

CONSTITUTION GUIDELINES and TEMPLATE FOR UT AUSTIN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student organizations at UT Austin are required to create and maintain a constitution. Student Organizations, in the Office of the Dean of Students, has established standards and 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 provides a foundation upon which an organization operates and contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. Additionally, 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 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 and 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. Attached to this document is a constitution template which can help guide you in drafting your organization's constitution or support your review of your existing constitution. **Highlighted articles and clauses are required to appear in all student organization constitutions.** Unhighlighted articles and clauses are highly recommended for the effective and efficient operation of your organization.

CONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title – Title of Constitution | <input type="checkbox"/> Article IV – Officers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preamble – Organization Overview | <input type="checkbox"/> Article V – Meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article I – University Compliance | <input type="checkbox"/> Article VI – University Advisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article II – Prohibition of Hazing | <input type="checkbox"/> Article VII – Finances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article III – Membership and Eligibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Article VIII – Elections |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Article IX – Amendments |

Submission of Constitution

All student organizations are required to submit a constitution as part of the initial registration application and as part of the annual registration process. If your constitution is not in accordance with these guidelines, your organization will be asked to resubmit an edited constitution and your registration and privileges that come with being a registered student organization with UT may be delayed.

These elements MUST appear in every student organization constitution.

1. **Statement of University Compliance:** 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. **Officer Elections:** The organization is required to include an "Elections" section that outlines the procedure in which an officer may be elected. The procedure should be clear and concise.
3. **Prohibition of Hazing Policy:** State law and Sec. 6-404 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.
4. **Constitution Updates:** In the "Amendments" section the organization should outline the procedure by which the constitution may be amended.

The below procedures are important to include in an effective constitution.

These are RECOMMENDED for you to include.

- **Procedure for Member Removal:** 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.
- **Procedure for Officer Removal:** The organization should include an "Officer Removal" section that outlines the procedure in which an officer may be removed. The procedure should be clear and concise.

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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

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*.

ARTICLE II – PROHIBITION OF HAZING

State law and Sec. 6-404 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.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP & ELIGIBILITY

- Section 1 – Membership Restriction
 - In accordance with Sec. 6-203 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.
- Section 2 – Eligibility of Membership
 - In accordance with Sec. 6-203 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.
- Section 3 – Membership Removal
 - **Procedure for member removal is highly recommended.**

Article IV – OFFICERS

- Section # – Section Title
[Insert titles of all officers, duties, responsibilities, requirements, and selection process.]
- Section # - Officer Removal
 - **Procedure for officer removal is highly recommended.**

Article V – MEETINGS

- Section # - Section Title
[Insert frequency of normal meetings, special meetings, calling meetings, attendance policy, voting]

ARTICLE VI - UNIVERSITY ADVISOR

- Section 1 – University Advisor Policy
 - In accordance with Sec. 6-101 (6) 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 (registered student organizations only).
- Section 2 – Advisor Responsibilities
[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. The advisor should be listed in student organizations HornsLink roster.*

ARTICLE VII – FINANCES

- Section # – Section Title
[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.

ARTICLE VIII – ELECTIONS

- Section # – Section Title
[Insert when and how elections are held, 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]
 - **Election procedure is required.**

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

- Section # – Section Title
[Insert notification method of proposed amendments, vote that is required to ratify an amendment, who can propose an amendment]
 - **Amendment process is required.**
- Section # – Constitution Amendment Submission
 - All amendments or changes to this constitution must be reflected in an updated constitution that must be submitted to Student Organizations in the Office of the Dean of Students within 14 days of its approval.