



STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

Student Groups Constitution Reference Guide:

2025-2026

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What is a Constitution?

The purpose of a Student Groups Constitution is to ensure that the Group has a structure in place for selecting individuals to act on behalf of and for the mandate of the Group. Having a well-crafted Constitution encourages a sustainable and stable Group that can maintain its activities from one year to the next with limited downtime due to learning curves, lack of clarity, uncertain process, or perceived/actual unfairness in selection of executives.

The Constitution does these things by setting out the executive officer positions of the Group, how they are filled, and each position's roles and responsibilities. By doing so, the individuals fulfilling these roles benefit from having a set of clear and consistent duties, which makes it easier for them to do the best job possible for the Group.

Each section of the Constitution should be clear, concise, and relevant to the Group's own chosen structure, environment, and activities. There is no need to make it unnecessarily complicated or obscure. Any Group member should be able to understand the Constitution.

REQUIRED Sections

- Name and acronym if any
- Mandate (the purpose of the group)
- Membership (who is a member, membership categories)
- Meetings of Membership (frequency, quorum, procedures for full Group meetings and meetings of the Group executive)
- Composition of Group Executive (positions, eligibility)
- Roles and Responsibilities of Executive Officers (duties)
- Election of Executive Officers (when, election format, nominations, term length, dealing with vacancies)
- Removal of Executive Officers (when, why, how)
- Amendment (process)
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

OPTIONAL Sections

- Group Advisor / Delegates (roles, selection)
- Affiliations (e.g. MacEwan chapter of other organizations)

- Finances (membership fees, if any; signing authorities; budget/expense requirements)
- Closure (process, responsibility)

There are many different and legitimate ways of organizing a group and running meetings. Organizational structure is not 'one size fits all'. Determine first how the group will fulfill its mandate and through what sort of activities. Having an idea of what the group will be doing can help identify the executive positions that will support these aims. Feel free to consult the Student Group Department with any questions or ideas about the Group's structure and operation. We can help you find something that works for your Group.

Sections of the Constitution

Name

Identify the official name of the Group and the preferred acronym if there is one.

Names are subject to requirements set by SAMU Student Groups procedure which can be found in the Student Groups Department Documents on Student Groups Connect, or on the SAMU website.

Student Groups are not permitted to use the word "association," "society," or "union" in their name

Name changes must be provided to the Manager of Student Groups for approval.

Mandate

This comes from the objectives approved in the group's initial application or from subsequent changes that have been approved by members. These are the reasons the Group was formed and continues to operate. The Groups activities and events should always work towards achieving the aims set out in the Group's mandate. If your Group's focus has changed, the members should be consulted, and the mandate updated if appropriate.

Membership

Membership can only include current MacEwan students.

Alumni, students at other institutions, community partners, advisory members, professional resources, affiliates, and associate members may only participate in group activities as guests.

Membership in groups is open to all students. Each group should maintain a membership list that is kept confidential. This helps the group communicate with members about business and various events or activities, and to let them know about any executive position

opportunities and selections. Make sure the list is not abused and promptly remove anyone who requests to be taken off.

Meetings

A Meeting is an organized assembly of current or prospective student group members to make decisions or discuss group objectives or operations. There are several types of meetings groups can define in their constitution.

Types of Meetings:

- **Annual General Meeting** – During this meeting, the group can discuss elections, amend the constitution, or make other significant decisions.
- **Event Planning Meeting** - Groups may hold several event planning meetings before an upcoming event. During these meetings, the group can delegate tasks, create an event schedule, and complete other planning requirements.
- **Regular Meeting** - Groups may hold regular meetings throughout the semester. During these meetings, the group can plan activities for the upcoming semester, discuss topics of importance to the group, and socialize with other members.

In the constitution groups must set out important elements pertaining to the different types of meetings, including who must attend, when they are held, what constitutes quorum, which items are to be discussed, how decisions are made, etc...

Voting Thresholds

The group can also determine what form of decision-making best suits the group and their members' preferences. Most commonly, these include simple majority and consensus. There are many other approaches, so if you want to take a different route, the Student Groups Department can help you find something that fits.

Executive Officers

The executive officers are the students who provide leadership and manage the group. A lot of different structures and roles are possible, but it is important that each person who is an executive officer knows the role and responsibilities for the position. It can be useful to keep duties general in the Constitution and then expand on each position in a separate job profile. This approach allows for a good amount of flexibility to update the job profile when needed, without necessarily needing to change the Constitution.

The Student Group Department is available to help with anything that might be confusing in this regard, as well as to help give direction or facilitate a discussion if an executive team experiences difficulty at any time. If an executive has not been fulfilling their role, the

removal process for executive officers should also be addressed in the group's Constitution so that conflict can be minimized as much as possible.

For administrative purposes, there should always be a president and treasurer identified in the constitution. The other three executive positions may receive any title the group deems appropriate.

Not everyone involved in the operations of the group needs to be an executive doing so can sometimes create problems and confusion. A situation of 'too many cooks in the kitchen' can develop. It is fine to have people contribute to designated volunteer roles (such as an event planner or social media coordinator) that do only those things at the direction of the executive and membership.

Sample Executive Officer Positions

President

To oversee the development of the group, foster group unity, preside at all meetings and ensure that the group functions properly, follows procedures and meets its obligations.

Treasurer

To receive all student groups' monies and deposit them into the group's account. To ensure all funding and purchase requests are completed correctly and have the appropriate documentation attached. The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that the account balance is correct and that any grants received are accounted for.

Sample Alternative/Additional Executive Officer Positions

- Secretary
- Vice President (VP)
- VP Communications
- VP Internal
- VP External
- VP Finance
- VP Events
- VP Administration
- VP Fundraising

Sample Duties and Responsibilities for Executive Officers

- General leadership and guidance
- Member recruitment
- Fundraising
- Budgeting
- Deposits
- Expenditures
- Record keeping
- Preparing and distributing agenda for meetings
- Event organizing
- Updating changes to executives/signing authorities
- Communications (incoming, outgoing – members, outgoing – others)
- Website maintenance
- social media
- Reporting requirements
- Designated liaison (Student Groups Department/SAMU, faculty, university department, external community/organizations)
- Regular programming/activity coordination
- Official delegates for affiliate organizations
- Volunteer coordination/management

Election

Election of executive officers must be done annually on Student Groups Connect. The most important aspect of electing executive officers is to make sure it is an open, transparent, and participatory process that involves the whole membership. It doesn't need to be extravagant or overly complicated. Members should know what the process is and be aware of the opportunity to both be a candidate and contribute to the selection of candidates.

In the constitution, the group should state when elections are to be held, the nomination process, and how long each executive is expected to hold their position.

Groups may apply nomination criteria for candidates such as an application/letter of interest, minimum prior membership duration, shadowing of current executives, etc. Nomination criteria must be set out in the constitution.

Removal of Group Executives

The removal process for student group executives must involve the Manager of Student Groups. Groups cannot remove an executive from their position without the Manager of Student Groups' approval.

In the constitution, the group may identify what constitutes removal from the executive and how the group would like to proceed once a breach has occurred.

Amendment

As a group evolves, grows, or shifts focus, it may find that certain parts of the Constitution should be updated. These updates are done by following the Constitution's amendment process. Whatever process is decided, it needs to be followed for the amendment to be valid. The Student Group Department needs to be provided with the updated Constitution, and the new version does not have effect until it is approved by the department and posted on Student Groups Connect.

The process should be selected so there is a thorough and open consultation procedure. It should also strike a balance between being flexible enough to change and being reserved so that the Constitution is not changed too frequently or on a whim. Because the Constitution guides the overall structure of the group, it is important to engage the full membership of the group on Constitutional matters. Support can be made available to facilitate that kind of consultation if your group would benefit from it.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

When issues arise within a student group, groups should first try to resolve the issue internally, before escalating the issue to the Manager of Student Groups.

Within the constitution, groups should determine who is responsible for receiving complaints and how complaints are to be handled. Alternative dispute resolution can include informal dialog, direct negotiations, or formal mediation process.

If mediation is required, groups must outline who the mediator is and what is expected of them to ensure the mediation process is fair, equitable, and transparent.

Official Delegate / Affiliation - *Optional*

If the group is a part of a larger organization, the group's relationship with the other organization should be identified. If the group has delegate selection responsibilities or roles/voting privileges otherwise, it is good to determine how these things will be handled.

Student Groups Advisor - *Optional*

Some Groups may find it beneficial to have an advisor. These positions are filled by staff/faculty members at the university. Having an advisor can help groups gain access to additional expertise, especially about specific industries, or subject disciplines, that can make it easier for the group to fulfill its mandate. Advisors should take a supporting role; the group members should still make the decisions.

Note: it is the group's responsibility to reach out to and obtain an advisor.

Finances - *Optional*

All finances are held through SAMU's accounting system. The finance section of the Constitution reaffirms this requirement. It can also be used to address any other financial matters, such as keeping a target minimum balance for the following year. If the group assesses a membership fee, the details of how much the fee is, when it is to be paid, and by whom, should be noted here.

Closure - *Optional*

Setting out a closure process for the group allows for a smooth winding down to take place. It helps the final group of executive officers to know what needs to be done and how to go about doing it to wrap up the Group's last items of business. It is also important for groups to indicate what they would like done with remaining funds if they close with money in their accounts.

Definitions to use in your Constitution:

- **Adopt:** to approve a document as-is when presented to the group.
- **Advisor:** a faculty member who serves as a mentor/liaison for a group.
- **Affiliation:** the formal tie between a group and another organization.
- **Agenda:** the document that contains meeting details and the items to be discussed and decided at the meeting.
- **Amendment:** the change to a document that is proposed and voted on.

- **Amendment Proposal:** the identification of the changes for a document and the rationale for the changes.
- **Consensus:** decisions made by compromise and cooperation to find a common ground solution that can be accepted by all parties.
- **Constitution:** the framework document that establishes a group's structure and expectations.
- **Decision-Making Model:** the process selected by a group for how that group will make decisions.
- **Delegate:** the person selected to represent the group at conferences or other organization's meetings.
- **General Meeting:** the meeting of the group where formal business items are decided if there are any, such as the election of executives.
- **Nomination:** the naming of an individual as a candidate for election to a position.
- **Notice:** the written identification of the meeting details and agenda provided to group members.
- **Petition:** a written request made for a specific action to be taken.
- **Quorum:** the minimum number of members that must be present and able to vote before a vote can be taken.
- **Recurrent:** a repeating event or requirement.
- **Simple Majority:** decisions made by a direct vote with 50%+1 voting in favour.
- **Solicit:** to seek an individual for a specific purpose, action, or role.
- **Term:** the time an executive holds a position and has authority to act for the group according to the group's Constitution.
- **Unanimity:** a condition of consensus that requires that no party is opposed to a voting item.
- **Vacancy:** an unfilled executive position when an executive resigns, is removed, or no one is elected.

Student Groups Constitution Template

Note: Please use the following template to help build your group's Constitution

Constitution for [Group name]

Article 1 – Name

The Student Group's official name will be **'[Group name]' [acronym in parenthesis if applicable]**. No other name will be used in the advertisement or representation of the group. Changes to the group's official name will be submitted to the Student Group Department for approval.

Article 2 – Mandate

The purpose of the group is **[list of objectives from the group's approved mandate]**.

The group is not an agent or representative of SAMU and/or MacEwan University and its views and actions in no way represent SAMU and/or MacEwan University.

Article 3 – Membership

Membership is open to all students of MacEwan University.

Membership is only open to current MacEwan University Students. Non-MacEwan University students may participate in group activities as guests.

Article 4 – Meetings

At least one general meeting will be held each fall and winter term. Notice of a general meeting will be provided by email to members at least seven days before.

Quorum for general meetings is **[choose a number of members required to be in attendance to conduct business and make decisions]**. Voting will be done by **[simple majority/consensus (select one as appropriate)] decision-making model.**

If a quorum is not reached for a general meeting, the group executive may vote for a particular decision or business item, except elections.

The group executive will meet regularly to lead and manage the group. Quorum for group executive meetings requires at least **[select how many]** executive officers to be present. The

group executive will operate on a [simple majority/consensus (select one as appropriate)] decision-making model.

Article 5 – Composition of Group Executive

There will be a group executive responsible for governance and management of the group. Only current MacEwan University students are eligible to be on the group executive.

The group will have an executive consisting of [select appropriate number] executive officers, namely:

President

Treasurer

[Title of Executive #3]

[Title of Executive #4]

[Title of Executive #5]

(If there are additional executive officer roles list them here.)

The duties and responsibilities of the President will include:

[list the president's duties and responsibilities].

The duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer will include:

[list the treasurer's duties and responsibilities].

The duties and responsibilities of the **[Title of Executive #3]** will include:

[list the executives duties and responsibilities].

The duties and responsibilities of the **[Title of Executive #4]** will include:

[list the executives duties and responsibilities].

The duties and responsibilities of the **[Title of Executive #5]** will include:

[list the executives duties and responsibilities].

(Identify the duties and responsibilities for any other executive officers if your group has more.)

Additional duties and responsibilities may be assigned or undertaken as they arise.

Article 6 – Election of Executive Officers

Election of the executive officers will occur annually through the Student Groups Connect platform in the Winter semester.

Voting is anonymous, and only current MacEwan University students are eligible to vote for executive officers.

Nomination of candidates for the group executive will be **[advance nomination /OR/ by nomination at an election general meeting (select one)]**. There will be a notice provided to members that nominations are open no less than **[specify timeline] before** the election is scheduled to occur.

If there is only one nominee for a particular executive officer position, there will be a “yes” or “no” vote for that candidate. In the case of a “no” result, the nominations will open again for another nominee to run.

The term for executive officers to hold their positions are from **[start date (identify month and day)]** following their election until **[end date (identify month and day)]** of the next calendar year or until an effective date of removal or resignation.

When a vacancy occurs, the membership must be notified of the vacancy. The executives may appoint an interim executive to the vacant position so as not to disrupt group operations. Nominations must be collected, and a by-election must take place to fill the vacancy

Article 7 – Removal of Executive Officers

An executive officer may be automatically removed by the Groups Manager due to behavior that is inconsistent with the code of conduct, failure to uphold requirements of the position, behavior inconsistent with SAMU and MacEwan University regulations, or acting against the group’s Constitution, mandate, or interests.

Group members or executive officers may petition the Groups Manager for the removal of an executive officer for not fulfilling duties and responsibilities or for failing to act for the best interest of the group or for acting against the group’s Constitution and mandate.

Article 8 – Amendment

The group executive will review any proposed amendments to the Constitution. If the group executive endorses the amendment, it will be voted on at a general meeting of the group. A **[simple majority/consensus (select one as appropriate)] decision-making model.** vote in favor at the general meeting is required for amendments to the Constitution.

Within ten business days of being passed by members, the amended Constitution must be provided to the Student Groups Department for final approval. Amendments have no effect until final approval by the Student Groups Department is received and the updated constitution is posted on Student Groups Connect.

Article 9 – Alternative Dispute Resolution

If a conflict arises within the student group complaints can be reported to [select executive]. Once the [select executive] has received the complaints, they may first attempt to help resolve the dispute through informal conversations between the parties.

If the complaint cannot be resolved through informal methods, the [select executive] will take on the role of mediator and will begin facilitating a formal mediation process aimed at providing all parties fair and equitable opportunity to address their concerns.

The mediator shall be responsible for:

1. Convening meetings with disputing parties
2. Ensuring that each party has an uninterrupted opportunity to present their perspectives, supporting evidence, and desired outcomes;
3. Promoting a respectful and constructive dialogue aimed at identifying mutually agreeable solutions;
4. Documenting key points of discussion, areas of agreement, and unresolved issues.

The primary objective of the mediation process is to achieve a resolution that upholds the best interests of the student group while fostering a respectful organizational culture.

Should a mutually satisfactory agreement be reached, the terms of the resolution will be formalized in a written mediation agreement, signed by all involved parties, including the mediator.

If the formal mediation process fails to resolve the conflict or if any party withdraws from mediation in good faith, the matter shall be escalated to the Manager of Student Groups

--- optional sections ---

Article 10– Official Delegate

Candidates for official delegate will be solicited when required. *(Identify this process.)*

Article 11 – Group Advisor

The group advisor helps promote the group to the department(s) with which the group works and offers the group guidance and support. The group advisor will not be a voting member of the group and will hold no approval authority for the group regarding its internal affairs or activities. A group advisor may be sought for each department with which the group works most.

Article 12 – Affiliation

The group will be affiliated with **[name of affiliated organization]**. The group will adhere to the expectations of SAMU policies and procedures and of **[name of affiliated organization]** resulting from the affiliation.

Article 13 – Finances

Finances will be held and processed through SAMU's group account system. All executive officers will be designated signing authorities. ***(If the group has a fee, identify the amount, who pays it, and when it is paid. Remember that fees need to be approved by the Student Groups Department.)***

Article 14 – Closure

The group may seek closure by a recommendation of the group executive to the Student Groups Department or by a two-thirds majority vote in favor of closure at a general meeting of Group members. The Student Groups Department may also recommend closure.

The group executive is responsible for closing all accounts and securely deleting all membership information. All grant money and property will return to SAMU. The final group executive may indicate a requested donation recipient for funds remaining in the group's account balance at the time of closure. If no donation is indicated, the remaining funds shall be deposited into the Student Groups Holding Account.

Date originally adopted by the membership: YYYY-MM-DD

Date last amended: YYYY-MM-DD

President Signature: _____

Date: _____

Treasurer Signature: _____

Date: _____