

# CONSTITUTION GUIDELINES FOR UT AUSTIN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## Constitution Overview

Student organizations at UT Austin are required to create and maintain a constitution. Student Activities has created these guidelines for student organization constitutions that will help you in the creation of a constitution for your student organization.

### **Purpose of a Constitution**

A constitution contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution establishes a foundation upon which an organization operates. The constitution provides details on the procedures and processes to aid the organization in functioning in an effective and efficient manner.

### **Constitution Review**

Each time new officers are elected, the constitution should be reviewed. This helps to ensure it is up to date and serving the needs of the organization. When a constitution is clear, concise and followed, the organization will operate more efficiently. This will allow it to grow and develop in a successful manner.

### **Creation of a Constitution**

The constitution should be tailored to your organization's specific needs. It should also be written to ensure all members and activities are in accordance with University policy. Below is a checklist of recommended areas to include in the constitution. The second page of this document lists recommended information that could be included in your student organizations constitution. The third page provides a constitution template.

## Constitution Checklist

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title – Title of Constitution            | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 5 – Meetings           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preamble – Organization Overview         | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 6 – University Advisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 1 – University Compliance        | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 7 – Finances           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 2 – Prohibition of Hazing Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 8 – Elections          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 3 – Membership and Eligibility   | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 9 – Amendments         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article 4 – Officers                     |   |

### **Submission of Constitution**

Newly registered student organizations are required to submit a constitution with their [new student organization application](#). If a constitution is not submitted, your student organization application with UT will be delayed. Current registered student organizations are required to submit a constitution when completing their [annual registration](#).

## **Recommendations for Student Organization Constitutions**

**It is recommended that the following clauses be included in student organization constitutions.**

1. **Statement of University Compliance (in University Compliance section):** This organization is a recognized student organization at The University of Texas at Austin and shall comply with all campus policies as set forth in the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*.
2. **Prohibition of Hazing Policy (in Prohibition of Hazing section):** State law and Sec. 14-103(3) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities* define hazing as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution.
3. **Membership Restriction (in Membership section):** In accordance with Sec. 6-202(a)(2) and Sec. 6-302 of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, this organization restricts membership to students, faculty members, and staff members of the University,
4. **Eligibility of Membership (in Membership section):** In accordance with Sec. 6-202(a)(3) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, this organization may not deny membership on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, except that a registered student organization created primarily for religious purposes may restrict the right to vote or hold office to persons who subscribe to the registered student organization's statement of faith; and a registered student organization may restrict membership based on the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
5. **University Advisor (in University Advisor section):** In accordance with Sec. 6-101 (15) and Sec. 6-101(16) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities and Information on Students' Rights and Responsibilities*, this organization may have a University Advisor who is at least twenty-one years of age, is not enrolled as a student at the University, and serves as either:
  - a. a part-time or full-time employee of the University.
  - b. a representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization.
  - c. serves as either.
    - i. a part-time or full-time employee of the University.
    - ii. a representative of a national organization that is associated with the registered student organization (registered student organizations only).
6. **Constitution Updates (in Amendments section):** All amendments to student organization constitutions should be [uploaded to the documents](#) section of their HornsLink profile within 14 days of approval by its members. It is recommended that the newest document include the date in which it was approved.

**These following procedures are recommended to be included in every student organization constitution. Student organizations should establish guidelines and use language that fit the organization's needs.**

7. **Procedure for Member Removal (in Membership section):** The organization should include a "Membership Removal" section that outlines the procedure in which a member may be removed. The procedure should be clear and concise.
8. **Procedure for Officer Removal (in Officer section):** The organization should include a "Officer Removal" section that outlines the procedure in which an officer may be removed. The procedure should be clear and concise.
9. **Procedure for Constitution Amendments (in Amendments section):** In the "Amendments" section the organization should outline the procedure by which the constitution may be amended.

## **Constitution of [Name of org] at The University of Texas at Austin**

### **PREAMBLE**

[Name of org] is intended to (insert mission, purpose, aims and functions)

### **ARTICLE I – UNIVERSITY COMPLIANCE**

[Insert recommended “Statement of University Compliance” text as listed on page 2 of the Constitution Guidelines for Student Organizations]

### **ARTICLE II – PROHIBITION OF HAZING**

[Insert recommended “Prohibition of Hazing Policy” text as listed on page 2 of the Constitution Guidelines for Student Organizations]

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

[Insert recommended “Membership Restriction” and “Eligibility of Membership” text as listed on page 2 of the Constitution Guidelines for Student Organizations]

[insert limitations, classes of, requirements, dues, procedure for member selection, **and procedure for member removal is strongly recommended.**]

### **Article IV – OFFICERS**

[Insert titles of all officers, duties, responsibilities, requirements, selection process, **and procedure for officer removal is strongly recommended.**]

### **Article V – MEETINGS**

[Insert frequency of normal meetings(in-person/virtual), special meetings, calling meetings, attendance policy, voting]

### **ARTICLE VI - UNIVERSITY ADVISOR**

[Insert recommended “University Advisor” text as listed in the Policies for Student Organization Constitutions page]

[Insert duties, responsibilities, selection process, number of advisors]

**Note:** An advisor is optional for registered student organizations but sponsored student organization are required to have an advisor from their sponsoring department. Advisor should be listed in student organizations HornsLink roster.

### **ARTICLE VII – FINANCES**

[Insert dues amount, collection of dues, who’s in charge of budget, process for requesting and spending funds)

**Note:** Sponsored Student Organizations must have a University account through their sponsoring department and are not allowed to have an off-campus bank account.

### **ARTICE VIII – ELECTIONS**

[Insert when and how elections are held (in-person/virtual), how members are notified of upcoming elections, nomination process, voting process, number of members required to be present, and number of votes required to win]

### **ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS**

**Procedure for Constitution Amendments is strongly recommended** as described on page 2 of the Constitution Guidelines for Student Organizations.

[Insert notification method of proposed amendments to members, vote that is required to ratify an amendment, who can propose an amendment]

[Insert recommended “Constitution Updates” text as listed on page 2 of the Constitution Guidelines for Student Organizations]