CONSTITUTION

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WHAT IS THIS HANDBOOK?

Article 2 paragraphs 3 to 8 of the UAPPOL Student Groups Procedure (available online) outline requirements that all student group constitutions on campus must follow. This booklet and the associated default and template constitutions constitute the guidelines referenced in Paragraph 5 of this procedure. These minimum guidelines must be met in order to become and remain a registered student group at the University of Alberta.

WHAT IS A CONSTITUTION?

A constitution is a written record of your organization’s fundamental principles and established precedents. It is your group’s most essential internal document. After the law, and University of Alberta, Students’ Union, and Graduate Students’ Association’s and Student Group policies, procedures, and guidelines, the constitution of a group takes precedence in matters of governance. Where the constitution of a group is silent, or comes into conflict with the law, University of Alberta, Students’ Union, Graduate Students’ Association and Student Group policies, procedures and guidelines, the higher authority will take precedence.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The constitution is used to define the rules and regulations that govern a student group’s existence. Basically, you need a constitution so that if anything comes up during the year you know how to deal with it, and so that its overarching rules can work with any more detailed records your group has to ensure the efficient and sustainable operation of your group.

Student Group Services requires all groups to submit a constitution fitting these requirements each year as part of the application process for recognition at the University of Alberta. Constitutions will only be formally reviewed every three years, based on the group’s election month.
CONSTITUTION REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

INFORMATION

Use this checklist when you write or review your constitution to make sure that these required items are covered in your constitution. This is also the checklist that SGS will be using to review your constitution, so you’ll be one step closer to approval if you take a look at it and our Default Constitution first!

Your constitution can absolutely address more than these specific areas, but this checklist is a good guide to what might most frequently come up in your group. Since every group is different, your constitution may not be organized in the same way as this checklist. For sample text and more details on each item, check out the Default Constitution.

☐ The checkboxes indicate the bare minimum of information that SGS would require,
  • and the bullet points indicate extra information that could be asked for, suggested, or would be beneficial.

Overall, there should be no contradictions or questions immediately rising out of a constitution. If you were a brand-new group member, would you understand how your group functioned by looking at your constitution?

CONSTITUTION REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

☐ Name of group is present, and matches registered name.

☐ Mission/Vision/Values are stated clearly.
  • There is a reference to the higher legal frameworks a group exists in - the University of Alberta, the SU, the GSA, Recreation Services, etc.

☐ Membership eligibility is nondiscriminatory and clear.
  • Classes of membership are defined, and reference is made to the University of Alberta’s policies around student membership ratios. Consult the SGS web page on Registration for information on these ratios.

☐ Membership standing is clarified.
  • Process of becoming a member. Rules for membership expulsion or suspension are in place, along with definitions of when these measures would be appropriate.
- **Executive positions** are listed and their responsibilities are accurately described.
  - Annual mandatory training, risk management approval and registration responsibilities are addressed,
  - 100% Student Executive composition is specified, as per the UAPPOL student group procedure.

- At least **two** executive positions have **signing authority** for the group's bank account.

- **Elections** are very clearly outlined. This could include the following items:
  - Timeline (for nominations, voting, campaigning, and appeals);
  - Who supervises the elections and what their role is;
  - Candidates’ roles and responsibilities;
  - Voting eligibility and registration, where applicable;
  - Democratic procedure and method for voting;
  - Appeal, impeachment, and/or recounting processes;
  - By-election and vacancy processes.

- At least one **Annual General Meeting** is codified, at which elections will take place.
  - All other types of meetings are defined, along with the procedures for calling meetings.

- **Quorum** for all meetings and elections is defined and consistent.

- **Financial practices** are addressed in sufficient detail, either under an executive’s portfolio or in a separate section.
  - This includes financial year, budgetary approvals, executives responsible for spending, regular deposits, reimbursement of members, and keeping of records.

- A process for **amending the constitution** is in place and requires the entire organization's participation (not just the executive council).

- **Dissolution procedures** are included, with specific reference to what happens to a group’s finances and resources once a group shuts down.
CONSTITUTION FAQ

Q. What goes in our constitution?
The UAPPOL Student Groups Procedure outlines the basic articles required in a student group constitution in Article 2. The Constitution Template provides guidelines for the specific content that should be included in a constitution. All of these articles must be met in the body of your constitution, and not in separate bylaw or internal group policy documents. If you want to go into detail about specific processes, or create bylaws that can be more easily changed without going through a constitutional amendment procedure, those details might be better suited for bylaws or an internal procedural document.

For example, the constitution might say that the VP Events is responsible for planning 3 social events each year. The bylaws might state that the VP Events plans a Welcome Party. The procedural and transition documents could specify where the Welcome Party is usually held, how people are told about it, what kind of food is ordered, and in which term it usually happens. That way, the VP Events could customize and plan the event without having to amend the constitution.

Q. What is our registration level?
Your student group will be registered with the University of Alberta, but may also be recognized by other campus organizations in order to receive additional benefits. Your group may be registered with Campus Recreation, the Students’ Union or the Graduate Students’ Association, provided you meet certain requirements.

Q. What are our compliance requirements?
In order to operate on campus, you group must comply with all local, provincial and federal laws, and must comply with University of Alberta and Student Group Services policies, procedures and guidelines as well as the policies and procedures of your registration level. These include the following membership requirements: U of A groups must have 2/3 student members. SU groups must have 2/3 undergraduate student members, and GSA groups must have 2/3 graduate student members. All group executives must be current students.

Q. Can we include the names of our executives in the constitution?
No. Things that change from year-to-year should not be included in the constitution. If you have very specific processes for your group that you want to record but that may change frequently, you can email them to SGS to keep on file or upload them onto BearsDen – but don’t add them into your constitution.
Q. Our constitution is private. Can we still be a student group?
Constitutions are meant to be public documents. If there is an external organization that is requiring that your constitution be private, please talk to SGS. If you have just decided that you want your constitution to be private, that’s not okay - your members need to be able to participate in the operations of your student group.

Q. Can we have a one-page constitution? What about a 100-page constitution?
SGS has no requirements for the length a constitution must be to be valid. If your group has a 100-page constitution, though, people likely won’t be able to read and interpret it effectively. (If you find that your group actually needs 100 pages of material to cover your governance, we’d suggest that you meet with us to figure out how better to structure your operations!)

Q. How often should we/can we change our constitution?
You should read your constitution once a year at the very, very minimum, so that you know what information is included in it and can ensure that your group’s operations aren’t in conflict. How often you should change it really depends on your activities. If your group has run in the same way for ten or twenty years, and the constitution is still a useful document for you during transition and yearly operations, then there’s no reason to change it. You can change it as often as you’d like, really, providing that your amendment procedures are followed.

Your group will be required to submit your constitution to SGS each year, but it will only be formally reviewed for compliance and edits each three years. This streamlines the registration process while still holding constitutions to account for their requirements under UAPPOL. If your constitution is ever amended in such a way that it comes into conflict with the law, University of Alberta, Students’ Union, Graduate Students’ Association and Student Group policies, procedures and guidelines, the higher authority will take precedence.

Q. Can we make jokes in our constitution?
Sometimes. Your group is welcome to customize certain elements of your constitution to be more entertaining or engaging, if that’s what you’re looking for - you could assign the president the title of “Master Jedi” if you wanted to. However, writing that the “Master Jedi” of the organization has supreme dictatorial powers would not be okay. Even if it were a joke to those of you who wrote it, that item would immediately be flagged at administrative levels.
Q. Our group is really small. Can we have a quorum of two members for a meeting to be valid?

No. Think about the consequences of that—you could have two executive members having coffee together, and provided that your apparatus for calling meetings is easy or nonexistent, they could decide to completely overhaul your group. SGS recommends that your quorum be as large as possible. If you have problems getting your members to come to a meeting, consider online meeting options once in a while, or provide free food, or come up with creative ways to recruit more passionate members.

Q. If one of our executives leaves partway through the year, can we just pick someone to replace that person?

Yes. If it’s in your constitution that vacancies will be filled by appointment, SGS knows that is sometimes necessary. However, be careful – if you appoint a President to take over a Treasurer’s responsibilities, and they both have signing authority, you’ll have effectively enabled one person to clear out your bank account. Manage your risk!

Q. What happens if our group shuts down?

First of all, you need to let SGS know. Ideally, some basic procedures for group dissolution are outlined in your constitution. Things you’ll want to think about are where any extra funds go (and it’s not okay to simply give them to the executive members) and where your resources should go if your group has collected any. SGS can help you navigate the processes of getting your group closed down if that happens, and we’re happy to help. (If your group is a Faculty Association in danger of shutting down for any reason, you will need to talk to Discover Governance.)

Q. Our external organization appoints our executive – is that okay?

No. Your executive needs to be democratically elected in some fashion. Every member should have a say in how the group is run. External affiliates should not be entirely controlling a student group’s operations; for information on ideal external affiliate relationships with student groups, contact SGS.

Q. What are voting thresholds?

A voting threshold is the number of votes required for a motion to be passed. In Robert’s Rules of Order, there are three common voting thresholds – a **simple majority** (more than 50%, or 50% plus one vote), a **substantive majority** (2/3 or 66.67%), or **super majority** (3/4 or 75%). Your group can
decide which of these you would like to use; Robert’s Rules again has some guidelines for you. You can also decide that 100% of members should be in favour - if you’d like to do this, search for consensus-based models of procedure or decision-making.

OTHER RESOURCES

**Student Group Services** ([www.su.ualberta.ca/studentgroups](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/studentgroups))

- Default Constitution
- The “My Home Constitution Kit” for writing your first constitution
- Robert’s Rules Handbook

**Discover Governance** ([www.su.ualberta.ca/discovergovernance](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/discovergovernance))

- Tips for Constitutional Reviews
- Wisdom for Committee Chairs
- Simplified Glossary for Robert’s Rules of Order
- Why Use Robert’s Rules of Order?
- 200 Parliamentary Questions Answered
STUDENT GROUP SERVICES ::
SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

This constitution template is meant to help new groups understand what the structure of a constitution might look like, along with providing any student groups with sample language for specific parts of their governing documents. Don’t directly copy and paste this document – even within this template, there are a lot of options for language choices and customized definitions, and your group should work together to ensure that its fundamental document is appropriate and accurate. Use this as a guideline in conjunction with the SGS Constitution Handbook, and consult SGS if you have any questions or want any help!

There are a few options for writing your first constitution:

1. This sample constitution, along with the constitution checklist (and resources below) can be used to guide you in writing your own constitution from scratch. As long as you cover the basic requirements, you can personalize this option as much as you need.

2. The Constitution Template will provide you with the scaffolding of a constitution that you can fill in with your group’s specific information and details. This gives you the basics and a little room for personalization.

3. The Default Constitution is a finished constitution with the minimum compliance requirements for a student group. You can use this constitution without changes if you want to register quickly, but it doesn’t allow any room for customization. Make sure you are familiar with what’s in it, because your group will be held accountable to it!

NOTE: The text that you will see in boldface is the template language. Bullet-pointed plain text indicates comments, advice, and guidelines from SGS. [Square brackets] indicate where your group would need to customize the content, if you were to directly copy a section’s wording.
CONSTITUTION OF [STUDENT GROUP NAME]

Preamble or Mission Statement

• This section is a summary of your group and identifies your mission statement and reason for existence. The mission statement should guide the actions of your group, explain its overall goal, provide a sense of direction, and guide the decision-making of your group.

ARTICLE I: Name and Purpose

I.I Name
The name of the student group shall be [student group name], and it may also be referred to as [acronyms or nicknames].

I.II Compliance
The student group operates at the University of Alberta, subject to University of Alberta policies and procedures. This group will also comply with all local, provincial, and federal laws and procedures.

• This section would also include compliance with the Students’ Union’s bylaws and policies, or the Graduate Students’ Association’s bylaws and policies, if the group were planning to be registered at either of those levels.

I.III Objectives and Goals
The group shall operate for the purpose of:

• List the aims, objectives, and goals of your group here. Why was your group founded?

ARTICLE II: Membership and Eligibility

II.I Membership
a. Membership in [student group name] 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 policies. Eligible individuals who wish to become part of [student group name] 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 September each year].

• Who is eligible to join your group? This should be stated here. This section of your constitution is very important. If you are setting requirements on your membership, ensure that they are consistent with your group’s stated purpose and vision, and aren’t violating any existing policies or laws. Some groups require auditions for membership, and some simply require you to sign up for a mailing list.
• Explain, in detail, how your members are admitted – are there requirements? Do you have a deadline for membership sign-up, or just one recruitment period?

• Wondering what the University of Alberta’s student group policies are? Check out the SGS website for information and direct links – the membership requirements for student groups are clearly outlined there.

b. The classes of membership that exist in [student group name] 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 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.

• These are some options for how your group can define its membership. It’s a good idea to have at least some basic membership levels in your group’s constitution so that your members have options of involvement and responsibility to take on, but it’s not required. If your group wants all of its members to be entirely equal, you can mandate that through your constitution as well.

c. The conditions of membership in [student group name] 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.

- In this section, you would also want to differentiate between a “member in good standing” and a “member in bad standing” and define the conditions that constitute each. If someone in your group isn’t working towards the group’s best interests or isn’t participating, is there a way that your group wants to address that?

- Explain, in detail, the process and reasoning for expelling members from the group. Ensure that this process is fair and clear – in the event that an appeal is brought against your group, the constitution will act as an advising document for any administration that becomes involved. Think about how to most clearly advise members of their responsibilities and figure out what happens if their responsibilities aren’t met. Also, put yourself in the member’s position. If an executive committee were to attempt to kick an individual out for no reason at all, would they be able to do so? What would an appeal process look like?

II.II Membership Dues
[Student group name] will not charge for membership status.

- Clearly define any membership dues (i.e. initiation, monthly, annual), the amount payable by each of the various classes of members, the deadline for payment, how they are collected, and who collects them. If you don’t wish to have membership fees at this point, but want to leave the option open for future years without too much hassle, you could also constitutionally define that the membership dues will be determined annually by the executive committee and announced a certain number of months in advance of the deadline.

ARTICLE III: Elections

III.I Eligibility
a. In order to be eligible to run and hold office, a member must meet the following requirements:

- This section must clearly define the requirements for holding office (and these must be non-discriminatory). Some requirements that groups use include: student status, a minimum GPA, membership status, participation record, previous experience on a committee, etc.
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 Elections. If the VP Elections 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 Elections/Elections Committee will provide candidates and voting members with information on the elections, campaigning, and all associated procedures, one month prior to voting.

- Decide how you want your elections to be run, and who is in charge of monitoring and recording the process. If your group wants to bring in an external, impartial member to supervise voting itself, then decide whose responsibility it is to arrange for that.

III.III Election Procedures
a. Elections will be held annually in [month].

- When are your elections held? Are they held as a separate meeting, or as part of the Annual General Meeting?

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

- Include any timelines and deadlines (specific dates are less useful than relative timelines – like “one week before voting” instead of “March 15”), as well as who is eligible to run for positions and how they would do so. It’s very important that your members know how they can get involved and that every voting member knows who their candidates are. Every member should have an equal opportunity to run.

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

- You can, and should, specify your election method. All general members should have a say in the election of your executive committee – as per SU Bylaw 5600, groups are expected to operate in a transparent, democratic matter. If your group has appointments or interviews as part of your process, you must include a ratification process in your constitution as a method by
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.

• How many votes does a candidate need to become elected? Discover Governance has tips on Voting Thresholds in their Tips for Constitutional Review, and for more input, check out Robert’s Rules of Order.

III.IV Appeals and By-Elections
a. A candidate or General Member may appeal election results within one week of the VP Elections/Elections Committee announcing them.

• Include information on the appeal process, who decides whether a complaint is valid, and how the appeal would proceed if it’s found to be legitimate. Ensure that you’re considering timelines and all aspects of the situation. Does a really close vote automatically mean that you’ll recount everything? What situations would require a new election to be held?

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.

• What happens if an executive member becomes ill, or simply can’t take on the responsibility? Or what happens if no one runs for a position in the first place? You can codify this in your constitution, or write a supporting procedural document as an executive committee. This is really crucial for positions with signing authority. (You can also include information on impeaching executive members – here, or later in the constitution.)

ARTICLE IV: Executive Committee

IV.1 Executive Committee Members
The composition of the Executive Committee will be 100% U of A students. The Executive Committee will be composed of: President; Vice-President Finance; Vice-President Membership...

• List all your executive positions here. Your executive positions as constitutionally decided will be checked against other registration information to ensure accuracy.

IV.1l 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 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.

- Clearly outline responsibilities for each executive member here. What should a person running for one of the executive positions expect to take on? It would be a good idea here to decide which positions have signing authority. If you’d like to have a really solid constitution, even think about chain-of-command – if the president were to be unavailable, who would assume that position’s responsibilities? This section can be written or bullet-pointed.

- Certain executive members will have particular responsibilities with regards to Student Group Services. Your President and Treasurer will be responsible for completing annual training as outlined in the UAPPOL Student Group Procedure. One member of your executive committee must be responsible for receiving risk management approval for your group’s activities.

- Ideally, another executive member will keep records for the year, including agendas, minutes and documents from meetings, registration information from the President and budgets, receipts and grant reports from the Treasurer. This ensures that important group information is not subject to the will of one sole executive member.

IV.III Other Executive Members

- In this section, you could define any other executive members such as non-voting executive (i.e. faculty or external affiliate advisors), honorary executive members, or ex officio members. You could also state the rights and powers of any other groups that affect your own, such as a Board of Directors or any local, provincial, national, or international umbrella organizations that are affiliated with your group. If you are affiliated with another organization, they also might have language around your group’s relationship that would be good to reference here.

IV.IV Impeachment/Removal and Replacement of Officers and Members

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

- Where information might need to be repeated, it’s a very good idea to simply refer to another section, rather than repeating the same information. The more times information is re-written, the better the chances are that someday, one of those items will be changed and one will be missed, so that the constitution ends up inherently contradicting itself.
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 Elections/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.

- Here, you would explain what would constitute an executive member’s impeachment, who would help adjudicate that process, and how the process would go forward. Voting numbers are important here as well. Explain the process for filling unexpected vacancies and any relevant timelines, especially if this information is not included in your Elections section.

ARTICLE V: Committees

V.I Committees
The Executive Committee Members may form additional committees as required.

- State the existence of any standing committees, in addition to the Executive Committee, and list their functions, duties, and responsibilities. If your group has occasional committees, only list them in the constitution if they are essential to your group’s operations. Outline the selection process for membership on these committees; include the length of term and any requirements for holding the position. You could also state the frequency of committee meetings.

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.

- Determine when the annual general meeting for the group will be held. Members are usually notified two weeks prior, often in writing, but you can set this for your group. Many clubs choose to coordinate elections with the AGM. At least one AGM needs to be held over a year for a group to remain recognized with the University of Alberta.

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

- Choose your governing procedure for meetings, and check out the basic Robert’s Rules of Order Handbook SGS has, or the more in-depth Robert’s Rules resources Discover Governance offers, for help!
b. Regular Meetings: Regular meetings will be held twice a semester and open to all members. Notice of meeting will be posted on the group’s website two weeks prior to the meeting date.

c. Executive Committee Meetings: Executive meetings will be held monthly and open to only Executive Members. Notice of meeting will be directly communicated to executives two weeks prior to the meeting date.

• Determine the different types of meetings your group will hold (i.e. regular, special, election...). Outline the procedure for calling meetings, how often they will be held, and detail how members will be notified.

VI.III Quorum
Quorum for regular meetings is 2/3 of all members. Quorum for executive meetings is 2/3 of the Executive Committee.

• Quorum is the minimum number of members required to be present before meetings can proceed as official group business. Quorum is often expressed as either a fraction (2/3) or a number (20) – choose one method and stick to it. Discover Governance has great tips on Quorum in its Constitutional Review resource, and suggests that quorum for general meetings always be at least twice the number of members on the executive committee. Quorum for an election is the same quorum as for a regular meeting, unless specifically otherwise defined.

ARTICLE VII: Finances

VII.I Fiscal Timelines
a. The [group name]’s fiscal year runs from May 1 to April 30.

• Establish your fiscal year and state this here. Signing authorities could also be mentioned in this section if they weren’t codified in the executive/portfolio sections.

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.

• When are deposits to be made? Who will make them? It’s a good idea to think about how much money your group has on hand at what points in the year. Periodic deposits are good to establish for a group that consistently handles a lot of money; other groups may want to only give an amount limit.

c. Bank statements and other financial documents are to be kept in a secure location for [time period] before being shredded.

• Your executives and group will want to establish where the financial
documents and bank statements are being kept, as well as how they will be disposed of and after what time period. Do you have backups? If you’re applying for student group grants at any point, you’re often required to submit the previous year’s budget; if you needed to, could you access or re-create it?

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

- When does your group need to have a budget written, and how will it be passed? Make sure that you think about the timelines for your budgets, elections, and your fiscal year.

- It’s also recommended to have the VP Finance’s responsibilities, either in this section or the Executive section, include weekly or monthly budget reports. How will your budget be followed, and how will members be kept up to date on the group’s spending? Do you have a balance sheet that is updated regularly, or a report template for the VP Finance?

VII.III Expenses and Reimbursement
a. The VP Finance and President must approve all expenses under [group name]’s name prior to any funds changing hands.

b. Members may be reimbursed for approved expenses by [cheque/cash/unspecified] as long as their reimbursement requests are made, with original receipts, within two weeks after the transaction.

- While not directly in your constitution, your VP Finance should also have recording and reporting forms for expense approval. You can also state here that the club/VP Finance will pay for everything directly, rather than having members have the option of reimbursement. Make sure that you’re not setting up any situations where one individual could take all of your group’s money for themselves without any checks or balances. All forms that you might want to use should be created and kept for transition so that your group’s organization is consistent; contact SGS if you’d like help designing or creating a template for these.

- Other financial factors that your group might want to consider, either in your constitution or otherwise, include: minimum and maximum amounts of cash on hand (e.g. in your group’s office, or at the VP Finance’s discretion); who counts and balances any cash boxes and how often; who is allowed to handle cash for membership, merchandise, or event purposes; what documentation is required for reimbursement and who administers this.
• Keep in mind that your group should never have a credit card and never have a withdrawal-enabled debit card.

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.

• State the procedure for members to propose amendments to the constitution, and define the procedure for voting on and passing proposed amendments (usually 2/3 of membership, but you can change that – quorum also matters here anyways!). Consider notifying members about the proposed amendment prior to the vote. Since SGS retains copies of your constitutions, it’s also a good idea to re-upload your constitution onto BearsDen and let SGS know when you have passed any crucial amendments. While we only review constitutions when you register, we can help at any time.

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.

• This is an important article to have in your constitution! What happens if your group dissolves, and where do your financial and physical resources go? Your group should have resources for this built into your constitution so that, if needed, SGS can help ensure that your group’s resources are appropriately allocated.