

How to Write A Club Constitution

What is a Club Constitution?

The constitution is the document used to guide your executive team in decision making, budgeting, conflict resolution and many other processes. The constitution will be referenced by both your club and the Clubs Coordinator in event of disagreements amongst the executive team.

What should your constitution look like?

Your constitution can be as detailed and specific, or short and open to flexibility as your club decides. Some club's constitutions are only a page long and others are much longer. The more extensive the constitution, the more your executive team will have concrete processes and policies to follow. In contrast, a simpler constitution means that your club will have fewer "rules" to follow. Keep in mind that everything you put in your constitution has to be followed by the club, members and the executive team. This means that too many complex processes in the constitution can be burdensome to the club.

What should your constitution cover?

The following topics must be covered in all SAMRU club constitutions:

Club Name

This is the name of your club. The name can include "MRU" but can't include the terms "association" or "union". These words can be substituted by "affiliation" and "united"

Objectives

This is what you club is forming to do/achieve

Membership

This section must state that all current MRU credit students can be members. A common mistake made in club constitutions is making the membership exclusive or opening the membership to non-MRU students. If you want to have non-MRU students involved with your club, they can be called associates or advisors. Your club can be targeted at a specific audience of students, but it must be open to all students interested in joining. This must be clearly stated in your constitution. You can also include club membership fees here if your club charges them.

❑ Duties

This is an outline of the executive positions and what their duties are. This can also include the term of office. All executives must be democratically elected every year, but you can decide if executives can serve multiple terms or not (as long as they are students)

❑ Elections

All executive positions must be democratically elected each year. It is up to your club when these elections are held. Many clubs hold their elections at their club's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is often in March or April. Here you must outline when the election will be held, how the election will be run (secret ballot, etc) and how many members have to be present in order for the election to be held (the quorum). You will also need to outline what percentage of the vote is needed for an executive to be elected.

❑ Meetings

This can include your general meetings (with your members), your executive meetings and your AGM. You will need to state how many members are required to run the meetings (quorum) and how you will let people know when and where the meetings are happening

❑ Impeachment

Impeachment is how your club can remove an elected executive (not members) in the event that they deem this necessary. In this section you will need to include how many members need to be present for the vote and what percentage of the vote is required to impeach. You can also include if the impeached executive can appeal the vote and how that process will work. If you would like to include a way for members to be removed, this can be called member removal or something similar (but not impeachment)

❑ Finance Audit

This section will state where you plan to get your funds. This can include SAMRU funds, membership fees, fundraising, sponsorships and event ticket proceeds. You will also have to define your fiscal period, which will be one year long (ex September 1 to August 31).

This section will need to include who has signing authority and who can approve purchases.

Amendments

This section lays out the procedures for amending your constitution. How many people are required to vote on this and by what percentage does the vote need to pass? Do members vote on this, or just executives?

Property

This section will cover who can approve and purchase club property, how property will be used, stored and disposed of.

Bylaws

This section is optional and would include any bylaws the club has

Where can you find help writing your constitution?

If you are struggling with writing your constitution you can contact the Clubs Coordinator at clubs@samru.ca or the clubs administrators at clubsadmin@samru.ca. We are always happy to help!

What if you need to change something in your constitution?

Changes can be made at the Clubs Coordinators request before the constitution is approved. If changes need to be made after this you will need to follow the procedures laid out in the Amendments section of your club's constitution.

Common Mistakes

Not signing the constitution

Your executive team must sign YOUR constitution, not the sample Constitution.

Not keeping a copy of the Ratification package and constitution

It is highly recommended that your club keep a copy of your signed ratification package and constitution for yourselves. This is an important document for your executive team to reference.