.
- 13. Themes.** Each Debate will be divided into four themes selected by Party officials on the basis of a questionnaire of Registered Liberals, and a review of electoral polling information related to the upcoming federal election. The list of themes will be provided to each Leadership Contestant not later than Thursday, February 20, 2025.

14. Detailed Time Format. The Moderator will endeavor to manage each Debate in accordance with the following time format (with time noted in minutes below):

- a. Moderator introductions – 1.00
 - b. Opening statements – 1.30 per Leadership Contestant
 - c. For Each Theme – 25.30 in total, comprised of:
 - i. an identical question for each Leadership Contestants from the Moderator. 1.00 per Leadership Contestant
 - ii. a prompt or follow up question from the Moderator to all to initiate open debate 5.00
 - iii. an identical question for each Leadership Contestants from the Moderator. 1.00 per Leadership Contestants
 - iv. a prompt or follow up question from the Moderator to all to initiate open debate 5.00
 - v. in the case of the first theme only, an identical question for each Leadership Contestants from the Moderator. 1.00 per Leadership Contestant
 - vi. a prompt or follow up question from the Moderator to all to initiate open debate 5.00
 - d. Closing statements by Leadership Contestants – 1.30 each
 - e. Moderator Closing and flex time – 8.30
 - f. The Moderator may ask, at their discretion, additional questions in periods of open debate to encourage ongoing substantive discussion. The Moderator may direct a question to a specific Leadership Contestant to ensure balance in the Debate. The Moderator will actively moderate all open discussion. Each Leadership Contestant will be given the chance to speak during each segment.
15. **Scrums.** The Party shall arrange for media scrums of no more than ten minutes with accredited members of the press following each Debate. Participation in the media scrum shall be mandatory. Each Leadership Contestant’s press secretary may direct the scrum.
16. **Logistics.** Each Leadership Contestant will have a green room designated for the use of themselves and their campaign team, and will have access to common areas. Each Leadership Contestant may attend at the Debate Site with up to five campaign team members, one family member, and up to two additional persons for hair and make-up. All

costs associated with all such attendees are to be borne by each Leadership Contestant, and each campaign is responsible for dealing with food and arrangements in their own rooms. Teams, other than spouses / partners, shall be restricted to the green room throughout the Debate, other than two designated people who may be in the media room.

17. **Order and Position.** The position of each Leadership Contestant on the stage, and the order of opening and closing remarks, and the order of participation in the press scrum will be drawn by the Chief Electoral Officer or her designate by lot at a time determined by the Chief Electoral Officer not later than two hours before the Debate. Other questions of order will be determined by the Moderator.

18. **Disputes and Urgent Decisions.** Any disputes that arise on the day of a Debate will be resolved by the Chief Electoral Officer or her designate. The Leadership Vote Committee hereby delegates to the Co-Chairs of the Leadership Vote Committee, in consultation with Party staff and officials, the power to revise any aspect of these rules or make any other determination of the Leadership Vote Committee with respect to the Debates, should they reasonably determine that such amendment is necessary or desirable on or after February 21, 2025.