

Article I – Name & Purpose

Section 1. Name

This section should describe the name of the organization and any other acronyms or names you go by.

Here's an example: The name of this organization shall be [organization name], a Registered Student Organization located at the University of South Carolina Aiken, hereinafter referred to as [acronym/short name].

NOTE: If the organization will not use an acronym, you do not need to include the "hereinafter" phrase.

Section 2. Purpose

In this section, you should list the organization's objectives, purpose, mission, vision, and values. In other words, this section should encompass what the organization is about and what you'll do.

Here's an example: The purpose of [organization name] shall be to [list what you intend to do, your mission, etc.]. Our [mission/goal] is to [list mission/goal].

Section 3. Affiliations

If the organization is affiliated with a national or international organization, you can use this section to detail that affiliation and any requirements you must meet in order to keep this affiliation.

Here's an example: [organization name] is affiliated with the [national/international] organization [list affiliated organization's full name]. As part of this affiliation, our student organization agrees to abide by all [list affiliated organization's full name] bylaws and [list any other requirements here].

Article II – Membership

Section 1. Eligibility/Becoming a Member

The organization should use this section to describe who is eligible to become a member of the organization and describe the process of how new members join the organization. USCA's standard process can be found on page 10 of this handbook, but you may add additional stipulations.

This section must also include the following statements:

[Organization name], as a registered student organization at the University of South Carolina Aiken, agrees to abide by the university's nondiscrimination policy.

[Organization name], as a registered student organization at the University of South Carolina Aiken, will not engage in any activities that are classified as hazing under the university's hazing policy.

Section 2. Active Member Definition

The organization should use this section to describe and define an active member. At a minimum, what are your members required to do to stay members? Is it someone who pays dues? Someone who attends a certain percentage of meetings/events? Both? Other?

Here's an example: To maintain active membership within [organization name], members must, in addition to the above requirements, [list the requirements for membership here].

You should also use this section to list all types of non-voting or representing membership such as associate, graduate, alumni, and honorary members.

Section 3. Member Removal Process

This section is necessary and should explain when membership ends and what the grounds are for taking disciplinary action and removing a member from membership, outline the process, who administers the process, and the possible results of disciplinary action.

Here's an example: If an active member fails to meet active membership requirements or graduates from the university, their membership with the organization will automatically end. An active member can also be removed from the organization for [list reasons here, reasons could be breaking university policies, malfeasance, etc.].

Example continued: To remove a member from the organization, a written request stating the reasons for dismissal signed by at least three (3) active members must be submitted at a regularly scheduled meeting. Before the next regularly scheduled meeting, written notification of the request and the reasons for dismissal must have been given to the offending member, who should come to that regular meeting prepared to address the accusations. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all active members present is required to remove the member from the organization.

Article III – Organizational Structure

Section 1. Executive Board

This section should describe the structure of the executive board, requirements, elections, etc. Everything and anything related to your executive board should be here. Please remember that all organizations are required to have at least two officers (President and Treasurer).

To start off the section we recommend using this space to describe the structure/hierarchy of the organization and all the leaders within the executive board. Here's an example: The elected leaders of [organization name] shall consist of [position 1], [position 2], [position 3] and [position 4]. Collectively they will be known as the Executive Board.

i. Qualifications

In this subsection, you will describe the qualifications for holding leadership in your organization. Standard requirements can be found on page 10 of this handbook. Please list any additional requirements your organization will have.

Here's an example: In addition to the University's GPA requirement of 2.0, members seeking to be part of the Executive Board of [organization name] must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0.

ii. Election Process

In this subsection, the organization is required to describe the process for electing its executive board. This process should be as detailed and clear as possible to ensure consistency within your election process from year to year. The election process must involve active members and be democratic in nature.

Here's an example: The Executive Board shall be elected on the 1st week of April and serve one-year terms. Candidates for a position must be nominated by another active member during the meeting before elections occur. Quorum shall be reached for all meetings where officer nominations or elections take place. Only active members in attendance are eligible to vote. All officers shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast. If no candidate for an office receives a majority of the votes cast, then only the top two candidates will be placed on a second ballot for that office until a majority is reached.

iii. Duties

Use this segment to describe the duties of all leaders of the executive board and then the duties of each position/leadership role. The organization should also detail how long their term is (is it 1 semester, a year, etc.).

Here is an example: All leaders of the executive board will serve one-year terms. During their term, all executive board leaders must [examples of duties could include: attend all executive board meetings and general meetings unless excused by the executive board, maintain a certain GPA throughout their term in office, attend all organization events unless excused by the executive board, etc.].

Here's an example of what this could look like for some frequently listed positions in constitutions: Each executive board leader must also complete the duties of their roles listed below: The [leader role] shall [list all duties of role]. The [second leader role] shall [list all duties of role].

iv. Resignation/Impeachment

In this portion, the organization should detail what happens if a leader on the executive board needs to resign or be removed from office.

Here's an example: If an Executive Board leader wishes to resign from their position, they must submit a written statement to the President resigning from their role and include the effective date.

Another example: An Executive Board leader whose dereliction of duty adversely affects the operations of the organization shall be subject to disciplinary action or removal from office. A written request stating the reasons for dismissal, signed by at least three (3) active members of the organization must be submitted at a regularly scheduled meeting. Before the next regularly scheduled meeting, written notification of the request and the reasons for dismissal must have been given to the offending Executive Board leader, who should come to that regular meeting prepared to speak. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all active members present is required to remove the executive board member from office.

Example for filling vacancies: Should any vacancies in the Executive Board arise, the President will assume the duties of that role until the end of their term. If the President position becomes vacant, the Vice President will assume the role until the end of their term.

Section 2. Committees

If your organization has committees, please include the following section. In this section, list committees, their functions, how chairpersons for each committee are selected, and how members are designated to serve on a committee. If committees are not part of the organization, you do not need to include this section.

Here is an example of some introductory text to this section: [organization name] will have [number] committees to include [list committees, some common examples include membership, programming, service, social, fundraising, marketing, etc. committees]. All members will be assigned to serve on a committee based on interest and availability.

i. Committee Chair Qualifications

Committees could be chaired by executive board members or by appointed chair positions. If you have chairs of committees that are not the executive board, you should include the following language in this section: Any student seeking to hold or holding a position in a student organization must maintain the cumulative GPA requirement for graduation and remain in good standing in their respective college (see page 10 of handbook for specifics). Any other qualifications required to head a committee should also be included.

ii. Election/Selection Process of Committee Chairs

Unlike Executive Board leaders, chairs and other leaders of the organization do not need to be elected. However, we still recommend you design a fair and democratic process to create buy-in for your members. Please detail that process here. Make sure to include the who, what, where, when, and how.

iii. *Duties of Committees and Committee Chairs*

In this portion, list what each committee is in charge of and detail what the duties of each chairperson are.

iv. *Resignation/Impeachment*

In this portion, the organization should detail what happens if a chair needs to resign or be removed from office. We recommend something similar to the executive board removal process.

Article IV – Meetings

Section 1. Types and Occurrence of Meetings

This section should describe what types of meetings you have, when and how meetings occur, notification of meetings, etc.

Here's an example: General meetings shall be held [weekly, bi-weekly, at least once a month] with additional meetings (i.e. special meetings) called by the Executive Board as needed. The first meeting of each semester will be held during the second week of classes. Written notification for all meetings will be given to active members at least one week in advance.

Section 2. Quorum

All constitutions should have a statement that defines quorum for the organization.

The required wording is: Action on any business, old or new, requires a quorum of [percent/fraction] of the active membership of the organization.

Here's an example: Action on any business, old or new, requires a quorum of 2/3 of the active membership of the organization.

Section 3. Basic Meeting Agenda/Procedures

This section should detail a sample meeting agenda and your general procedures for meetings. It's not required to include this in the constitution, but it is highly encouraged.

Article V – Funding

Section 1. Dues/Funding Resources

Within this section, the organization should detail how it will fund itself. Will it collect dues, fundraise, apply for funding?

Indicate how they will be collected and a provision stating that the policies, activities, and finances of the organization are subject to the control of the majority of its voting membership. Include when the dues will be collected and how they need to be paid, as well as what will be done if a member

does not pay their dues.

A reminder that first year organizations are not eligible for Student Activities funding. For additional financial information and to find out if your group qualifies for Student Activities Fees, consult with Caila Flanagan, Assistant Director of Student Leadership and Engagement.

If dues will be charged, an example phrase could be: Dues shall be charged for membership in [organization name] on a [semesterly/yearly/quarterly] basis. The amount of dues charged for each [semester/year/quarter] shall be determined at the first meeting of the fall semester. Membership dues can be paid during any semester and shall be collected by the [position who receives dues]. The [position who receives dues] must receive payment of dues within one month of the first day of class of each [semester/academic year/quarter] to be an active member of [organization name].

If the organization plans to fundraise, here's an example: [organization name] shall, as it deems necessary, undertake fundraisers for its own purposes. All fundraising shall be conducted in accordance with university policies.

If you plan to request Student Activity Fee Funding from Student Government, here's an example: [organization name] may finance its activities by applying for Student Activity Fee funds from Student Government (or their designee) after [organization name] has been recognized as a student organization by the Office of Student Leadership and Engagement.

Article VI – By-Laws

Section 1. By-Laws Statement

The organization shall establish by-laws to carry out the policies set forth in the constitution. A 2/3 vote of simple majority is generally required to approve by-laws or changes in existing by-laws.

Article VII – Amendments

Section 1. Amendment Proposal

In this section, you should detail who can propose an amendment to the constitution and how. As with elections, it is important to be specific when dealing with the amendment process. A quorum should be required for an amendment vote as well as a 2/3 vote of the attending membership. If anything should be changed or updated you should describe the process here.

Article VIII – Ratification

Section 1. Ratification Process

This section should detail how an amendment is ratified. Active membership must be involved in this process (it cannot just be your executive board).

Here's an example: The Executive Board will present the proposed amendment at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The amendment will be read aloud to the organization and debated. To pass an

amendment to this constitution, it must be approved by a two-thirds vote of active members present.

The constitution must also include the following ratification clause word for word: [organization name], as a registered student organization at the University of South Carolina Aiken, agrees to abide by the guidelines set forth in this constitution, all university policies, including those set forth in the Student Organization Handbook, as well as local, state, and federal law.

Be sure to include a signature page here too. You can have your Executive Board, all your members, etc. sign it if you would like. However, there must be at least one signature as well as the ratification date.