

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

What follows is a sample constitution as prepared by the SFUO in accordance with Bylaw 9 of the SFUO Constitution. A legend for reading the Constitution appears below:

Anything written in italics: represents a comment by the SFUO on the immediately preceding text. There will be areas in the sample constitution we feel a desire to explain our reasons for setting a certain minimum standard and those explanations will appear in italics immediately following the section in question.

Anything written in plain text: represents those items which must be included as part of the constitution of any club.

Anything written in bold text: represents the header for the following subsections. For example, the article numbers all appear in bold to denote that they are they defer for the sections that follow them.

(Anything written in parentheses): represents a place where we are unable to supply standard information in plain text, as what is required is specific to your club alone.

The following sample constitution will serve as an excellent guideline for new clubs and returning clubs who wish to make changes to their current constitution. Once completed, your proposed constitution must be reviewed and approved by the Clubs Committee.

CONSTITUTION OF (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE)

Article 1 – Name

The club's official name will be "(Insert your club name here)." No other name will be used in the advertisement of representation of the club.

This article is self-explanatory. You must define the exact name of your club that will be used in all official documents.

Article 2 – Club Mandate

(1) List all purposes for which this club will serve:

Outline and describe the planned purpose of your club. It is important that you not define your club too narrowly or too broadly. By this we mean that you should not simply say that: "We want to get students together to have a good time." While this is no doubt a laudable goal, it is much too broad a mandate for us to ratify. Your club needs a more specific reason for existing, but try not to define your club with such a focused precision that you leave no room for growth or different ideas to emerge. What we

recommend is that you give a good, but more general, outline of your club's purpose. When it comes to your club's purpose and mandate, we will hold you to, and sometimes constrain you to, what is written in your constitution.

Article 3 – Membership

- (1) Membership will be open to everyone
- (2) At least 75% of the members of the club are registered students at the University of Ottawa
- (3) All executive members of the club are registered University of Ottawa students

Firstly, club membership will be open to everyone. No club may explicitly or implicitly seek to limit their membership. Secondly, a club is permitted to take in associate members from the community if they so desire. Thirdly, this is a University and not a community at large, and as such we require clubs to restrict executive privileges to current U of O students only.

Article 4 – Executive

- (1) The executive committee shall consist of the following:
 - a. President;
 - b. Vice President/Secretary; and,
 - c. Treasurer.

You are not restricted to an executive consisting of only these listed positions, but these positions represent the minimum requirements. It is highly recommended that you divide the positions of Secretary and Vice-President if you so desire. However, do not include extra positions just for the sake of doing so. Determine what positions you can consolidate and merge. A small and efficient executive can get things done better than a large cumbersome bureaucracy. Also, it is important to note that if you wish to add or get rid of certain executive positions, you must notify the Clubs Coordinator and the Vice-President Student Affairs in writing or could instead face de-certification.

Article 5 – Responsibilities of the Executive

- (1) The President will:
 - a. Oversee the other members of the executive in fulfilling their responsibilities;
 - b. Chair all meetings; and
 - c. Have signing authority for the club
- (2) The Secretary/Vice-Presidents will:

- a. Assist the President in her duties;
- b. Assume all powers of the President in her absence; and,
- c. Be responsible for recording minutes of all meetings.

(3) The Treasurer will:

- a. Be responsible for overseeing all financial dealing of the club
- b. Keep complete records of all financial dealings of the club; and,
- c. Have signing authority for the club.

The above responsibilities represent the minimum duties required of each executive in order to ensure that the club is run smoothly. You may add responsibilities as you see fit and of course if you have added further executive positions, you will have to define duties for each new position.

Article 6 – Meetings

- (1) At least three general meetings shall be held during the school year, including the Annual General Meeting; and,
- (2) Members will be informed of each of these meetings at least seven (7) days in advance.

These are minimum requirements. Do not bother to get more ambitious than this and say that you will hold numerous meetings per year because then you will have to. Simply give the above stated minimum which you need to hold, and try to hold more as time and scheduling permits.

Article 7 – Elections

1. Elections for the executive will take place in March of each year
2. The length of the mandate of executive members is from May 1st to April 30th of the following year.
3. The executive positions will be open to members of the club who are students at the University of Ottawa.
4. Elections will take place during a meeting on a date determined by the executive. This date must be set and conveyed to club members no less than two weeks in advance along with a call for members to submit their candidacy for the available executive positions
5. Candidates for executive positions must convey their interest in a particular position to the current executive no less than one week before the voting date. Candidates also have the opportunity to submit a platform for the position, which will be circulated to club members prior to the vote. In the event that there is nobody contesting the any one of the executive positions in advance of the vote, interested persons may indicate their interest in the position at the elections meeting.

6. During the election, each club member will have one (1) vote for each executive position. This vote will be secret.
7. The President of the club may only vote in the event of a tie.
8. The winner for each position will be the candidate with the greatest number of votes. In the case of a tie, the President shall cast the deciding vote.

*Please see the SFUO 2010-2011 Constitution for further details.
All club elections must abide by the policies set out in these procedures.*

Article 8 – Amendments

- (1) Amendments to the constitution must win a two-thirds majority vote of the present members; and
- (2) An amendment to the constitution must be approved by the SFUO Clubs Committee, which must be presented with a typed copy of the proposed amendment as well as typed minutes from the meeting when the amendment was passed in order to prove that the amendment was passed.

The Clubs Committee may decertify a club should it fail to notify the Vice President of Student Affairs, in writing, of any changes to its constitution or to its executive.

Article 9 – Impeachment

- (1) Any member of the club who commits an act negatively affecting the interests of the club and its members may be given notice of impeachment;
- (2) The impeached individual shall have the right to defend her actions; and,
- (3) A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present will result in the removal of the impeached individual from the club and the loss of any privileges associated with the club.

It is best to include impeachment procedures such as those outlined above. You will probably never use the impeachment procedures. In the end, you will be glad that you included this part in your constitution.

Article 10 – Finances

- (1) The executive will set a membership fee annually.

It is not necessary to define how much you will charge in your constitution. It will limit your club later when you want to raise the annual fee and have to go through a whole constitutional amendment process just to do so. Instead, say that you will be collecting a certain fee and that the executive will determine this fee.

Article 11 – Refund Policy

(1) Initiating a refund policy for club members which is to include the following format and minimum standard:

- i. A member may apply to her club for a refund within one (1) month of becoming a member of the club, or within one (1) week of the club's first official event if:
 - a. There has been a misinterpretation of the club's mandate and proposed activities as specified of the member when signing onto the club.
- ii. A member may only apply to her club for a refund after one (1) month of signing up for membership for the club, or after one (1) week of the club's first official event for extenuating circumstances.
 - a. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to: Serious organizational issues with the club executive that led to a complete lack of communication to its members, or lack of programming as promoted to its members; and,

Any circumstances that seriously hampers the ability for the club member to enjoy its membership to the club.
 - b. Where a club and its members cannot resolve the refund issue, a club or the member may request assistance from the Clubs Coordinator who will act as a mediator between the Club and the member to reach a resolution.

Article 12 – Agency Clause

(1) The (Insert your club name here) is not an agent of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa and its views and actions do not represent those of the SFUO.

This is required exactly as stated above.