



# Constitution Guidelines

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## *Introduction and Requirements*

The Campus Activities Center at the University of Wyoming requires all student organizations to submit a constitution as a part of the registration process. This can be one of the more complex parts of starting or maintaining your organization. This guide is meant to help in the process.

## *What is a Constitution?*

A constitution is the founding document of an organization, which provides a framework for how your group will function in the short and long term. The purpose of such a document is to provide specific guidelines for leadership as it is passed on to future officers. A good rule when constructing your constitution is to leave as little grey area as possible.

## *University of Wyoming Requirements*

Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) are required to include a number of things in their constitution if they wish to be approved. Some of these are statements on dues, membership requirements, a non-discriminatory clause, and such. These will be emphasized in the guide to each article. While not mandatory, it is highly recommended that you follow this standard format when constructing your constitution:

- PREAMBLE
- ARTICLE I. NAME
- ARTICLE II. PURPOSE
- ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP
- ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS
- ARTICLE V. OPERATIONS
- ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS
- ARTICLE VII. FINANCES
- ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

## *How to use this guide*

The outline that follows this is designed to help you construct your constitution. A breakdown of each article will be provided, including the purpose of the article, guiding questions for your group to think about, and sample statements. Some things to be aware of:

- Sample text will not have any special formatting.
- **All mandatory text will be listed separately and bolded. These statements must appear word for word in your constitution in that article. These will be listed in the “Required” sections.**
- ***If text is in bold italics, that means that a statement of a similar nature must be included in your constitution, but it does not have to be verbatim. These will be found under the “Required” sections.***
- *Text that we suggest appear in your constitution will be listed in italics.*

# Article Descriptions

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## **PREAMBLE**

Purpose: A preamble is an introductory statement that explains the purpose of the organization and constitution.

Guideline: The preamble should include the name of the organization. This is not the section to state the purpose of the organization, as that will come in Article II. In some cases, even a brief history is included.

Required: NONE

Sample:

Section #. The Quidditch Club at the University of Wyoming hereby establishes this constitution in order to guide the organization towards fulfilling its purpose.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

Purpose: This Article will make it known what to call your organization.

Guidelines: In this Article, you will put the exact title, and acronym if applicable, of your organization. If your group does have an acronym, you may use it from here on out in the rest of the articles. There are some guidelines to be aware of when naming your organization that can be found in the [RSO Handbook](#) & [UW Regulation 8-234](#). For example, no group on campus may use the “University of Wyoming” as a precursor to their name, but “at the University of Wyoming” may follow it.

Required:

**Section #. The name of this organization will be the Quidditch Club at the University of Wyoming (QC-UW).**

Sample:

Section #. The name of this organization will be the Quidditch Club at the University of Wyoming.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

Purpose: This Article will be the basis for why the group was founded, and why the group exists.

Guidelines: Anyone who reads this section should be able to understand what your organization does. The purpose should be made crystal clear in this article. In some cases, this will be the guiding principles upon which your organization was founded. For others, it may be as simple as providing entertainment. If you have a multitude of reasons, outlining your purpose using bullet points may help make this section clear.

Required:

**Section 1. QC-UW is willing to abide by all policies established by the University of Wyoming.**

Sample:

*Section #. The purpose of the QC-UW shall be:*

- a. to function as a student organization*
  - b. to encourage participation*
  - c. to foster loyalty to the organization*
  - d. to reflect the purpose of the organization’s foundation*
  - e. to foster a (broad educational, social, cultural, political) goal*
  - f. etc., as desired.*
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### ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

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Purpose: As with any group or organization, you want to people to know what it takes and means to be a member, as well as any requirements of the members. There are three (3) essential components to this section.

Guidelines: First, you must lay out what it means to be a general member of the organization, from who the targeted groups are to what is required of them and what the perks of being a member are. Second, you must state whether or not there are dues for being considered a member. Lastly, you must incorporate a non-discrimination clause. When outlining your membership parameters, think about your purpose, and the types of students who would be interested in your group. That should help you shape this section. If your organization will be collecting dues, be sure to outline the benefits the members who are paying dues and those who are not. For instance, voting rights may only be granted to members who are current with their dues.

Required:

**Section #.** **The QC-UW admits students without regard to their race, gender\*, religion\*\*, color, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, creed, ancestry, political belief, or any other applicable protected category and affords each member all the rights, privileges, programs, and other activities generally accorded or made available to members of the organization.**

\*Per UW Regulation 8-234, membership eligibility based on gender is valid only if gender is a bona fide membership qualification.

\*\*Per UW Regulation 8-234, the only time "religion" may be excluded from this statement is when your organization's aims are primarily sectarian.

**Section #.** ***Dues for membership in QC-UW shall be \$5 per year payable by the first Wednesday of the month of October. OR There shall be no dues for QC-UW.***

Samples:

**Section #.** *Membership in this organization shall be open to all University of Wyoming students.*

**Section #.** *Eligible members must (be a member of a specific college/major, etc.) to become a member.*

**Section #.** Membership shall be limited to currently enrolled UW students, faculty, and/or staff members.

**Section #.** Non-dues paying members may still attend general meetings, but will be unable to participate.

### ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

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Note: There must at be at least one of the following, or an equivalent, Officers in your organization: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Each of these positions must have a description of duties so that members know what to expect of each role. These are the positions which will be elected by your organization on a routine basis.

Guidelines: Be specific with your requirements. In the case of the VP, it is normal for them to oversee operations in the absence of the President. While you are required to have the above positions, you may expand beyond that. In some cases, a Historian, Publicist, Social Chair, and such are applicable. Dependent on the mission of your organization, you may not want to list these additional Officers here, but rather leave them to the discretion of the most current active membership. **You MUST have some sort of language containing the line of succession in case of absence from the President of your organization.** Additionally, you will want to determine if there are requirements that each Officer must meet, such as GPA, office hours, committee attendance, etc...

Required:

**Section #.**

***The Executive Officers of QC-UW shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.***

***a. The duties of the President shall preside at all meetings, call special meetings, and to appoint committees.***

***b. The duties of the Vice-President shall be to perform all duties of the President in her/his absence, and to serve as a program chairperson.***

***c. The duties of the Secretary shall be to keep an accurate, permanent record of the organization, to take charge of all correspondence, to notify the Branding Iron and post information regarding meetings and activities, and make necessary reports.***

***d. The duties of the Treasurer shall be to keep an accurate and complete record of all monetary transactions and to collect club dues. The Treasurer must disperse Fund money in accordance with regulations of the University.***

Samples:

**Section #.**

*Other officers can be chosen at the discretion of the club, (for example) historian, publicist, etc.*

**Section #.**

All Officers must maintain a cumulative and semester 2.0 GPA in order to remain in their position. Should their GPA should fall below 2.0, they will be removed from their position, and a special election organized by the remainder of the Officer Committee will be held.

## **ARTICLE V. OPERATIONS/ELECTIONS**

Purpose:

In order to ensure as smooth a transition as possible between Officer Committee/Boards, it is essential for an organization to have clear election procedures, which should be the focus of the Operations Article.

Guidelines:

The main feature of this Article will be the Elections Procedures. When putting this together, you will want to focus on the timeline, duration of office, the percentage of votes a candidate must secure in order to be the victor, how nominations are made, how the vote will be held, and qualifications to hold office.

In general, elections are held in the Spring and take effect shortly thereafter so that Officer Administrations have a brief overlay to allow for some time for the new Officers to get acquainted with their role with the help of their predecessors. Additionally, terms tend to be only for one (1) year to coincide with the academic year. In general, groups tend to rely on a 2/3 majority or a ¾ majority total in order to secure victory. Remember, a majority means 1+ whatever the 2/3 or ¾ is. For instance, if your group chooses a 2/3 majority vote requirement, and there are nine (9) members of your organization, in order to win, the candidate would need seven (7) votes. There are many ways to nominate a member for election. They can range from a nominating committee, from the floor, a combination, and such. Votes, much like nominations, can be taken in a variety of ways, from show of hands to secret ballot. This is at the discretion of the organization.

With regards to qualifications for office, this is entirely dependent on the needs of your organization. If your group is specifically geared towards Marketing majors, requiring the officer to be currently enrolled in the program might be a good idea. In the cases where your group doesn't have such a narrow focus, you might want to ignore adding any qualifications.

You may also want to consider procedures in the cases where an Officer position opens outside of the normal election cycle.

Required:

**Section #.** Following each selection or change of any officer/advisor, the Campus Activities Center will be notified.

**Section #.** *Election of Officers*

- a. The officers shall be elected (for example) each spring semester to allow time to prepare the budget, revise the constitution as needed, and prepare registration forms for the coming year.*
- b. Officers are elected and activated (for example, each April, etc.) for a period of (one year).*
- c. All candidates shall be nominated from the floor.*
- d. Voting shall be (by ballot, standing vote, show of hands, oral vote, or etc.), as decided by the organization.*
- e. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of all votes cast shall be necessary for election.*

Sample:

**Section #.** In the instances where an Officer is not able to complete their term, a special elections committee will be formed in order to determine the best manner to fill the vacancy.

**Section #.** A vacancy occurring in any office shall be filled by a person elected by a simple majority vote of the members of the QC-UW.

**Section #.** One (1) week prior to the election, all candidates will have the opportunity to speak as to their qualifications and answer questions in a debate style format in order to aid the membership as they determine who to vote for.

## **ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS**

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Purpose: This Article informs the reader as to the time, location, and frequency of the organization's meetings.

Guidelines: Being as specific as possible will enable anyone who reads your constitution to attend your meetings should they desire too. You may also want to consider who can call special meetings of the organization. If there are special rules, such as Robert's Rules of Order, that your organization follows, this would be the place to include that.

Mandatory:

**Section #.** *The QC-UW meeting time shall be determined and announced by the executive board prior to the first week of the fall semester.*

Sample:

**Section #.** *Special meetings may be called by the (president, Executive Committee, organization, etc.) when necessary.*

## **ARTICLE VII. FINANCES**

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Purpose: In this Article, you will state where your funding is coming from, and what will happen to any funds should the organization be disbanded.

Guidelines: If your organization does not collect dues, then when it comes to events you may rely on funding from ASUW funding or through fundraisers. If your group makes the decision to dissolve, then it must be clear with where any funds are to be dispersed.

Required:

**Section #.** *The QC-UW is funded through membership dues and ASUW.*

**Section #.** *In the event that the organization is dissolved, all remaining funds collected will be used to pay off any debts incurred by the organization. Remaining funds shall be returned to their original sources. Any additional remaining funds will be donated to ASUW for use by RSO Funding Board to support other student organizations.*

Samples:

**Section #.** The QC-UW is funded through ASUW and the Hogwarts Alliance.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

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Purpose: By having a clear procedure to make amendments to your Constitution, future groups will have the ability to adapt the organization to the needs of the members. All amendments are subject to review and approval of the Campus Activity Center.

Guidelines: Some things to consider when writing this article is how you want future iterations of your organization to go about making changes. While you do not want the amendment process to be impossible, you also do not want it to be something that is done easily, or without considerable thought being put into it. You want to consider who can propose them, if there will be a waiting period between proposals and votes, how many members must vote in favor of an amendment for it to stand, and whether the person proposing the amendment can accept changes during the discussion phase of the process.

Required:

**Section #.** **After University recognition is granted, any proposed changes in the approved constitution or bylaws must be presented to the Campus Activity Center for approval, and such changes shall not be effective until approval is granted.**

**Section #.** *This Constitution may be amended by a 2/3 majority of those members at the meeting.*

Samples:

**Section #.** *Any proposed amendments to this Constitution must be presented and discussed at least one (1) week prior to voting takes place.*

**Section #.** There shall be at least one (1) week before it can be voted upon should any changes in language to an amendment take place after the discussion period.

**Section #.** No changes in language to an amendment may take place during a meeting in which it is being voted on.