

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

PLEASE READ: *Please note that this is a very simple, sample constitution, provided to assist groups in preparing their **OWN, ORIGINAL** constitution with more substance. If you intend to apply as a new organization, your application may be denied if you simply fill in the blanks and turn this in as a completed constitution or you ignore required sections and/or clearly stated policies.*

Refer to ETSU General Policies on Student Organizations and Tennessee Board of Regents Policies for additional guidance when creating your constitution. These policies can be found at www.etsu.edu/sorc in the Policies and Forms section.

Article I NAME

Section (1) The name of the organization shall be _____.

Note: TBR 3.6—No person, group or organization may use the name of the institution or school in any manner, provided that registered student organizations may use the name of the institution or school following the name of the organization (i.e. “ETSU Kite Flying Club” would not be permitted; however, “Kite Flying Club at ETSU” is acceptable.) No person, group or organization may use the seal or any symbol of the institution or school without the prior written approval of the president of the institution or the director of the school, or his or her designee.

Article II PURPOSE/MISSION

The purpose(s) of this organization shall be to _____.

Note: The purpose of your organization should be clear, comprehensible, and unique. If your organization does not stand out as one that will be distinct from other organizations already on campus, then your application may be denied. Explain how your organization will offer a new perspective to the campus and how it will benefit the campus and its students.

Article III MEMBERSHIP

Section (1) Membership in this organization shall be open to _____. Example:

“any ETSU student or ETSU faculty or staff members that are interested in becoming a member of the organization.”

Note: If there are standards of membership such as class standing, grade point average, etc., required in order to gain membership in your group, those requirements should be outlined here. Example “All student members must be in good standing with ETSU and are required to keep a minimum GPA of 2.0.”

Section (2) Membership shall be for _____ (length of time).

Example: “one academic year starting in the fall semester and ending in the spring.”

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

*Members are welcome to renew their membership the following academic term.” **Note:** Many groups work on an academic calendar (August-May), while others follow a calendar year (January-December) or the State’s fiscal year (July-June.)*

Section (3) A member shall be considered in good standing with the organization as long as he/she fulfills the following criteria:

- A. _____ Example: “pays membership dues by the deadline stated;”
- B. _____ Example: “attends at least 50% of meetings each semester;”
- C. _____ Example: “performs a minimum of 25 hours of service per year.” **Note:** Section (3) should clearly outline the expectations you have for regular members including dues payment, general conduct, meeting and program attendance, service, etc.

Section (4) Members who remain in good standing are entitled to the following benefits _____.
Example: “voting privileges, free entry to organization-sponsored events, eligibility for leadership positions, opportunity to attend regional or national conferences or other professional development, etc.”

Note: This section should outline the privileges of membership that could be lost if the expectations outlined in Section (3) are not met.

Section (5) Failure to meet any of the requirements listed in Section (3) may result in loss of any or all privileges listed in Section (4); and, in extreme cases, may be grounds for removal of membership.

Note: If there are any requirements that are grounds for automatic removal of membership, those should be stated here. For example, if an honor society requires a certain grade point average, then students failing to maintain that G.P.A. will automatically be dismissed.

Loss of privileges/membership shall be determined by _____.

Example: “the faculty/staff advisor of the organization” or “the executive committee.”

Members being considered for disciplinary action may make appeals by _____.

Example: “providing written explanation/defense” or “attending a meeting to discuss.”

Note: Be very specific about how a member facing loss of privileges may plead their case. To whom should they provide a written explanation? Is there a time limit for appealing? Should they appear before a group in person? If so, what group and when?

Section (6) This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

Note: This statement is required for all organizations registered with ETSU.

Article IV DUES & TREASURY

Section (1) The local dues of (your organization’s name) is set at \$_____ per _____ (semester/year).

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

Section (2) The national dues are set at \$_____ per _____.

Note: *If your organization is not affiliated and paying dues to a national entity, Section (2) will not be needed.*

Section (3) In the case of organizational dissolution, the organizational funds will _____.

Example: "be donated directly to a non-profit organization voted upon by the existing membership."

Note TBR 4:7—*The organization must provide plans for the distribution of all funds and assets in the event of dissolution.*

Article V LEADERSHIP

Section (1) The elected officers of this organization shall include:

Examples:

- A. President **Note:** *Your group may use a different title, but all organizations must have one person listed as the primary convener, spokesperson, coordinator, communication contact, etc. for the organization.*
- B. Treasurer **Note:** *Any organization that plans to collect dues, make purchases or conduct fundraisers must have one person responsible for the treasury, though this role may be combined with others, such as Secretary, etc.*
- C. Vice-President
- D. Secretary

Section (2) Other appointed leaders of this organization shall include:

- A. Historian
- B. Committee Chairman (for each standing committee)
- C. Parliamentarian
- D. Other _____
- E. An Advisor who is a current, full-time employee of ETSU.

Note: *All registered organizations at ETSU are required to have a current faculty/staff advisor listed in the directory at all times.*

Section (3) Nominations will be held during the _____ meeting of the _____ semester.

Note: *This will depend on your organization's term of membership mentioned in Article III, Section (2). In other words, if your term of membership is January-December, officer nominations may happen the last week of November. That way, elections may take place the first week of December in order for new leaders to transition and take office in January. Think this process through completely.*

Examples of the qualifications & procedures for nominations:

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

- "A. Any person considering an elected officer position should become familiar with that respective position by reading the duties listed in the constitution and/or shadowing the current officer for a minimum period of time.*
- B. Any person nominated must be in good standing with the organization.*
- C. Persons nominated must be present in the nomination meeting.*
- D. Persons nominated must verify that they will be returning in the fall semester to fulfill their position if elected as an officer*
- E. Persons nominated for the position of President or Vice-President must verify that if they will be returning in fall, that they will be committed to a full term of service as outlined in Section (5).*
- F. Nominations must be made one week prior to official elections.*
- G. Nominations may be submitted in writing by email or in person at the meeting designated for nominations.*
- H. Nomination must be formally accepted by the nominee and noted in the minutes. Once accepted, the executive officers will verify qualifications (listed above) and bring that information to the general membership prior to elections."*

Section (4) Election of officers shall be held during the _____ meeting of the _____ semester.

Note: Refer to the timeline in Section (3).

Examples of the procedures for elections:

- "A. Elections will be conducted by paper ballot, facilitated by the meeting chair with the assistance of the faculty/staff advisor. If the meeting chair is running for a particular office, that specific vote will be facilitated by another member of the executive committee.*
- B. At least 1/3 of members must be present in order to conduct elections.*
- C. Elections may be held by email with votes being sent directly to both election facilitators (e.g. meeting chair and advisor), as long as all voting members are notified a minimum of 2 days in advance and at least 1/3 of members participate in the email vote.*
- D. Officers will be chosen by simple majority."*

Section (5) Term of office shall be for _____. Example: "one academic year; August-May."

Note: The term of office will most likely mirror the term of membership mentioned in Article III, Section (2).

Elected officers are eligible to hold the same position no more than _____ time(s).

Section (6) Any officer, member, or faculty removal is as follows:

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

A. Removal of Officers

Any elected or appointed officer may be removed from their position for failure to fulfill duties, misconduct, violation of university policies, or behavior deemed harmful to the organization. A removal process may be initiated by any executive board member or the faculty advisor. The officer in question must receive written notice of the concerns at least one week prior to a removal hearing. The officer shall have the opportunity to speak on their behalf before a vote is conducted. Removal from office shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present in consultation with the faculty advisor, provided quorum is met.

B. Removal of Members

A member may be suspended or removed from the organization for failure to maintain membership requirements, misconduct, repeated violations of organizational policies, or behavior harmful to the organization or university community. The member must be informed of the concerns and allowed an opportunity to respond before disciplinary action is taken. Removal of membership shall require a majority vote of the executive board in consultation with the faculty advisor.

C. Removal of Faculty/Staff Advisor

The faculty/staff advisor may be removed from their role if they are unable to fulfill advisor responsibilities or if a majority of the executive board determines a change is necessary for the organization's success. Removal of an advisor shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the executive board and notification to Student Activities and Organizations. A new advisor must be selected within a reasonable timeframe in accordance with university policy.

D. Appeals Process

Any officer or member removed from their position or membership may submit a written appeal to the executive board within seven (7) calendar days of the decision. The appeal will be reviewed at the next scheduled executive meeting, and the decision of the organization shall be final.

Note: *The advisor should be present for any process to remove an officer.*

Officers being considered for disciplinary action may make appeals by _____.

Example: "providing written explanation/defense" or "attending a meeting to discuss."

Note: *Be very specific about how an officer facing removal may plead their case. To whom should they provide a written explanation? Is there a time limit for appealing? Should they appear before a specific group in person? If so, what group and when?*

Section (7) Should an office become vacant in mid-term, a new officer shall be chosen by _____.

Example: "appointment by the executive officers and approval by the faculty/staff advisor" or "special election, with nominations being held one week prior to elections."

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

Section (8) Requirements to be an officer include being a registered student, in good academic standing, at ETSU for the entire term of office. Officers should maintain a G.P.A. of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

Note: *These are the minimum requirements according to ETSU and TBR. Your group may have additional requirements, but these must be included and followed in order for the organization to be recognized at ETSU.*

Section (9) A current, full-time employee of ETSU will be selected to serve as advisor by the executive board members at the beginning of each term.

Note: *Advisors may be selected for an unlimited amount of terms. Also groups can have more than one faculty/staff advisor in addition to alumni and community advisors if they choose.*

Article VI DUTIES OF LEADERSHIP

Note: *This section should include all roles and responsibilities charged to each officer (elected and appointed) within the organization. Providing details will assist your officers in their transition each year. There should be a section here for every officer listed in Article V, Sections (1) & (2).*

Section (1) The (president/chairperson) shall serve as head of the organization and be responsible for _____.

Examples: "calling for and presiding over all scheduled meetings, serving as the spokesperson and point of contact for the organization, voting only in the case of a tie, providing a charge and general oversight for all committees, establishing goals for the organization to work toward, etc."

Section (2) The vice president shall serve in absence of the president, and shall perform such duties as assigned by the president.

Note: *Many groups require the V-P to chair a standing committee, for others, the V-P serves as the chairman of the general meetings.*

Section (3) The secretary shall be responsible for maintaining all records of the organization (e.g. constitutional amendments, meeting minutes, membership rosters, attendance), and for recording the minutes of all meetings and communicating with membership on behalf of the executive committee.

Note: *These are generally the duties of the secretary, though some organizations include management of the treasury and/or oversight of marketing and publicity.*

Section (4) The treasurer shall be responsible for managing the organization's finances.

Note: *Duties may include collection of dues, coordination of fundraising efforts, general bookkeeping and financial reports to the executive committee, deposit of all*

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

funds in the organization's account, and approval of expenditures in conjunction with the president or faculty/staff advisor—requirement of at least two signatures and/or a vote of the general membership to approve budget expenditures is strongly advised. These procedures should be written in the constitution and strictly followed.

*****Organizations registered with ETSU do not automatically obtain non-profit status, and therefore are responsible for paying any taxes associated with profitable activities conducted by the group. If your organization is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, a tax return 990 must be filed annually with the Internal Revenue Service, and your organization's financial records are subject to audit by the IRS at any time.***

Section (5) The Advisor shall _____. Example: "attend at least 3 meetings each semester, assist with elections, oversee removal or members or leadership, etc."

Article VII COMMITTEES

Section (1) There shall be ____ (number) standing committees, and their charge is as follows:

Examples:

"A. Fundraising Committee: Responsible for ensuring that enough funds are raised annually to cover costs associated with programming, travel, activities, etc.

B. Marketing Committee: Responsible for publicity materials related to open activities, recruitment, fundraising and community involvement.

C. Membership Committee: Responsible for managing the recruitment of new members, new member orientation and verification of current members fulfillment of requirements for good standing."

Section (2) The president and/or executive committee may create new committees as needed.

Article VIII ORGANIZATION MEETINGS

Section (1) There shall be a minimum of ____ meetings per month during the spring and fall semesters. Additional meetings may be called as necessary by the president. Additional meetings must be announced at least ____ in advance of the meeting date.

Section (2) The business of these meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Note: *This is an example of a meeting format; if you do not use parliamentary procedure, DO NOT put this in your constitution.*

Section (3) This organization is subject to the policies and procedures of ETSU and the Tennessee Board of Trustees. **Note:** *This statement is Required.*

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

Section (4) A quorum for conducting business shall be considered to be _____.

Example: "1/3 of the members of the organization" or "a minimum of 10 members present," etc.

Section (5) The advisor should attend at least one regular meeting per semester in addition to the meeting of elections.

Note: *If you have not defined the job of the Advisor, this needs to be addressed at this time, if not in Article VI, Section (5).*

Section (6) All general meetings shall be open to _____.

Example: "any ETSU students, faculty, or staff that are already members in the organization or have an interest in obtaining membership with the organization."

Article IX AMENDMENTS

Section (1) Any member may submit a proposal amend this constitution.

Section (2) Amendments may be made according to the procedure below.

Example:

"A. Proposed amendments must be submitted two weeks in advance to an executive officer; the amendment will be voted on at the following meeting.

B. Executive officers and active members will be eligible to vote on any amendments.

C. For an amendment to pass, a 2/3 majority vote of members and officers present, provided there is a quorum, will be required.

D. Passed amendments will be noted in the minutes and placed in the constitution. The revised constitution will be distributed to all members within 2 weeks."

Section (3) Amendment repeals may be made according to the following procedure:

Example:

"A. Motions to repeal a constitutional amendment must be submitted in writing. No oral repeals are acceptable.

B. For a repeal to pass, a 2/3 majority vote of members and officers present, provided there is a quorum, will be required."

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

XYZ Organization at ETSU

This constitution of the XYZ Organization at ETSU has been ratified (or amended) by the general membership on _____ (date).

(Signature of the President)

(Signature of Secretary)

(Printed name of President)

(Printed name of Secretary)

Before applying to be a new organization, we strongly encourage you to submit a copy of your constitution to the SORC/Student Activities Graduate Assistant for review. Recommended changes will be noted and returned to the organization.