

# Registered Student Organization (RSO) Constitution Guidelines

The constitution should include the name of the group, the date the constitution was written, a preamble and articles outlining the rules of the organization. The constitution should be updated immediately when changes in operation of the organization are made.

Please note the sections marked in **red with an asterisk (\*)** are required.

## Preamble\*

An example: "We, the students at the University of Delaware, do hereby form the organization known as [Organization Name] for the purpose of [state the organization's broad purpose]."

## Articles

### I. **Name of the group\***

Example: "The organization shall be known as [Organization Name]."

### II. **Object of the organization\***

A detailed description of how the group will fulfill the purpose, aims and functions stated in the Preamble.

### III. **Affiliation with any other group**

A statement of affiliation with an external national, regional and/or local organization, if appropriate.

### IV. **Qualifications/criteria for selecting membership\***

All full-time, matriculated undergraduate students at any University of Delaware campus are eligible to join, vote and/or hold office within a student organization. Also include how you define a member and who is eligible. For example, do members need to attend a certain number of meetings or events? Do they need to pay dues or volunteer for a certain number of hours? Are there restrictions to the size of the group?

### V. **Non-discrimination clause\***

You must include the following:

The organization agrees to adhere to all policies and procedures of the University and all local, state and federal laws. Members will become acquainted with [policies and procedures](#) found on the University Student Centers website and the [Student Guide to Policies](#). This organization is viable, functioning, composed of at least six full-time undergraduate students and adheres to the [University of Delaware's Non-Discrimination/Title IX policies](#).

### VI. **Anti-hazing clause\***

You must include the following:

Members will become acquainted with policies and procedures found in the [Student Guide to Policies](#). This organization is viable, functioning, composed of at least six full-time undergraduate students and adheres to [University of Delaware's Hazing Policy](#). Hazing is defined as any action taken toward, or circumstances directed at, one or more students, which action or circumstance exposes such student(s) to unpleasant,

harassing, embarrassing, degrading or hazardous conditions, the endurance of which is intended to be a condition upon which the student(s) may become members of, or participate with, any group, regardless of whether the group is recognized by the University or has been formally organized.

VII. **Duties and privileges of membership**

What does membership allow them to do? Voting rights, etc.

VIII. **Other types of non-voting or representing membership**

List other types of members, for example, associate, graduate, alumni and honorary members.

IX. **Absence policies**

List any penalties for members who do not attend meetings or events, for example, revoking voting privileges, membership status, etc.

X. **Qualifications for officers\***

**All officers must be full-time, matriculated, undergraduate University of Delaware students with a minimum GPA of 2.5.**

We suggest including that any potential officer must be able to complete a full academic year in their role (i.e., no second-semester seniors, semester-abroad students, etc.)

XI. **Officers\***

Describe the titles of the officers, the duties of each and the qualifications for becoming an officer. Please list all other duties of the below officers. If you have additional officers, list them and their duties in this section, as well.

a. **President**

This organization shall have a President with the duties of calling and running meetings and handling day-to-day affairs. The President shall be responsible for the registration of the Registered Student Organization and all required paperwork for the continuation of the organization (including start-of-the-year, mid-year and end-of-the-year packets). The President will receive all information from the Student Involvement Office from an undisclosed email database. [This information is to be used to help your RSO function, so please be sure to share the information with the entire board and organization members accordingly.] The President will help to appoint all standing and special committees.

We suggest requiring that the President is a member who has already served on the executive board for at least one year. RSOs can designate co-Presidents, however, only one of the two must be the RSO's primary contact for emails and other notifications.

b. **Vice President**

The Vice President shall serve the role of President if the President is absent, unable to serve the duties of President or resigns. The Vice President should also be responsible for checking the organization's mailbox for disseminating information about other activities offered by other RSOs and business promotions.

c. **Treasurer**

The treasurer shall be responsible for all group expenditures and revenues. The Treasurer shall submit all reimbursements to the Student Involvement Office for the

purpose of the organization. The Treasurer shall also maintain all group ledgers. The Treasurer should also be responsible for requesting funds from the allocation board. [Because of the intimate knowledge of the group's finances, we suggest you charge the Treasurer with duties similar to those of a Vice President.] The Treasurer shall also be responsible for all sales, solicitations and deposits for the organization.

d. Secretary

The Secretary shall record the events of all meetings of this organization and shall maintain minutes of those meetings. The Secretary shall take attendance of those present at meetings as necessary.

You may want to have the Secretary serve as the organization's historian with the goal of passing on accurate records of what the group has done over the past year and who was involved. The Secretary should also maintain the membership list and email database. You may want to make the Secretary the primary contact on Student Central.

e. Public Relations Chair

The Public Relations Chair shall be responsible for promotion of the group and their events. This includes making posters, flyers and brochures, updating web page information, entering information on the University Events web page and submitting press releases to the appropriate media.

XII. **Election of Officers\***

When and in what manner will elections be held (e.g., secret ballot, show of hands, by voice, etc.)? Do the members need to be nominated? If so, how? What will be done if there is a tie? Who can vote? When do officers assume their new roles? What's the procedure for filling a vacancy?

You may want to consider having elections at the end of the fall semester to beginning of spring semester. This allows you to have greater continuity over time because often the former President and board will be present for one semester. You may also want to consider two-year positions, where someone serves as Vice President one year, then moves up to President the following year. Elections shall be held at least once per academic year.

a. Resignations

Clause regarding the exit of an officer

b. Officer transition\*

Officers should be elected in spring semester for the start of fall semester. A spring election will allow time for orientation. Elections in the spring allow former officers to train new officers. Do not pick the last week of the semester for elections.

XIII. **Policies and Procedures for Disciplining/Removing Officers and Members\***

Students may be removed for non-participation, misconduct, failure to fulfill job duties or violations of the constitution.

a. Removal of an officer

- i. A notification requesting the removal of an officer must be reported to the President. If the President's removal is being requested, the report must be

made to the Treasurer. Through the removal process, the President will then have five business days to call and hold a mandatory general meeting.

- ii. The officer will be notified of a vote for possible removal at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. During the meeting, the officer will be allowed time to address the organization to share any relevant defense prior to the voting for removal. The officer will have the opportunity to address the members of the organization and their concerns. The members, in turn, may then ask questions of the officer.
- iii. Members will then make an anonymous vote. A two-thirds affirmative vote of active student members is needed to remove the officer from their position. Officers will be notified of the voting results upon conclusion of the meeting.
- iv. The officer must return all organization equipment, property and documents within 72 hours of removal. The President will notify the Student Involvement Office immediately if there is a change in President or Treasurer.

b. Removal of a member

- i. A notification requesting the removal of a member must be reported to the President. A warning will be sent to the member of the request with necessary improvements and a date by which those must be seen. If the member does not make the improvements as requested by the President within the warning, they will be asked to go through the formal removal process.
- ii. Once a formal request for the removal of the member is established, the President will then have five business days to call and hold a mandatory officer meeting with the member. The member must be notified of the meeting at least 72 hours in advance.
- iii. At the meeting the member will have the opportunity to address the officers and their concerns. The officers, in turn, may then ask questions of that member. If the member does not appear or chooses to not participate in the meeting, the officers will be allowed to make a vote at the scheduled meeting. A two-thirds affirmative vote is needed to remove the member from the organization. The member will be notified of the voting results upon conclusion of the meeting.

XIV. Meetings

Please indicate how many meetings the group will have per month, where they will be held and how the meetings are called. It is recommended that general group meetings be held one a month and executive board meetings be held bi-monthly. In addition, we would encourage you to meet with your advisor at least monthly.

XV. Dues, if applicable

Include 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 pay, as well as what will be done if a member does not pay their dues. If there are no dues collected, please state so.

XVI. **By-Laws**

The organization shall establish by-laws to carry out the policies set forth in this constitution. A two-thirds or simple majority [select one] vote is generally required to approve by-laws or changes to existing by-laws.

XVII. **Procedures for Decision-Making**

Consider using the rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order to govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the by-laws or the special rules of order of this organization.

XVIII. **Establishment of Committees**

List all committees and the duties of each.

XIX. **Selection of an Advisor\***

The advisor must be a full-time professional faculty or exempt staff person; no part-time/non-exempt, graduate students, alumni, or community members may serve as advisor. Please describe how the advisor will be chosen and what duties they will have (e.g., attending meetings, events, offering advice, etc.). A student organization has the right to change their advisor at any time.

The Student Involvement Office is the principal contact regarding policies and procedures for functioning as a student organization. The purpose of the advisor is to have another professional assist with guidance of the organization and to develop leadership skills. An ideal advisor should be familiar and in agreement with the objectives of your organization.

XX. **Disbursal of Organizational Assets Should the Group Become Defunct\***

The University of Delaware shall inherit the assets of any RSO, should the group become defunct.

XXI. **Define a Quorum**

Establish the minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be conducted legally. It is a protection against the possibility that a small number of individuals within an organization might get together and transact business in an under-representative way. Generally, a number that is 30–50% of the membership works well.

XXII. **Yearly Review of the Constitution**

At the end of the spring semester the current officers shall review the constitution and propose all amendments that could improve the operation of the RSO.

XXIII. **Rules for Ratifying the Constitution\***

Ratification requires a two-thirds or simple majority [select one] vote of the organization and approval by the Student Involvement Office.

XXIV. **Rules for Amending the Constitution\***

Amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote of the entire membership and advanced notice to all members of the proposed change.

## Signatures\*

President (type their name here): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
President Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Treasurer (type their name here): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Advisor (type their name here): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

University Student Centers Staff (type their name here): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
University Student Centers Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date