# Club Constitution Structure

The constitution is the heart of your organization. It provides the structure by which your group will function, and it secures a professional operating environment that Penn State prides itself upon. All student organizations recognized by the Office of Student Affairs must include at least eleven (11) specific articles in their constitutions. Within these articles are certain statements that must be included with that article. You are not limited, however, to just these stipulations. You are free to personalize your organization’s constitution to suit your specific needs.

The required articles and statements, and what they mean are delineated below. A sample constitution including the required articles, and the most common way of organizing them, is attached in order to aid you in the application process.

## Required Constitutional Elements

### Heading

1. All information must be centered.
2. State the full name of the organization, and its acronym, if applicable.
3. Under the name, state the original date that the organization first met on the confines of the York Campus at the Pennsylvania State University.

### Body

Any statements that must be included in the constitution in some fashion will be prefaced by the word “**state**” in boldface or text will be in **boldface**.

### Article I: Purpose

* Clearly **state** the purpose of the organization. This is the singular most significant part of the document, as it is the mission statement of the organization. No organizations with duplicate or highly similar purposes of those existing organizations will be considered for registration.
* **State** the purpose in sentences, or by using numbers or bullets.

### Article II: Membership

* Since your organization is an undergraduate student organization, **state** that the majority (50% + 1 of the active membership) must be undergraduate students.
* **State** that only currently registered students are eligible for active membership.
* If applicable, additional categories of membership (such as Associate, Honorary, Alumni, etc.) must be outline in this section.
* **State** that there must be at least 5 active student members at all times
* **State** that only active members may vote, preside, officiate, or solicit funding on the organization’s behalf.
* **New Membership and Recruitment**

1. Any and all new members will be given full disclosure during recruitment, including but not limited to the disclosure of:
   1. Organizational documents (Constitution, Bylaws, Manuals, etc.)
   2. Organization events and activities
   3. A list of responsibilities of members
   4. A copy of the University Hazing policy, prescribed by Policies and Rules for Student Organizations (These document will be available upon request by the Office of Student Affairs).
2. All members, including but not limited to new members and recruits, reserve the right to refrain from participating in any activities without consequence, based upon personal/religious beliefs, personal values, or moral reserve as defined by the member.
3. Any and all interaction/activity between members and/or new members will be limited to guidelines stated by university policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

* **Membership Removal**

Please draft a "Membership Removal Policy" subsection within the Membership Section that you feel is appropriate for expelling members from your organization. Please be sure to include reasonable guidelines for what is a condition for expulsion.

Example: The club reserves the right to expel a member who is not following the policies of the organization with a super majority vote of attending members---quorum is 75% of active members.

*This statement does not need to be included, but the meaning should be understood.*

* **Mediation Procedures**

Please draft a “Mediation Procedures Article” that you feel is appropriate for addressing any possible violations of constitutional policies.

1. In the case of violations of constitutional policies and/or a conflict between members within the organization the highest ranking officer that is not involved in the conflict, with the assistance from the adviser (if applicable), will facilitate an informal mediation procedure
2. The mediator shall:
   1. Arrange for a mediation meeting outside of the regular organization business meeting
   2. Explain their role as the impartial party and the objectives of the mediation
   3. Set ground rules
   4. Allow each party to express their views by allowing the conversation to go where the parties wish it to go
   5. Collect any available resources that might assist in the resolution (financial documents, emails, photos, etc.)
   6. As a third party, do not suggest nresolutions but rather leave the responsibility for the resolution with the parties involved
   7. Facilitate goal setting to reach a win-win resolution

*This statement does not need to be included in your constitution, but it is highly recommended and should be understood.*

### Article III: Officers

* **State** that undergraduate candidates **must be full-time**, officially registered active student members to be selected as officers in your organization at the time of the appointment or election. Officers may change from full-time to part-time, or vice versa, after becoming an officer. Student organizations may establish and apply additional eligibility criteria for appointed or elected leaders/officers.
* **State** all officers, elected or appointed, and their appropriate duties and powers. If officers form the executive committees, an odd number of officers is recommended. Avoid shared offices.
* **State** the procedures that will be followed to fill unexpired vacancies. These include the meeting at which nominations and elections will take place (if applicable), the process by which a candidate will be nominated, etc. ***(this statement can be included in the Officers section or the Elections section)***
* You must have an officer responsible for your organizations funds. This officer will be the only active member with access to your SGA account, and will most likely be your treasurer.

### Article IV: Meetings

* **State** the frequency of meetings. At least two meetings per semester are required in order to maintain active status with the University.
* **State** how, and by what body, the frequency of meetings may be decided or changed.
* **State** under what circumstances, and by whom, a special meeting may be called.
* **State** how, when, and by whom members would be notified of regular and special meetings.
* **State** that adequate advanced notice must be given to all members.

### Article V: Voting

* **State** what will constitute quorum. Different quorums may be used for voting, elections, amendments, and other items. If you wish to require different quorums for different voting events, they must be specified.
* **State** what shall constitute a majority; likewise if different types of majorities will be required for different voting events, they must be specified.

### Article VI: Finances

* **State** that all organizational funds are to be handled exclusively through the Student Affairs office.
* **State** that the organization will not have an off-campus account.
* **State** whether or not the payment of dues is a necessary condition for membership. If it is **state** how they will be determined. Do not specify a specific amount, and it is recommended that the amount is kept reasonable. **State** how often dues are to be collected.
* A dollar amount that officers can spend without approval of the membership must be specified. It is recommended that this amount is kept small.

### Article VII: Elections

* **State** the meeting at which nominations and elections will take place. **State** how and when these meetings will be publicized.
* **State** that no one involved in conducting the elections may be an official candidate.
* **State** the procedure for nominations and elections, along with how ties will be handled.
* **State** when new officers begin their terms of office. A transition period is recommended so that the new officers may learn their responsibilities, along with the organization’s business and University regulations.

### Article VIII: Amendments to the Constitution

* **State** the procedure for the introduction and passage of amendments.
* **State** who may propose amendments.
* **State** that all amendments are subject to approval by the Office of Student Affairs
* **State** when the approved amendments are to take effect.

### Article IX: Parliamentary Authority

* **State** the parliamentary authority used to cover cases not specifically covered by the constitution. *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* by Sarah Corbin Roberts is highly recommended.

**Article X: Accessibility of this Constitution**

* **State** that a copy of the constitution will be available to anyone upon request.

**Article XI: Advisor**

* **State** that this organization must retain an advisor at all times.
* **State** that the advisor must be a full-time faculty or staff member at Penn State York, and that he/she should be chosen by the organization. Do not mention a specific name.
* **State** the method by which your organization will select an advisor.

**Article XII: Safety Considerations (Do NOT include this section unless directed by the Office of Student Affairs).**

* **State** that no member will use any undue force in any contact activity.
* **State** that no member will use weapons in conjunction with your organization’s activities.
* **State** that all members will wear safety equipment as outlined in the Participation Waiver during all activities.
* **State** what specific safety guidelines your organization will follow, outlining how the group will protect its members and participants (for example, the type of safety equipment will be used, what national guidelines will be followed if the group is part of a national chapter).
* **State** in detail the type of activities the group will be engaging in.
* **State** that all members are required to acknowledge and abide by all of the above safety considerations, and to sign a participation waiver as a condition of membership.
* **State** that any violation of stated guidelines is grounds for immediate dismissal from your organization.
* **State** that these safety considerations, outlined in article XII, will be submitted to the Penn State Department of Health and Safety for approval.

**Article XIII: Publications and Other Communication Media (if your group’s primary recognized function involves a communication medium)**

* **State** that your organization will maintain a board of directors.
* **State** that board will be comprised of faculty or staff members.
* **State** the method your organization will use to select board members.
* **State** the terms of office for board members.