

## **Voting by Special Voting Rules**

### **Report on the Survey of Special Ballot Voters for the 43rd General Election**

Research Division

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## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background and Objectives.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Notes to the Reader.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Definitions .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Key Findings.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Detailed Findings .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Electoral Information.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Voting Experience .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Reason Unable to Vote by Special Ballot .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix A: Profile of Survey Respondents .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix B: Administrative Compared with Weighted Survey Data .....</b>	<b>27</b>









## Definitions

The following voters are referenced throughout the report:

<b>International mail-in</b>	Voters who reside outside Canada and who received and returned their ballot by mail.
<b>National mail-in</b>	Voters who reside in Canada and received their ballot by mail. This includes those who voted by mail either within or outside their electoral district. The ballot was returned either by mail, on campus or at an EC office.
<b>Elections Canada (EC) office</b>	Voters who received their ballot at an EC office. The ballot was returned either immediately at the EC office, at a later date at the EC office, by mail or on campus.
<b>Campus</b>	Voters who received their ballot on campus. The ballot was returned either immediately on campus, on campus at a later date, by mail or at an EC office.





### **Ease of voting and completing ballot**

- Nearly all (97%) voters found that the voting method that they used had been easy, with 85% finding it very easy to use and 12% finding it somewhat easy.
  - International mail-in voters were less likely to say that using that voting method had been very easy (69%) compared with those who had voted at an EC office (87%) and campus voters (89%).
- Completing the ballot was considered easy for virtually all voters (98%).

### **Satisfaction with voting experience and services**

- Special ballot voters were satisfied with their overall voting experience (94%), with 91% of respondents being very satisfied and 14% of respondents being somewhat satisfied.
  - Of those who did not express satisfaction with their overall voting experience, 6% were dissatisfied, 4% were somewhat dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied.
  - Campus voters were more likely to say that they were very satisfied (91%) compared with international (77%) and national (77%) mail-in voters.
- Nearly all respondents (98%) who had interacted with Elections Canada staff indicated that they were either somewhat or very satisfied with the services provided.

### **Likelihood of recommending special ballot voting to others**

- Nearly all (96%) respondents stated that they were either very or somewhat likely to recommend voting by special ballot to others.

### **Main reason unable to vote**

- Among respondents who had been unable to cast their ballot (4%), the most common reason provided was among mail-in electors, who could not mail in their ballot to Elections Canada by the deadline (33%).

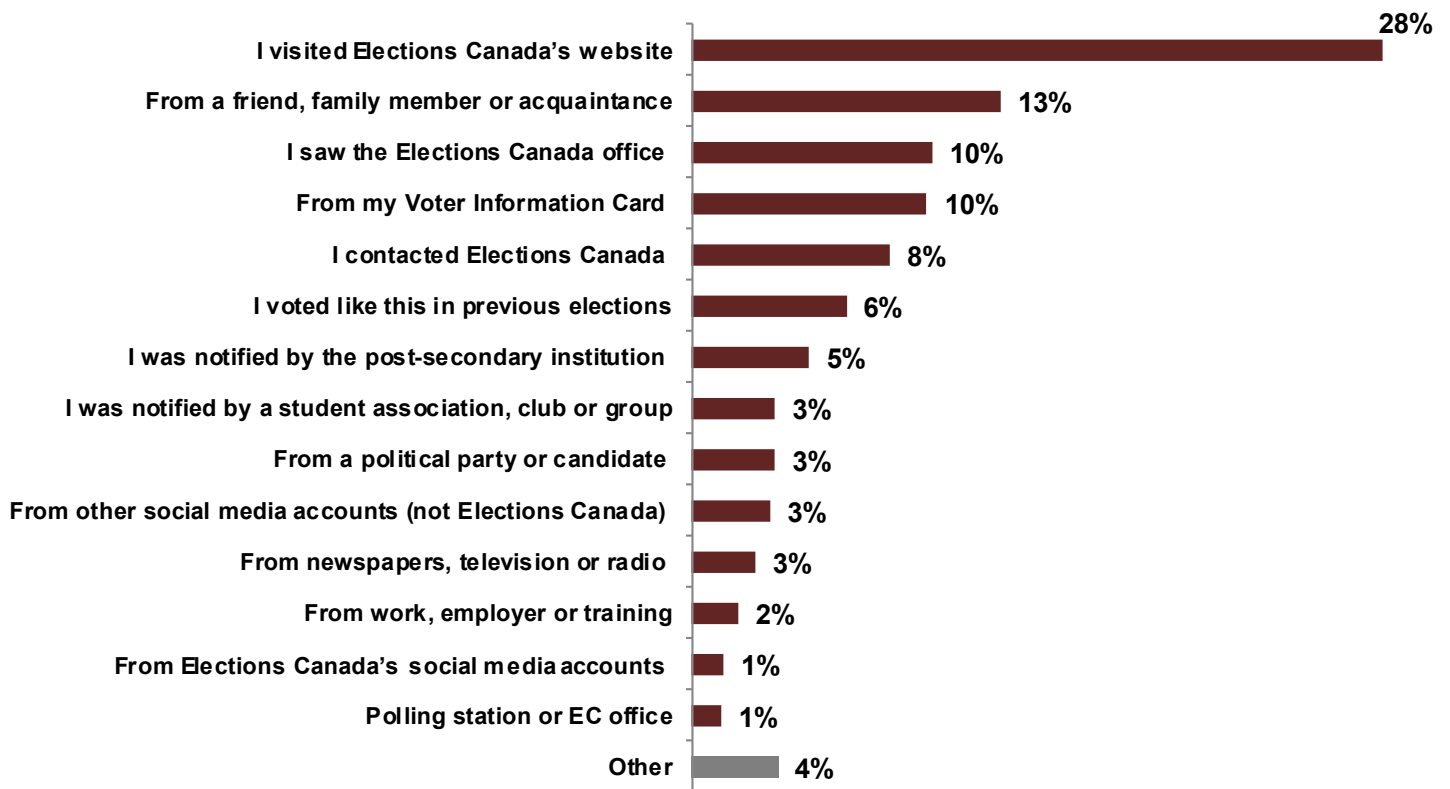
## Detailed Findings

### Electoral Information

#### Sources of information on option to vote by special ballot

Overall, the most common source of information for finding out about the option to vote by special ballot was the Elections Canada website (28%).

#### Sources of information on option to vote by special ballot<sup>2</sup>



For international mail-in voters, the most common sources of information for finding out about the option to vote by special ballot were visiting the Elections Canada website (34%); from a friend, family member or acquaintance (20%); or from non-Elections Canada social media (13%).

The most common sources of information for finding out about the option to vote by special ballot for national mail-in voters were visiting the Elections Canada website (42%) or from a friend, family member or acquaintance (14%).

<sup>2</sup> Q.11–14. How did you find out you could use that voting method? Base:  $n = 3,339$ : voters.

The most common sources of information for finding out about the option to vote by special ballot for EC office voters were visiting the Elections Canada website (32%); from their voter information card (13%); or from a friend, family member or acquaintance (11%).

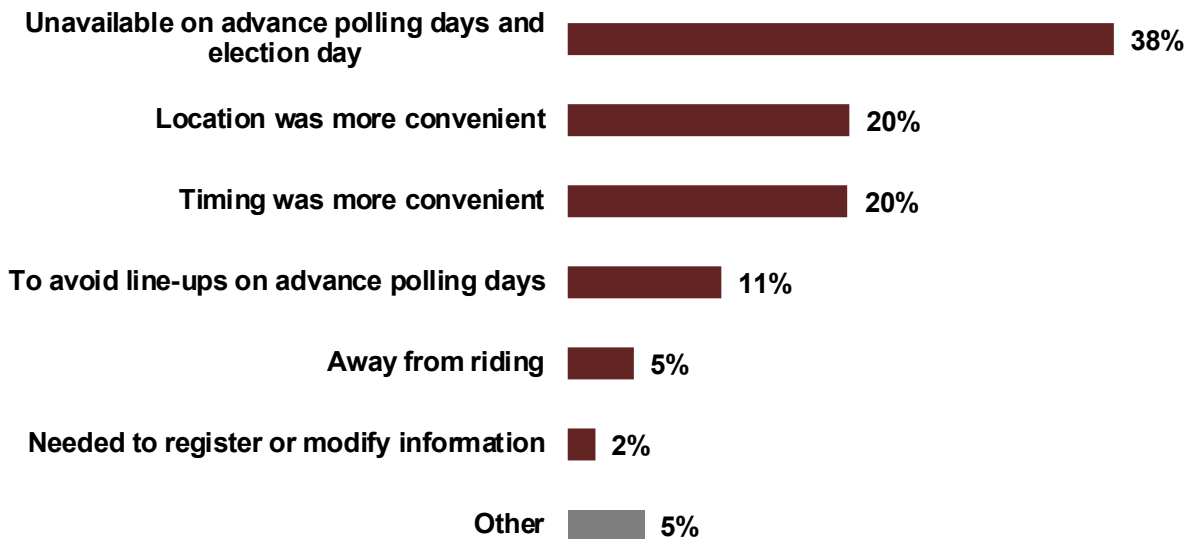
For campus voters, the most common sources of information for finding out about the option to vote by special ballot were being notified by their post-secondary institution (23%); being notified by a student association, club or group (18%); or from a friend, family member or acquaintance (14%).

## Voting Experience

### Reason for voting by special ballot

Almost two in five (38%) respondents indicated that the reason they voted by special ballot was because they were unavailable on advance polling days and election day. Other commonly cited reasons had to do with convenience: either the location (20%) or the timing (20%) was more convenient.

### Reason for voting by special ballot<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Q15. What is the main reason you decided to use that voting method? Base  $n = 1,454$ : asked of national mail-in, EC office and campus voters.

### **Voting method**

National mail-in and EC office voters were more likely to have voted by special ballot due to being unavailable on advance polling days and election day (41% and 46%, respectively) compared with campus voters (7%).

Campus voters were much more likely to have voted by special ballot due to the location being more convenient (62%) compared with EC office voters (9%).

EC office voters were the most likely to have voted using special ballot to avoid line-ups on advance polling days or election day (12%) compared with campus voters (8%) and national mail-in voters (6%).

### **Age**

Younger voters aged 18 to 24 were more likely to state that they had voted by special ballot because the location was more convenient (53%) compared with older age cohorts, such as those aged 25 to 34 (21%), 35 to 54 (13%), 55 to 74 (8%) and over 75 years (5%).

Voters aged 55 to 74 were more likely to have voted by special ballot because they were unavailable during advance polling days (53%) compared with voters aged 35 to 54 (36%), voters aged 25 to 34 (30%) and voters aged 18 to 24 (11%).

### **Education**

Respondents who had completed high school or less, or who had completed some post-secondary or college, were more likely to vote by special ballot due to the location being more convenient (34% and 25%, respectively) compared with respondents who had completed university (12%).

Respondents who had completed some post-secondary or college were more likely to vote by special ballot because the timing was more convenient (25%) compared with those who had completed university (15%).

### **Employment status**

Retired respondents were more likely to vote by special ballot because they were unavailable during advance polling days (55%) compared with respondents who were employed (37%), students (14%) or unemployed (5%).

## Time it took to vote by mail

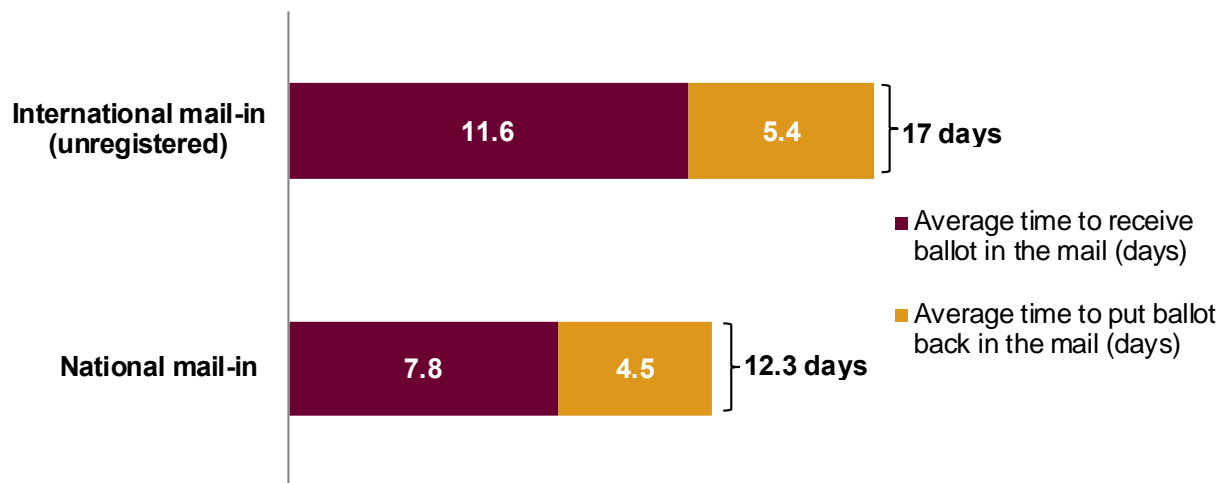
On average, it reportedly took just over one week (7.8 days) for national mail-in voters to receive their ballot in the mail, and it took another 4.5 days to put it back in the mail. In total, this process took almost two weeks (12.3 days).

For international mail-in voters who were not already on the International Register, it reportedly took an average of 11.6 days to receive their ballot in the mail. Then it took another 5.4 days to put the ballot back in the mail. The total process took an average of 17 days. Understandably, this process took, on average, longer than that of national mail-in voters.

For international mail-in voters who were already on the International Register for the 2019 general election, it took them nearly one week (6.8 days), on average, to put their ballot back in the mail once they had received it.<sup>4</sup>

These time frames do not include the time that it took for voters to complete the application documentation or the time it took for Elections Canada to receive the ballot in the mail.

### Mean wait time for receiving ballot and putting it back in the mail<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Q20: Once you received your ballot, how long did it take you to put it back in the mail? Base:  $n = 541$ : international mail-in voters who were already on the International Register. Note: The average time to receive the ballot in the mail for electors on the International Register is not included. This depends on when the ballots were mailed out by Elections Canada and received by electors, which is unknown.

<sup>5</sup> This graph consists of the following questions:

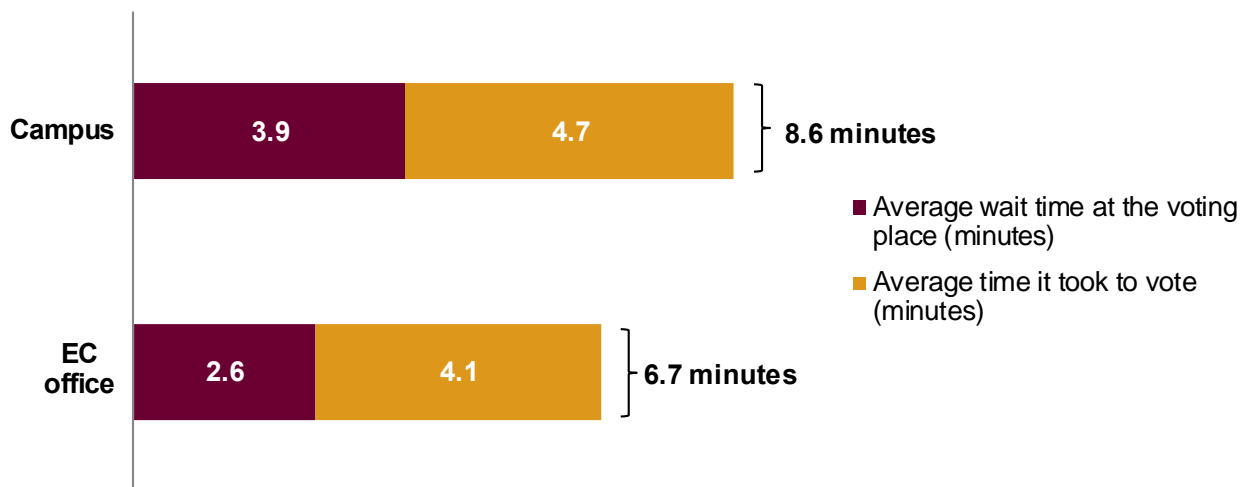
- Q18: Once you submitted the documentation, how long did it take to receive your ballot in the mail? Base:  $n = 1,274$ : national and international mail-in voters.
- Q19: Once you received your ballot, how long did it take you to put it back in the mail? Base:  $n = 1,511$ : national and international mail-in voters.

## Wait time at voting places

On average, campus voters reportedly waited in line at the EC office for 3.9 minutes, and it took 4.7 minutes to complete the ballot and vote. In total, the average reported voting experience for campus voters was 8.6 minutes.

EC office voters reportedly spent, on average, 2.6 minutes waiting in line at the office, followed by 4.1 minutes to complete the ballot and vote. In total, the average reported voting experience for EC office voters was 6.7 minutes, nearly two minutes (1.9) faster than the wait time for campus voters.

### Mean wait time to vote at an EC or campus office<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> This graph consists of the following questions:

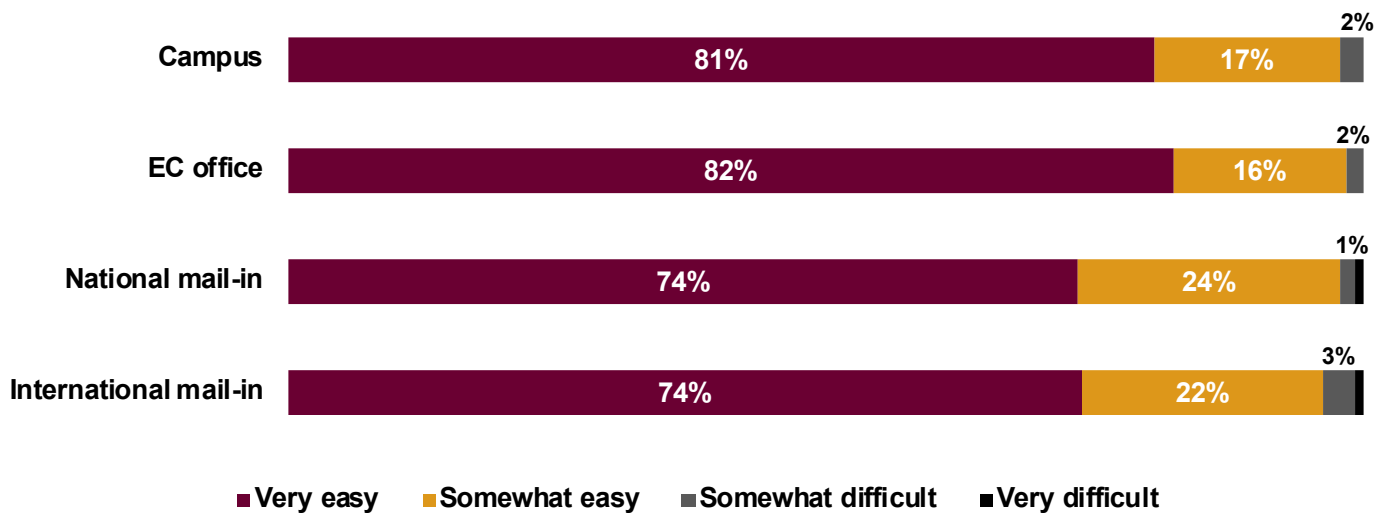
- Q27: Before an election officer began serving you, how long did you wait at the EC office? Base:  $n = 406$ : EC office voters who voted immediately.
- Q28: Once an election officer began serving you, how long did it take to vote? Base:  $n = 421$ : EC office voters who voted immediately.
- Q29: Before an election officer began serving you, how long did you wait at the EC office on campus? Base:  $n = 425$ : campus voters who voted immediately.
- Q30: Once an election officer began serving you, how long did it take to vote? Base:  $n = 439$ : campus voters who voted immediately.

## Ease of completing the ballot

Overall, virtually all voters considered it easy to complete their ballot (98%), claiming that it was either very easy (81%) or somewhat easy (17%).

Ease of completing the ballot remains similar across voting methods. The voters who reportedly faced the most difficulty were international mail-in voters: 4% indicated that completing their ballot was difficult, 3% indicated that it was somewhat difficult, and 1% indicated that it was very difficult.<sup>7</sup>

### Ease of completing the ballot, by voting method<sup>8</sup>



<sup>7</sup> The graph does not display figures less than 1%, which fall into the "Very difficult" category.

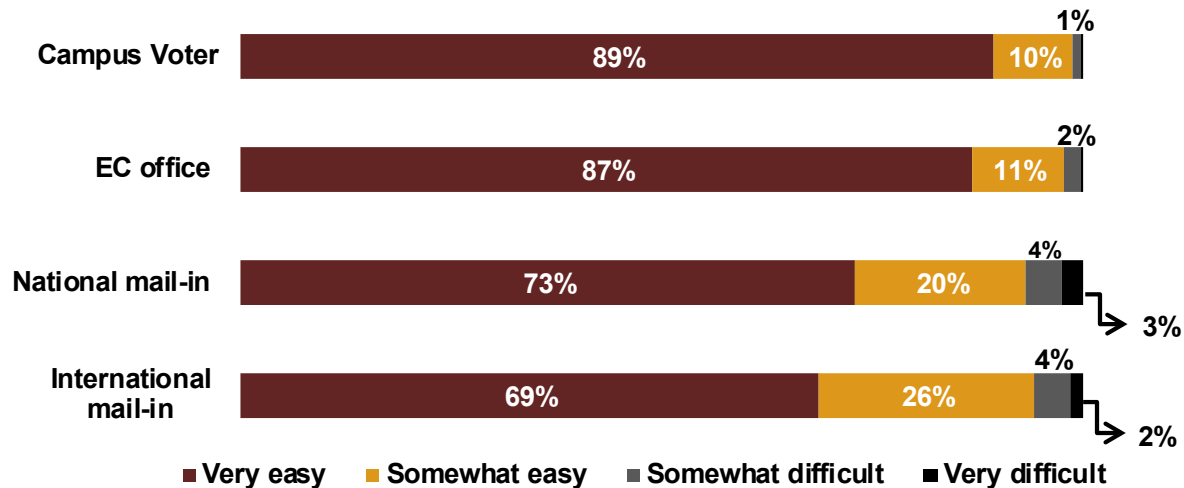
<sup>8</sup> Q58. More specifically, would you say that completing the ballot was ... Base:  $n = 3,339$ : voters.

## Overall ease of voting

Virtually all (97%) voters found that, overall, the special voting method that they used was easy: 85% of voters found it very easy, and 12% found it somewhat easy.

When considering the different voting methods used, ease of voting remained high; however, international mail-in voters were less likely to say that using that voting method was very easy (69%) compared with campus voters (89%) and EC office voters (87%).<sup>9</sup>

### Overall ease of voting, by voting method<sup>10</sup>



## Employment

Retired respondents were more likely to have found that voting by special ballot was very easy (91%) compared with those who were students (83%) or employed (82%).

<sup>9</sup> The graph does not display figures less than 1%, which fall into the “Very difficult” category.

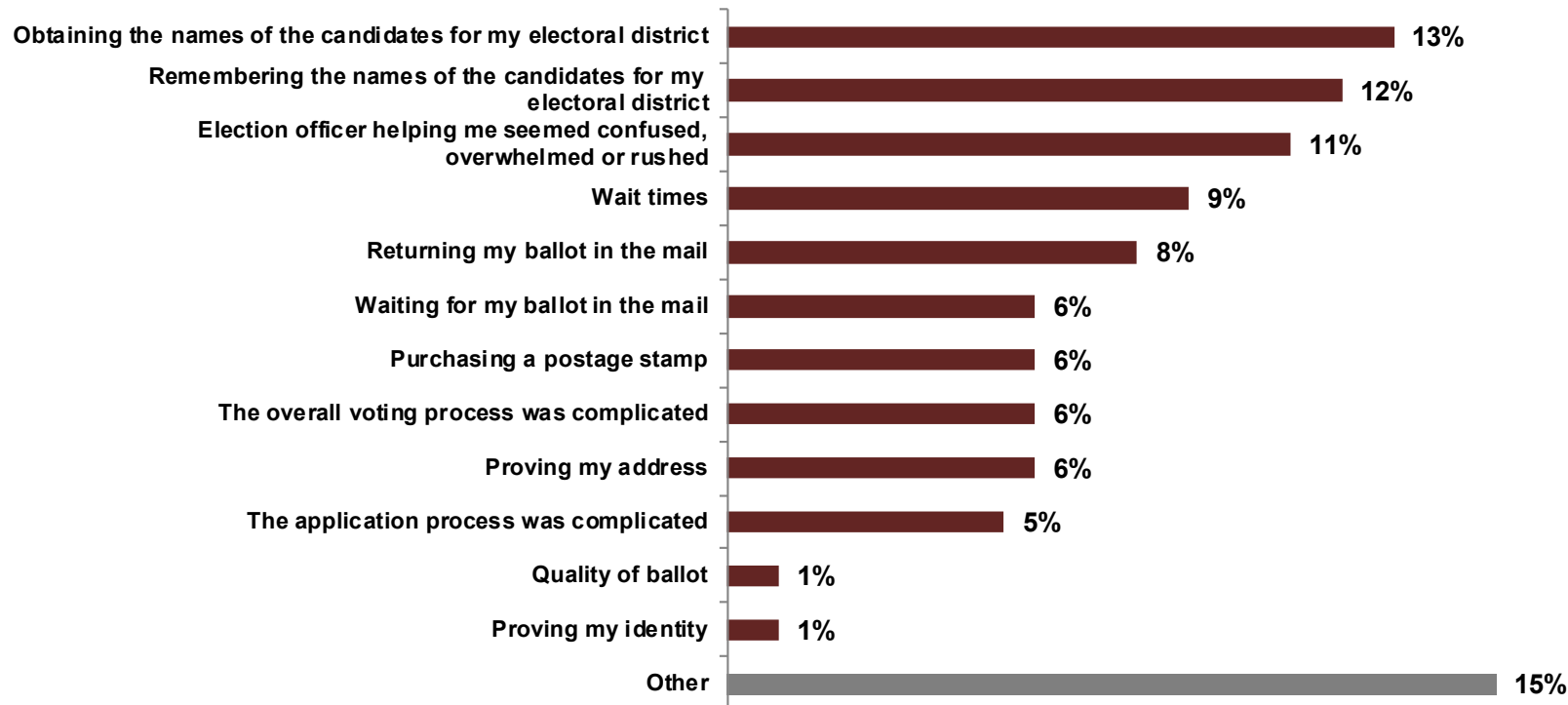
<sup>10</sup> Q52. Overall, would you say that using that voting method was ... Base:  $n = 3,339$ : voters.



## Difficulty with voting method

Among respondents who indicated that using the voting method was difficult, the most common difficulty mentioned was obtaining the names of the candidates (13%), and remembering the names of the candidates (12%), for a given electoral district.

### Difficulties with the voting method used<sup>11</sup>



Among national mail-in voters, the most commonly mentioned difficulties were returning their ballot in the mail (18%), waiting for their ballot in the mail (15%) and purchasing a postage stamp (15%).

Similarly, international mail-in voters most commonly cited the following difficulties: returning their ballot in the mail (20%), waiting for their ballot in the mail (16%) and obtaining the names of the candidates for an electoral district (16%).

For EC office voters, common difficulties included remembering the names of the candidates for an electoral district (16%); obtaining the names of the candidates for an electoral district (15%); the election officer serving the voter seemed confused, overwhelmed or rushed (15%); and wait times (15%).

The difficulties faced by campus voters almost exclusively involved the election officer seeming confused, overwhelmed or rushed (55%); and wait times (13%).

<sup>11</sup> Q53–57. What did you find difficult about the voting method you used? Multiple responses. Base:  $n = 168$ : respondents who said that using the voting method was somewhat or very difficult.

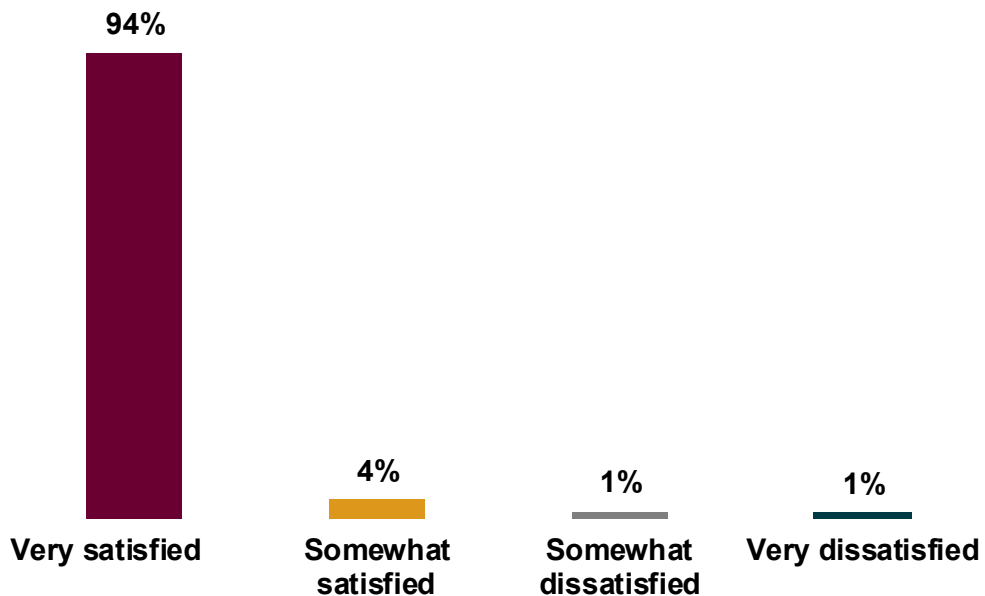
## Satisfaction with services provided by Elections Canada staff when voting

Overall, the survey respondents were satisfied with the services provided to them by election officers. Nearly all respondents (98%) indicated that they were either somewhat or very satisfied with the services provided. Only 2% indicated that they were either somewhat or very dissatisfied with the services provided by Elections Canada staff.

Satisfaction levels across voting method did not differ significantly. Among the EC office voters who were satisfied with the services provided by the election officer, 94% were very satisfied, and 3% were somewhat satisfied.

Among the satisfied respondents who voted on campus, 93% were very satisfied, and 5% were somewhat satisfied.

### Overall satisfaction with services provided by election officer(s)<sup>12</sup>



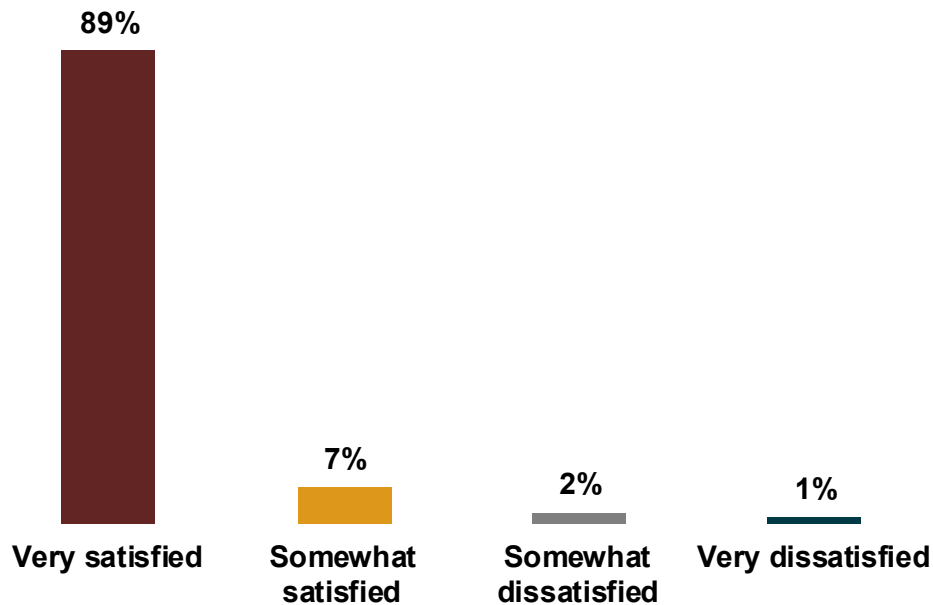
<sup>12</sup> Q62. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services provided by the election officer(s)? Base:  $n = 1,136$ : respondents who interacted with an election officer, either when receiving or when returning their ballot.

## Satisfaction with overall voting experience

Overall, respondents were satisfied with their voting experience (96%), with 89% being very satisfied and 7% somewhat satisfied. Among those who were dissatisfied with their overall voting experience (4%), 2% were somewhat dissatisfied, and 1% were very dissatisfied.<sup>13</sup>

Overall satisfaction levels were similar across voting methods. International mail-in voters (94%), national mail-in voters (92%), EC office voters (97%) and campus voters (98%) were either very or somewhat satisfied with their overall voting experience.

### Overall satisfaction with voting experience<sup>14</sup>



### Voting method

While satisfaction levels were similar across voting method, those who voted on campus were more likely to say that they were very satisfied (91%) compared with both international mail-in (77%) and national mail-in (77%) voters.

<sup>13</sup> Note: due to rounding, figures may not add up to combined categories.

<sup>14</sup> Q61. Overall, how satisfied were you with your voting experience? Base: n = 3,339: voters.





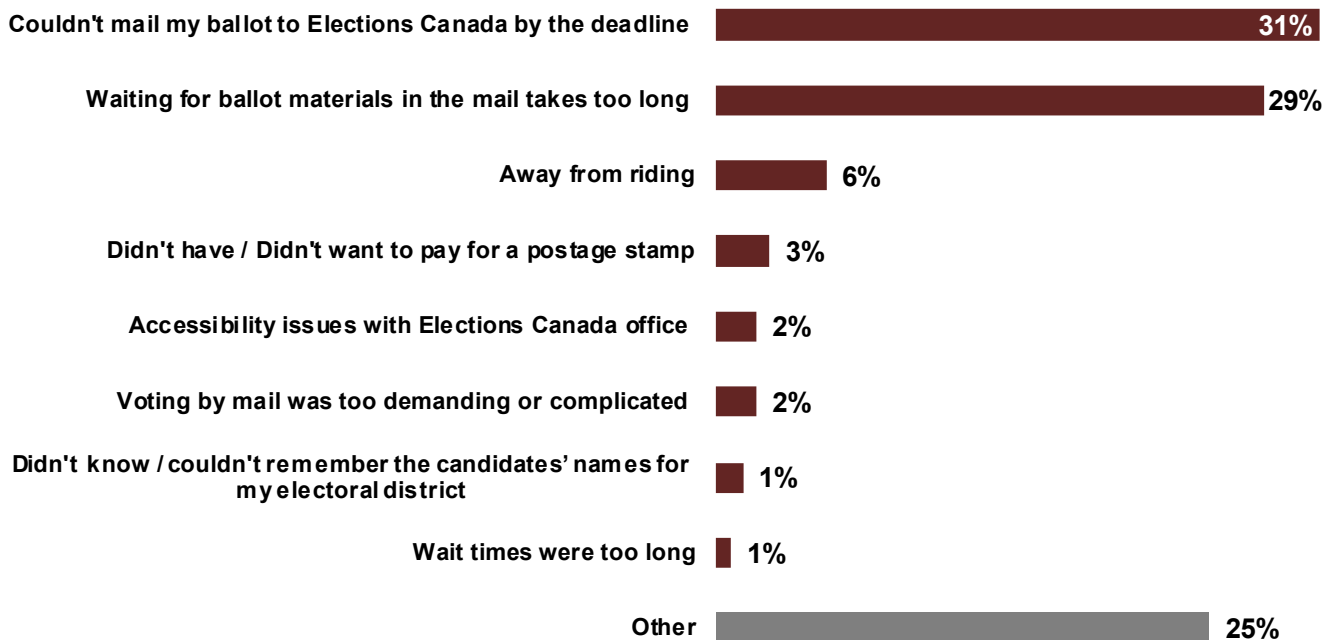




## Reason Unable to Vote by Special Ballot

Of all respondents, only 4% had not successfully returned their ballot. Among those who had been unable to cast their ballot, the most common reason provided for not being able to do so was among national and international mail-in electors, who could not mail in their ballot to Elections Canada by the deadline (33%).

### Main reason unable to vote<sup>20</sup>



<sup>20</sup> Q67–69. What is the main reason you were unable to vote? Base:  $n = 140$ : those who did not return their ballot. The data for these questions are unweighted.







