

CLUBS – CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The following outline and questions are designed to help you write a constitution for your student organization. All clubs sanctioned under the Student Association are subject to the policies of BCIT and BCITSA, but a constitution for your club contains an important record of continuing aspects of the organization, like its purpose and structure. Constitutions provide guidance, consistency, and transparency for your club. There should be a specific process for revising its contents.

ARTICLE I – NAME

Section 1 – What is the exact title to be used in addressing this organization?

Section 2 – The title must include BCITSA to show it is a designated club. The club may refer to itself as “BCIT ” generally, but not in formal documents such as contracts or invoices.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE/MISSION STATEMENT

Section 1 – What is the purpose? Is it fostering a broad educational goal? Is it a social, cultural, or political organization? Why was the group founded?

Section 2 – This section must include a statement of the group’s requirements to abide by established BCIT and BCITSA policies.

ARTICLE III – AFFILIATIONS

Section 1 – This section should include any information regarding local, regional, national, or international groups with which the student club or organization is affiliated.
[If not affiliated with any entity other than BCIT or BCITSA, then this section may be removed].

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Who is eligible for membership? Are there any restrictions? How does one become a member? How are members identified? What is the cost of membership/year?

Section 2 – Eligibility requirements can also be added, as well as details about what rights or benefits membership entitles someone to, such as voting rights or free admission into events.

Section 3 – A Nondiscrimination and inclusivity clause which includes all of the protected groups (race, sex, disability, sexual orientation etc.) is good to include.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1 – How many officers are there?

Section 2 – What are their titles and duties? Will the officers constitute an executive committee? Description of any standing committees should be included, probably in the by-laws.

Section 3 – What is the term length of each position? No term can last longer than 12 months.

Section 4 – How may officers be removed?

Section 5 – Will officer reports be required? How often will these reports be given?
How will they be available?

Section 6 – Which Officers have signing authority for the Club? Clubs must have at least one, but preferably two, signing authorities to sign cheques when required.

ARTICLE VI – ELECTIONS

Section 1 – How are officers elected? When are they elected (month), and for what period?
Who is eligible for office? When do officers assume their positions?

Section 2 – How will vacancies be filled mid-term?

Section 3 – What type of ballot? What percentage of those voting shall constitute a candidate's election?

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

All General and Designated Clubs must hold a minimum of one Annual General Meeting (AGM) per Fiscal Year. AGM's are normally held within the last three months of the Fiscal Year.

Section 1 – Does the club want to specify certain regular meetings? Determine who has the authority to call a meeting and who has the responsibility of notifying members of meetings and how it should be done. For example, "The secretary shall notify members of the business meeting, via e-mail, no later than five business days in advance of the meeting."

Section 2 – Quorum for major meetings and votes. Quorum is the minimum number of members of a group that must be present at a meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid, and how many people must vote to make the result valid.

Section 3 – Any meeting rules, such as who Chairs meetings, how speakers are given the floor, and how to make motions. Motions are formal decisions made by the club and should be documented in meeting minutes. Motions should be made to announce and confirm election results, passing budgets, and other major decisions.

ARTICLE VIII – ADVISORS

Section 1 – What is the name and position of the Club or Organization Advisor?

Section 3 – What is the role of the faculty or staff advisor?

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

Section 1 – What is the purpose and duties of standing committees? What are their powers?
Do they have any finances? Etc.

Section 2 – How will members of the committees be selected?

ARTICLE X – FINANCES

Section 1 – Will the organization use membership dues?

Section 2 – How will the organization finance its activities? How will funds be allocated?
How will accounts be maintained?

ARTICLE XI – CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Section 1 – How are changes to your constitution document made? One opportunity a year (Annual General Meeting)? Changes should always be voted on, never made unilaterally by anyone.

ARTICLE XI – BYLAWS

Bylaws are used to elaborate on a constitution, and are optional. Like a constitution, they help keep a consistent structure for the club that helps with sustainability and provides guidance to the executives. Some things to include in bylaws:

- Standing (regular) committees of the organization and their function
- Ad Hoc Committees of the organization which are established for a single purpose as needed.
- Structures/purposes of committees. How are the members of the committee chosen? Who Chairs the committee? What authority do they have, and how do they report to the executive board?

All Club Constitutions must include a clause stating that the Club does not have the agency or authority to sign contracts on behalf of the Club or the BCITSA.