The My Home Constitution Work Kit

With all of the procedural clarity of a store-bought constitution, from the comfort of your own home!
You and Your Constitution

You’ve decided to embark on the exciting journey of writing your very own constitution! Get excited; you’re joining the ranks of famous framers like John Adams, Charles de Talleyrand, and Cyril Ramaphosa. It might seem like a daunting prospect, but don’t worry. The My Home Constitution Kit is here to guide you through the whole process.

The Details

This document contains a ready-made constitution for your student group. All you have to do is add some fresh phrases and personalize it for your needs!

The following items must be considered and added before you can use this constitution:

- Page 3: Your student group name.
- Page 3: Your group’s summary, mission statement, and reason for existence.
- Pages 3 and 4: Your group’s registration level and corresponding membership ratios.
- Page 3: Your group’s objectives and goals.
- Page 3: The method by which a student becomes a member of your group.
- Page 5: The method of announcing candidacy.
- Pages 5 and 7: The month of your elections/AGM.
- Page 6: The Month after your elections/AGM.
- Page 7: Additional executive positions.
- Page 7: Duties of these additional executives.
- Page 8: Start and end dates of your fiscal year.
- Page 9: Charity or organization that your group will donate assets to after closing down.

Make it Yours

If you want to further personalize your constitution, feel free to make changes to these articles or add new ones detailing procedures that your group would like to follow. Such changes might include a fee for membership, different quorum levels, executive eligibility, classes of membership, etc. The articles already included in this template are the minimum requirements and should not be heavily altered or removed. Once completed and submitted, your constitution will be reviewed by SGS to ensure compliance and completeness.

The bolded items in the following template require your attention and group-specific input. So grab your pen and get drafting!
Constitution of [Student group name]

Preamble or Mission Statement

[Include a summary of your group, your mission statement and reason for existence.]

ARTICLE I: Name and Purpose

I.1 Name
The name of the student group shall be [student group name], Hereinafter referred to as [“the group”].

I.11 Compliance
The student group operates at the University of Alberta, subject to University of Alberta

[1. and Recreation Services
2. and Students’ Union
3. and Graduate Students’ Association]

policies and procedures. This group will also comply with all local, provincial, and federal laws and procedures.

I.11l Objectives and Goals
[The group shall operate for the purpose of:]

ARTICLE II: Membership and Eligibility

II.1 Membership

a. Membership in the group is open to students, faculty, and staff at the University of Alberta, subject to membership requirements outlined in the University of Alberta’s student group procedures. Eligible individuals who wish to become part of the group must indicate this by [method: e.g. signing up for a group mailing list at Clubs Fair or by emailing the group before the end of October each year].

b. The group will be registered with the University of Alberta

[1. and Recreation Services
2. and the Students’ Union
3. and the Graduate Students’ Association]

and general membership will consist of at least
[1. 2/3 U of A students (default)
2. 2/3 Undergraduate Students
3. 2/3 Graduate Students]

c. The classes of membership that exist in the group are as follows.
   i. General Members: A General Member is defined as any student who signs up for the student group mailing list at a recruitment event and who has attended one group meeting or event over the year as recorded by the VP Membership. General Members are able to vote in all group matters.
   
   ii. Executive Members: An Executive Member is defined as any student member who is elected to an executive position or who is appointed to temporarily assume duties of a vacant executive position, while that individual is in that role. Executive Members are able to vote in all group matters.
   
   iii. Associate Members: An Associate Member is defined as an individual who is ineligible or unable to join the group as a general member due to time commitment, University of Alberta student status, or other affiliation, but who still wants to participate officially in group business. Associate Members do not have voting rights but are invited to sit on committees or working groups and to attend all group events.

d. The conditions of membership in the group are as follows.
   i. To remain in good standing, a member must attend at least one group meeting or event over an academic year and have their attendance recorded by the VP Membership.
   
   ii. A member in bad standing is defined as any member who has not attended any group meetings and events over the preceding calendar year, or who has clearly and purposefully worked against the group’s stated purpose and objectives.
   
   iii. All members in bad standing will be given written notice of this fact by the executive committee, and will be given three months from the receipt of this notice to either attend a group event or meeting, to plan a group event, or to propose an alternate measure to amend the member’s participation. If a member in bad standing fails to communicate with the executive committee within that time, their membership privileges will be revoked until the next academic year.

II. Membership Dues
The group will not charge for membership status.
ARTICLE III: Elections

III.I Eligibility

a. In order to be eligible to run and hold office, a member must be in good standing for at least 3 months as of the date of elections and must not be in their last year of study at the University of Alberta.

b. In order to be eligible to vote in an election, a member must be a General or Executive Member in good standing. A member is not allowed to vote for a race in which they themselves are campaigning.

III.II Election Supervision

Elections will be monitored by the VP Membership. If the VP Membership plans to run as a candidate, the President will appoint an impartial committee of three, non-candidate, General Members to promote and supervise the election process as below. The VP Membership/Elections Committee will provide candidates and voting members with information on the elections, campaigning, and all associated procedures, one month prior to voting.

III.III Election Procedures

a. Elections will be held at the annual general meeting in [month].

b. Members will declare their candidacy by [method: e.g. registering with the VP Membership or Elections Committee one (1) month prior to voting, or by receiving two (2) nominations at a special candidacy meeting, or by submitting an application to the VP Membership/Elections Committee].

c. All eligible members will be given an opportunity to vote by secret ballot. The voting logistics will be determined by the VP Membership/Elections Committee and will be communicated via email to all members on the nomination deadline. Candidates will be given one month to campaign prior to voting.

d. A candidate must receive a simple majority (50% or 50% with one additional vote) to be elected. If an unopposed candidate does not receive a simple majority, that position is considered vacant.

e. Executive terms of office begin on the first day of the month following elections and run for a period of one year.

III.IV Appeals and By-Elections

a. A candidate or General Member may appeal election results within one week of the VP Membership/Elections Committee announcing them.

b. Should an executive position not be filled or become vacant partway through the year, the President will, with 2/3 executive support, appoint a member to that position.
ARTICLE IV: Executive Committee

IV.I Executive Committee Members
The composition of the Executive Committee shall be entirely University of Alberta students.

The Executive Committee will be composed of: President; Vice-President Finance; Vice-President External; Vice-President Elections, Vice-President Secretary [Other positions as required].

IV.II Duties of Executive Committee Members

a. The President is responsible to set strategic direction for the group and is the Chair of the Executive Committee. The President acts as the main point of contact for all external organizations, possesses signing authority on the group bank account, approves group expenses and is the primary media contact. The President must also complete annual training with Student Group Services as part of the registration requirement as outlined in the UAPPOL Student Group Procedure. The President will be responsible for completing the student group's registration process with Student Group Services by the end of [the month following elections].

b. The Vice-President Finance is responsible for creating and presenting group budgets. The VP Finance will possess signing authority on the group's bank account, and will be responsible for handling group funds, making regular cash deposits and approving expenses. The VP Finance will also be responsible for curating the group's financial records in compliance with Article VII. The Vice-President Finance must also complete annual training with Student Group Services as part of the registration requirement as outlined in the UAPPOL Student Group Procedure.

c. The Vice-President External is responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with external organizations, partners and affiliates. The VP External will update and manage the group's website, social media and other communications. The VP External will be responsible for keeping up to date on University of Alberta and Students’ Union risk management policy and receiving approval for all group events.

d. The Vice-President Membership will keep a roster of current members and their good/bad standing. They are responsible for overseeing the election campaign, democratic voting process, announcement and transition of new executives and appeals/by-election processes in compliance with Article III.

e. The Vice-President Secretary will be responsible for creating agendas for gen-
eral and executive meetings in consultation with the President and members wishing to contribute, and for sending these agendas to general membership. The VP Secretary will also be responsible for keeping accurate meeting minutes and sending these minutes to general membership within one week of the meeting. The VP Secretary will also serve as backup record keeper for the group, and will seek copies of budgets, receipts, grant reports, constitutional amendments, executive rosters and registration documents for retention by the group for a period of one year.

IV.III [Other Executive Members]

a. Members in bad standing will be removed from the group in compliance with II.I.c.iii (Membership).

b. If an Executive Member fails to fulfill the duties of their position, any General or Executive Member may petition for their impeachment. The VP Membership/Elections Committee is responsible to present the evidence and petition to the group’s membership at its next meeting, and the impeachment will pass with a 2/3 vote.

ARTICLE V: Committees

V.I Committees

The Executive Committee Members may form additional committees as required.

ARTICLE VI: Meetings

VI.I Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held in [month] of every year. All members will be notified in writing one month prior.

VI.II Meetings

a. All meetings will run in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order.

b. Regular Meetings: Regular meetings will be held at least twice a semester and open to all members. Notice of meeting will be emailed to general membership two weeks prior to the meeting date.

c. Executive Committee Meetings: Executive meetings will be held at least monthly and are open to Executive Members and general members in an observational or consultative capacity. Notice of meeting will be directly communicated to general members two weeks prior to the meeting date.
VI.III Quorum
Quorum for regular meetings is 2/3 of all members. Quorum for executive meetings is 2/3 of the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VII: Finances

VII.I Fiscal Timelines
a. The group’s fiscal year runs from [2 months after your AGM].
b. The VP Finance will be responsible to make deposits every two weeks, or when an amount greater than $500 has accumulated in the cash box, whichever is sooner.
c. Bank statements, receipts, grant reports and other financial documents are to be kept in a secure location for one year before being shredded.

VII.II Budgets
The VP Finance is responsible for creating and presenting the upcoming fiscal year’s budget at a general meeting in the month after elections. The budget will require a 2/3 vote to pass.

VII.III Expenses and Reimbursement
a. The VP Finance and President must approve all expenses under the group’s name prior to any funds changing hands.
b. Members may be reimbursed for approved expenses by cheque as long as their reimbursement requests are made, with original receipts, within two weeks after the transaction.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments to the Constitution

VIII.I Amendments
Any General or Executive Member can propose amendments to the constitution at a regular meeting. Once proposed, the amendments will be tabled until the next meeting. The VP Secretary will notify members of the details of the proposed amendment in the following meeting’s agenda. Voting will take place at the meeting following the proposal and 3/4 of the members present must vote in favour of the amendment for it to be passed. Once amended, constitutions should be re-filed with Student Group Services. Should the constitution be amended in the middle of the 3-year constitution cycle, the amendment will be held in force until it is approved by Student Group Services, unless it is contravened by Student Group Services policy, Dean of Students
Policy, UAPPOL Student Group Procedure, Code of Student Behaviour, SU Bylaw, Municipal, Provincial, or Federal Law, in which case the authority of the highest policy body will retain in force.

ARTICLE IX: Dissolution

IX.I Dissolution
The group may be dissolved by a 2/3 majority vote at a Special General Meeting convened for the purpose of which 90 days notice must have been given in writing to all members. The group is automatically dissolved upon membership dropping below 10 members. Upon dissolution, the Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that any remaining financial resources are donated to [charity or cause] and the bank account is closed down. Any resources or group assets will be donated to [charity or cause] where appropriate but will not be distributed to individual members.

Done filling in the blanks?
Wow, look at that, your constitution is done! Wasn’t that easy? And it was so much fun, I don’t blame you for wanting to do it all again. Go ahead, make another one, no one will judge you.

When you’re ready to register, just upload your shiny new constitution on the BearsDen form and feel the pride of a job well done. With this little document, you’ve set your group on a course for success!