



Constitutions

Why

A constitution contains the fundamental principles which govern an organization's operation. The development of a constitution will serve to clarify your purpose and delineate your basic operating structure. It will also allow current and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is all about.

When

Each time new officers are elected, the constitution should be reviewed to ensure it is up to date. When a constitution is clear, concise and followed, it will allow an organization to grow and develop because less time is needed to focus on minute details.

What

The constitution should be tailored to your organization's specific needs. In addition, student organization constitutions are drafted to ensure all members and activities are in accordance with University policy, avoiding future conflict. If your constitution is not in accordance with these guidelines, Student Life and Learning will ask you to resubmit a draft that has the proper changes; official registration with IU will be delayed until the proper changes have been made.

Please note the sections in **bold type**, which are required in your constitution, taken from the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (available online at <http://www.iu.edu/~code>).



POLICY: Student Organization Constitutions

All student organizations must create and maintain a constitution.

These clauses MUST appear exactly as written in EVERY student organization constitution

- **Statement of University Compliance:** This organization shall comply with all Indiana University regulations, and local, state and federal laws.
- **Anti-Hazing Policy:** Hazing is strictly prohibited. Hazing shall be defined as any conduct which subjects another person, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, degrade, or intimidate the person as a condition of association with a group or organization, regardless of the person's consent or lack of consent.
- **Personal Gain Clause:** This organization, if raising funds, shall ethically raise and distribute profits from organizational functions to either the organization or to members who provide a service that directly benefits the organization. Individual members may not receive compensation from for-profit companies if acting as a representative of a student organization.

The following clauses may be required based on your organization's activities:

- **Programs Involving Children:** This organization, when working with children, will be aware of and abide by the University's Programs Involving Children (PIC) Policy
- **International Travel:** This organization, when traveling internationally, will coordinate their travel through the Office of Overseas Study

All student organizations are expected to comply with all Indiana University policies and regulations, including the Student Code of Conduct. A complete copy of the Student Code of Conduct is available online at <http://www.iu.edu/~code>. For more information about University Policies, visit <http://policies.iu.edu/policies/categories/index.shtml>.

Violations may result in loss of full or partial student organization benefits and may subject the student organization to the Student Organization Ethics Board process.

For more information about the Student Organization Ethics Board, visit

<http://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-life-learning/student-organizations/ethics-board.shtml>



Sample Constitution

Title

Constitution should be entitled “Constitution of [Official name of the organization]”

Preamble

Should state the full, official name of the organization as well as the purpose, aims and function of the group.

Article I: Membership

State the limitations of membership, if any (maximum or minimum limits).

State the different classes of membership and the requirements for and rights of each class, if any.

State the procedure for selection and revocation of membership. For example: How does the organization admit persons to or remove persons from membership?
Is membership contingent on payment of dues?

Article II: University Compliance

(This must be written EXACTLY as follows):

This organization shall comply with all Indiana University regulations, and local, state and federal laws.

Article III: Executive Officers

State the title of all officers. What are the duties and responsibilities of each?

What are your requirements for executive officers (e.g. GPA, experience)? What other requirements are you looking for in officers?

How long do officers serve? When do they take office? When do they turn over their office? Do past officers have a specific role in the organization?

How are officer vacancies filled? How do officers resign?

Will executive officer meetings be held? How often? Who calls these meetings? If the organization has an advisor, is this person considered an executive officer? How are decisions made at these meetings?

How are officers elected or selected? How may a vacant office be filled?

What is the procedure for removing a person from office?

*Responsibilities to consider:

- Keeping advisor current on organization activities
- Supervising officers and/or committees
- Calling general and Executive meetings
- Presiding in the absence of the President
- Developing meeting agendas



- Taking & distributing meeting minutes
- Maintaining lists of organization members
- Completing required University paperwork
- Setting organization goals (short and long term)
- Developing and maintaining organization budget
- Maintaining records of organization spending
- Re-registering the organization each year

Article IV: Advisor

What are the responsibilities and duties of the advisor? How is an advisor selected by your organization? For how long must an advisor serve? Will you allow more than one advisor?

Article V: Meetings

Are there regular membership meetings? If so, how often are regular meetings held? How are they advertised? Who has the authority to call meetings? Who sets the agenda for meetings? What rules of order are followed? How are emergency or special meetings called? Who has the authority to call these meetings? How are members notified of these emergency/special meetings? How is attendance recorded for meetings (if necessary)?

Article VI: Elections

When and how frequently are elections held? How are people nominated to run for an office? Is voting by secret ballot or open show of hands? What percentage of members must be present and voting for a candidate to be elected? By what means and how far in advance will membership be notified of an upcoming election?

Article VII: Non-Hazing

(This section **MUST** be written exactly as follows):

Hazing is strictly prohibited. Hazing shall be defined as any conduct which subjects another person, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, degrade, or intimidate the person as a condition of association with a group or organization, regardless of the person's consent or lack of consent.

Article VIII: Dues & Budgets

Are dues charged by the organization for membership? If so, how is the amount determined? How often are dues collected? What happens to members who haven't paid dues by the deadline? Who collects dues? Who creates and maintains the group's budget? How often is the budget revised?



Article IX: Finances

Who is in charge of financial affairs?

Will the organization be applying for or maintaining a Student Organization Account? State accordance with the Student Organization Accounts office policies and procedures.

If the group is not planning on holding a Student Organization Account, what type of financial maintenance will the group utilize?

What happens to the remaining money if the group dissolves?

Article X: Personal Gain Clause

(This section MUST be written exactly as follows):

This organization, if raising funds, shall ethically raise and distribute profits from organizational functions to either the organization or to members who provide a service that directly benefits the organization. Individual members may not receive compensation from for-profit companies if acting as a representative of a student organization.

Article XI: Amendments

How will all eligible voting members be notified of proposed amendments (e.g. announcements at meetings, email, posting etc.)?

What vote is required to ratify an amendment (e.g. 2/3 or 3/4 of total or present members)?

Article XII: Ratification

If more than a majority of those present is desired to ratify this constitution, then this article must be included.

The following Articles should be included if they apply to your organizations and its activities:

Article **: Programs Involving Children

This organization, when working with children will be aware of and abide by the University's Programs Involving Children (PIC) Policy.

Article **: International Travel

This organization, when traveling internationally, will coordinate their travel through the Office of Overseas Study.