



■ Constitution Handbook

What is a Constitution?

A constitution is a written record of your organization's fundamental principles and established precedents. It is your group's most essential internal document: your constitution describes the policies and procedures of your organization's operations and governance. Additionally, all student group constitutions are expected to comply with local and federal law, University of Alberta policies and procedures, and Students' Union or Graduate Students' Association's policies and procedures, as applicable.

Why is a Constitution important?

The constitution is used to define the rules and regulations that govern a student group's existence. It's important to have a constitution so that throughout the year you know how to handle challenges and changes, to ensure the efficient and sustainable operation of your group.

Clubs must submit updated constitutions to Student Group Services (SGS) as part of the agreement entered upon applying for student group recognition from the University of Alberta, Students' Union, and/or Graduate Students' Association by emailing it to us and uploading the new copy to BearsDen.

You should read your constitution once a year at the very, very minimum, so that you know what information is included in it and can ensure that your group's operations aren't in conflict. (This is a common agenda item for Annual General Meetings!) How often you should change it really depends on your activities. If your group has run in the same way for ten or twenty years, and the constitution is still a useful document for you during transition and yearly operations, then there's no reason to change it as long as it meets all of SGS requirements. You can change it as often as you'd like, really, providing that your amendment procedures are followed. Regardless, be sure to check the constitution checklist every year to ensure that your constitution meets the current requirements.

Student Group Services may request changes to be made as University policy surrounding student groups changes. Starting in 2015, we began conducting regular review of student groups' constitutions on a 3-year rotation, so this is likely the frequency with which you will receive requests to make changes.



■ Constitution Requirement Checklist

How to use this checklist:

Use this checklist when you write or review your constitution to make sure that these required items are covered in your constitution. This is also the checklist that SGS will be using to review your constitution.

Your constitution can absolutely address more than these specific areas, but this checklist is a good guide to what might most frequently come up in your group. Since every group is different, your constitution may not be organized in the same way as this checklist. For sample text and more details on each item, check out the Constitution Template or the [Default GSA Constitution](#).

- The checkboxes indicate the bare minimum of information that SGS would require
- The bullet points indicate extra information that could be asked for, suggested, or would be beneficial

Overall, there should be no contradictions or questions immediately rising out of a constitution. If you were a brand-new group member, would you understand how your group functioned by looking at your constitution? If you are unsure about this, it is a good idea to have an outside party (a non-member) read your constitution for clarity.

Checklist:

- Name of group** is present, and matches registered name.

- Mission/Vision/Values** are stated clearly.
 - There is a reference to the higher legal frameworks a group exists in – the University of Alberta, the SU, the GSA, Recreation Services, etc, as well as your affiliation with these services.
 - This is also known as your “Registration Level” or “Type of Registration”

- Membership eligibility** is nondiscriminatory and clear.
 - Classes of membership are defined, and reference is made to the University of Alberta’s policies around student membership ratios. Consult the SGS web page on Registration for information on these ratios.

- Membership standing** is clarified.



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- This includes the process of how someone would become a member as well as rules for membership expulsion or suspension, along with definitions of when these measures would be appropriate. These measures can include the actions that would warrant these consequences.

- Executive positions** are listed and their responsibilities are accurately described.
 - Annual mandatory training, risk management approval and registration responsibilities are addressed,
 - Student Executive composition is specified, as per the UAPPOL student group procedure.

- Elections** are very clearly outlined. This could include the following items:
 - The month in which the election general meeting will occur annually (this will determine your group's registration timeline). This meeting may be the same as the annual general Meeting, but it does not have to be.
 - Timeline (for nominations, voting, campaigning, and appeals). i.e. How long the whole process will take as well as each individual component of the process.
 - Who supervises the elections and what their role is as well as what would happen if this delegated supervisor wanted to run in the election.
 - Candidates' roles and responsibilities;
 - Voting eligibility and registration, where applicable;
 - Democratic procedure and method for voting;
We recommend using Parliamentary Procedure for big decisions like these. Examples are: a **simple majority** (more than 50%, or 50% plus one vote), a **substantive majority** (2/3 or 66.67%), or **supermajority** (3/4 or 75%).
 - Appeal, impeachment, and/or recounting processes;
 - By-election and vacancy processes.

- At least one **Annual General Meeting** is codified.
 - All other types of meetings are defined, along with the procedures for calling meetings.
 - The AGM does not have to be the same meeting as the general election, though we recommend they occur at the same meeting so that you can gather all of your members (or as many of them as possible) once instead of multiple times.

- Quorum** for all meetings and elections is defined and consistent.



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- Acceptable quorums include at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of the body invited to that meeting. In other words, for an Annual General Meeting for a club with 100 members, at least 33 members.
- Student Group Services may request a larger quorum policy depending on the type of student group. If you have additional questions, please contact us.

Financial Practices are addressed in sufficient detail, either under an executive's portfolio or in a separate section. This includes:

- Fiscal year (*the time frame for the current budget, which will include the year in which money from sources like membership dues, grants, etc. should be spent*)
- Budgetary approvals/executives responsible for spending (*who has to approve spending on behalf of the group? How can a member be reimbursed for spending on behalf of the group?*)
- Regular deposits (*if the group keeps a cash box/float, how much is it? When does the Treasurer make deposits to the bank account? Most groups have a dollar amount or time frequency, "whichever is sooner" in their constitution. Eg. "When \$500 or more is in the cash box, or every two weeks, whichever is sooner."*)
- Keeping of records (*SGS recommends that all financial records be kept for up to 6 years before being shredded, in the event of an audit by the CRA or other organization.*)

If your group does not handle any money, please specify this in your constitution and include a process for what would happen if your group did start to handle money!

At least **two** executive positions have **signing authority** for the group's bank account.

A process for **amending the constitution** is in place and **requires the entire organization's participation** (not just the executive council). This would include the process on how a member would suggest an amendment as well as what vote would be required for the amendment to pass.

Dissolution procedures are included, with specific reference to what happens to a group's **finances and resources** once a group shuts down. This would also include the process on how a dissolution would be suggested as well as what vote would be required for the dissolution to pass. Please be mindful that upon dissolution, the group's finances and resources **cannot** be given or distributed to members or the executive.



■ Constitution Template

This constitution template is meant to help new groups understand what the structure of a constitution might look like, along with providing any student groups with sample language for specific parts of their governing documents. Don't directly copy and paste this document – even within this template, there are a lot of options for language choices and customized definitions, and your group should work together to ensure that its fundamental document is appropriate and accurate. Use this as a guideline in conjunction with the SGS Constitution Requirement Checklist, and consult SGS if you have any questions or want any help!

Notes:

The plain text that you will see below is the template language. Bullet-pointed *italicized* text indicates comments, advice, and guidelines from SGS, and should be removed if using this template. **[Square brackets]** indicate where your group must customize the content, if you were to directly copy a section wording. Please ensure that if you are using this template that you customize it to make it specific to your group.

CONSTITUTION OF [STUDENT GROUP NAME]

Preamble or Mission Statement

This section is a summary of your group and identifies your mission statement and reason for existence. The mission statement should guide the actions of your group, explain its overall goal, provide a sense of direction, and guide the decision-making of your group.

ARTICLE I: Name and Purpose

I.I Name

The name of the student group shall be **[student group name]**, and it may also be referred to as **[acronyms or nicknames]**.

I.II Compliance

The student group operates at the University of Alberta, subject to University of Alberta **[and Students' Union OR Graduate Students' Association (choose one or remove)]** policies and procedures. This group will also comply with all local, provincial, and federal laws and procedures.

I.III Objectives and Goals

The group shall operate for the purpose of:

- *List the aims, objectives, and goals of your group here. Why was your group founded?*

ARTICLE II: Membership and Eligibility



II.I Membership

- A. Membership in **[student group name]** is open to students, faculty, and staff at the University of Alberta, subject to membership requirements outlined in the University of Alberta's student group policies. Eligible individuals who wish to become part of **[student group name]** must indicate this by **[method: e.g. signing up for a group mailing list at Clubs Fair or by emailing the group before the end of September each year]**.
- *Who is eligible to join your group? This should be stated here. This section of your constitution is very important. If you are setting requirements on your membership, ensure that they are consistent with your group's stated purpose and vision, and aren't violating any existing policies or laws. Some groups require auditions for membership, and some simply require you to sign up for a mailing list. Please ensure that your requirements are inclusive and non-discriminatory.*
 - *Explain, in detail, how your members are admitted - are there any requirements? Do you have a deadline for membership sign-up, or just one recruitment period? Wondering what the University of Alberta's student group policies are? Check out the SGS website for information and direct links - the membership requirements for student groups are clearly outlined there.*
- B. The classes of membership that exist in **[student group name]** are as follows.
- a. **General Members:** A General Member is defined as any current University of Alberta student who has fulfilled membership recognition requirements as specified in II.I.a. General Members are able to vote in all group matters.
 - b. **Executive Members:** An Executive Member is defined as any General Member who is elected to an executive position or who is appointed to temporarily assume duties of a vacant executive position, while that individual is in that role. Executive Members are able to vote in all group matters.
 - c. **Associate Members:** An Associate Member is defined as an individual who is ineligible or unable to join the group as a general member due to time commitment, (lack of) University of Alberta student status, or other affiliation, but who still wants to participate officially in group business. Associate Members do not have voting rights but are invited to sit on committees or working groups and to attend all group events.
- *These are some options for how your group can define its membership. It's a good idea to have at least some basic membership levels in your group's constitution so that your members have options of involvement and responsibility to take on, but it's not required. If your group wants all of its members to be entirely equal, you can mandate that through your constitution as well.*



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- *Note that as per University of Alberta recognition policies, student group executives must be composed entirely of current University of Alberta students. Additional requirements for the composition of your total membership and executive membership are outlined on the Student Group Services website. However, student group membership must consist of at least 2/3 University of Alberta students where the first ten members must be students at the University of Alberta.*
- C. The conditions of membership in **[student group name]** are as follows.
 - *Here, list the conditions of good standing with the club: payment of dues, attendance at meetings, etc.*
 - *Indicate the potential causes for a member to end up in bad standing, and the consequences or sanctions of being in bad standing. Also indicate how a member in bad standing can restore their good standing with the club.*
 - *Indicate how members' good/bad standing is kept, how and whether it is publicized to the rest of the membership, etc.*
 - *If a member needs to be expelled, describe the process and reasoning for expulsion. To ensure that the process is fair and clear, consider working with Discover Governance (uasu.ca/governance/discover). This can include an appeals process to ensure that members facing possible expulsion are also protected and provided opportunity to defend their case before a final decision is reached.*
 - *Student Group Services and Discover Governance staff are more than happy to assist with these processes; if you would like to include either as a third party moderator in the case of appeals or contentious issues, feel free to do so.*

II.II Membership Dues

[Student group name] will charge **[\$X]** for membership status.

- *Clearly define any membership dues, the amount payable by each of the various classes of members, the deadline for payment, how they are collected, and who collects them. If you don't wish to have membership fees at this point, but want to leave the option open for future years without too much hassle, you could also constitutionally define that the membership dues will be determined annually by the executive committee and announced a certain number of months in advance of the deadline.*

ARTICLE III: Elections

III.I Eligibility

a. In order to be eligible to run and hold office, a member must meet the following requirements:

- *This section must clearly define the requirements for holding office (and these must be non-discriminatory). Some requirements that groups use include: student status, a*



minimum GPA, membership status, participation record, previous experience on a committee, etc.

b. In order to be eligible to vote in an election, a member must be a General or Executive Member in good standing.

III.II Election Supervision

Elections will be monitored by **[Executive Member, Other Officer]**. If the **[Same Executive Member]** plans to run as a candidate, **[the Executive Team, or Another Governing Body -- indicate]** will appoint an impartial committee of three, non-candidate General Members to promote and supervise the election process as below. The Elections Supervisor(s) will provide candidates and voting members with information on the elections, campaigning, and all associated procedures, **[timeline]** prior to voting.

- *Decide how you want your elections to be run, and who is in charge of monitoring and recording the process.*
- *Elections do not have to be monitored by an executive member, but they can be. To keep things fair, the elections supervisor should not be able to run for a position.*
- *If your group wants to bring in an external, impartial member to supervise voting itself, (usually referred to as a Chief Returning Officer) then decide whose responsibility it is to arrange for that, who is eligible to be the CRO, etc.*
- *Student Group Services can supervise your election if desired! Just be sure to give us a few weeks' notice to support you best.*

III.III Election Procedures

a. Elections will be held annually in **[month]**.

- *When are your elections held? Are they held as a separate meeting, or as part of the Annual General Meeting?*
- *Note that this will determine your group's registration period to renew its recognition with the University.*
- *If your group has more than one election month, please specify which positions would be elected in each of the months.*

b. Members will declare their candidacy by **[method: e.g. registering with the Elections Supervisor one month prior to voting, or by receiving two nominations at a special candidacy meeting, etc.]**. Candidates will be given **[timeline]** to campaign prior to voting.

- *Include any timelines and deadlines (specific dates are less useful than relative timelines – like "one week before voting" instead of "March 15"), as well as who is eligible to run for positions and how they would do so.*
- *It's very important that your members know how they can get involved and that every voting member knows who their candidates are. Every member should have an equal opportunity to run.*



- *Some clubs have an interview or other vetting process to determine eligibility to run for a position in the club; this is permissible as long as any general member/University of Alberta Student can participate in that process, and the final decision for the executive team members is made through a vote with the total membership of the club. Include a ratification process in your constitution as a method by which regular members can register their disagreement with any decision.*
 - **c.** All eligible members will be given an opportunity to vote **[by secret ballot]**. The voting logistics will be determined by the Elections Supervisor(s) and will be communicated to all members on or immediately following the nomination deadline. *You can, and should, specify your election method. All general members should have a say in the election of your executive committee – as per SU Bylaw 5600, groups are expected to operate in a transparent, democratic manner.*
 - *We highly recommend that your members be given the opportunity to vote secretly or anonymously. There are online methods if you want to save on paper (and time!) counting votes. For more information and support, please let SGS or Discover Governance know.*
- d.** A candidate must receive a **[# or % of votes]** to be elected.
- *How many votes does a candidate need to become elected? Discover Governance has tips on Voting Thresholds in their Tips for Constitutional Review, and for more input, check out Robert's Rules of Order.*
 - *What happens if a candidate runs unopposed for a position? Do they still need a minimum # of votes?*

III.IV Appeals and By-Elections

- a.** A candidate or General Member may appeal election results within **[timeline; we recommend at least one week, and no more than two weeks]** of the announcement by the Elections Supervisor(s).
- *Include information on the appeal process, who decides whether a complaint is valid, and how the appeal would proceed if it's found to be legitimate.*
 - *Ensure that you're considering timelines and all aspects of the situation. Does a really close vote automatically mean that you'll recount everything? (How close is "really close" in that case?) What situations would require a new election to be held?*
- b.** Should an executive position not be filled by a general election or become vacant partway through the year, **[process for filling vacated/vacant positions after the general election]**.
- *What happens if an executive member becomes ill, or simply can't take on the responsibility? Or what happens if no one runs for a position in the first place? You can codify this in your constitution, or write a supporting procedural document as an executive committee. This is really crucial for positions with signing authority. (You can*



also include information on impeaching executive members – here, or later in the constitution.)

- *If an elected officer steps down mid-year, how long does the group have to decide who/whether to replace them?*

ARTICLE IV: Executive Committee

IV.I Executive Committee Members

The composition of the Executive Committee will be 100% U of A students.

The Executive Committee will be composed of: **[list of roles]**.

- *List all your executive positions here. Your executive positions as constitutionally decided will be checked against other registration information to ensure accuracy. As a minimum, your group must have a president and treasurer or treasurer equivalent.*
- *You can also include duties and expectations that are shared by all executive members, such as regular attendance at meetings, completing the duties indicated by their portfolio to the best of their ability, advocating for the wellbeing and sustainability of the organization, completion of training, etc.*

IV.II Duties of Executive Committee Members

- ☐ ******* All recognized groups are expected to have at least two executive members to comply with University policy where these must be a president and treasurer or treasurer equivalent. The president and treasurer cannot be the same individual.
- ☐ ******* Certain executive members will have particular responsibilities to comply with the Student Groups Procedure: Your President and Treasurer (or equivalents) will be responsible for completing annual training. One member of your executive cannot complete all the training as GLO: finances must be completed by the treasurer and the other GLO modules are recommended to be completed by the president. One member of your executive committee must be responsible for receiving risk management approval for your group's activities from the Dean of Students' Office.
- *Clearly outline responsibilities for each executive member here. What should a person running for one of the executive positions expect to take on?*
- *It would be a good idea here to decide and indicate which positions have signing authority for the club's bank account, if your club is handling money.*
- *If you'd like to have a really solid constitution, even think about chain of command – if the president were to be unavailable, who would assume that position's responsibilities? This section can be written or bullet-pointed.*
- *Ideally, another executive member will keep records for the year, including agendas, minutes and documents from meetings, registration information from the President and*



budgets, receipts and grant reports from the Treasurer. This ensures that important group information is not subject to the will of one sole executive member.

- *For more on the roles/responsibilities on executive teams, make an appointment with Student Group Services.*

IV.IV Impeachment/Removal and Replacement of Officers and Members

a. Members in bad standing will be removed from the group in compliance with [Membership Section of Constitution].

- *Where information might need to be repeated, it's a very good idea to simply refer to another, rather than repeating the same information. The more information is re-written, the better the chances are that someday, one of those items will be changed and one will be missed, so that the constitution ends up internally contradicting itself.*

b. If an Executive Member fails to fulfill the duties of their position, [determine a process for accountability, possible reparations/mediation, and then consequences for repeated failure to fulfill their roles].

- *Here, you would explain what would constitute an executive member's impeachment, who would help adjudicate that process, and how the process would go forward.*
- *Voting numbers are important here as well. Explain the process for filling unexpected vacancies and any relevant timelines, especially if this information is not included in your Elections section.*
- *Tip: Reference your "Appeals and By-Elections clauses/articles here!"*

ARTICLE VI: Meetings

VI.I Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held in [month] of every year. All members will be notified in writing [timeline] prior.

- *Determine when the annual general meeting for the group will be held. Members are usually notified two weeks prior, often in writing, but you can set this for your group.*
- *Many clubs choose to coordinate elections with the AGM. At least one AGM needs to be held over a year for a group to remain recognized with the University of Alberta.*

VI.II Meetings

- *Consider indicating the procedure for your standard meetings. Some clubs have different types of meetings -- some with formal club business and other more social or casual. Which meetings need a set structure? What is the structure that will be used?*
 - *Parliamentary Procedure, also known as Robert's Rules, is a popular way to run business meetings and elections -- you can find resources online or at the library if you would like to incorporate it into your meeting structure.*



- *Other meeting models or procedures include consensus-based, which is preferred by smaller clubs and committees. For more information on consensus-based decision making and meeting facilitation, contact Student Group Services and complete the online GLO: Skills Running Effective Meetings Module on eClass.*
- *Determine the different types of meetings your group will hold (i.e. regular, special, election...). Outline the following:*
 - *procedure for calling meetings (who can call a meeting? Typically a member of the executive, like the President or Secretary)*
 - *how often they will be held*
 - *detail how members will be notified (email? Post on a website?)*
 - *Quorum: the minimum number of members required to be present before meetings can proceed as official group business. Quorum is often expressed as either a fraction (eg. 2/3) of the membership, or a number (eg. 20) – choose one method and stick to it.*
- *Will your club have different meetings for discussing club business and others for social/team bonding? Who Chairs those meetings?*
- *How often will the Executive team meet, if they will meet separately? What is the quorum for those meetings?*
- *Discover Governance has great tips on Quorum in its Constitutional Review resource, and suggests that quorum for general meetings always be at least twice the number of members on the executive committee. Quorum for an election is the same quorum as for a regular meeting, unless specifically otherwise defined.*

ARTICLE VII: Amendments to the Constitution

VII.I Amendments

- *State the procedure for members to propose amendments to the constitution, and define the procedure for voting on and passing proposed amendments (usually 2/3 of membership, but you can change that – think about the quorums for the other meetings you have).*
- *Consider notifying members about the proposed amendment prior to the vote. Since SGS retains copies of your constitutions, let SGS know when you have passed any amendments. While we usually only review constitutions when you register, we can help at any time.*
- *Once amended, constitutions should be re-filed with Student Group Services.*

ARTICLE VIII: Dissolution

VIII.I Dissolution



- *What happens if your group dissolves, and where do your financial and physical resources go? Your group should have resources for this built into your constitution so that, if needed, SGS can help ensure that your group's resources are appropriately allocated. The group's resources cannot go to members or the executive; it is recommended that the group select a charity for them to go to.*
- *If not already specified, we recommend calling a special meeting for this kind of decision, so indicate the quorum needed to officially dissolve the student group.*
- *Indicate that part of the process of closing the club will involve informing the University (via Student Group Services) that the club is disbanded, to ensure your group's BearsDen page is removed from the public list.*

OTHER SECTIONS YOUR CONSTITUTION MIGHT NEED:

If your group is affiliated with an external organization...

If your group's executive has ex-officio members or alumni advisors...

Include a section on Other Executive Members!

- *In this section, you could define any other executive members such as non-voting executive (i.e. faculty or external affiliate advisors), honorary executive members, or ex officio members. You could also state the rights and powers of any other groups that affect your own, such as a Board of Directors or any local, provincial, national, or international umbrella organizations that are affiliated with your group. If you are affiliated with another organization, they also might have language around your group's relationship that would be good to reference here.*
- **REMEMBER!** *Only current student members can be voting executive members for your student group. You can have non-voting advisors who participate in discussion and provide guidance, and this kind of role should be specified in this section of the constitution.*

If your group has a large project or event that might be better organized by a team or committee that is separate from the Executive....

If your group has any kind of committee or additional working group within the club that is not the Executive...

Include a section on Committee Policy!

- *State the existence of any standing committees, in addition to the Executive Committee, and list their functions, duties, and responsibilities. If your group has occasional committees, only list them in the constitution if they are essential to your group's operations. Outline the selection process for membership on these committees; include*



the length of term and any requirements for holding the position. You could also state the frequency of committee meetings.

- *Consider including a clause that states the Executive Committee Members may form additional committees as required. You never know when you might need to make another committee -- and if you don't, then no worries!*

Constitution FAQ

Q. What goes in our constitution?

Take a look at our Constitution Template for help on what kinds of things are included in a constitution. If you want to go into detail about specific processes, and especially if you want those processes to be able to change very easily, those details might be better suited for an internal procedural document.

For example, the **constitution** might say that the VP Events plans a Welcome Party. The procedural and **transition documents** could specify where the Welcome Party is usually held, how people are told about it, what kind of food is ordered, and in which term it usually happens. That way, the VP Events could customize and plan the event without having to amend the constitution.

Q. What are our compliance requirements?

To operate on campus, your group must comply with all local, provincial and federal laws, and must comply with University of Alberta policies and procedures as well as the policies and procedures of your registration level. Look for these requirements on the SGS Website under Registration - Requirements.

Q. Can we include the names of our executives in the constitution?

No. Things that change from year-to-year should not be included in the constitution. If you have very specific processes for your group that you want to record but that may change frequently, put them into the transition documents for the next team to reference! Don't add them into your constitution.

Q. Our constitution is private. Can we still be a student group?

Constitutions are meant to be public documents. If there is an external organization that is requiring that your constitution be private, please talk to SGS. If you have just decided that you want your constitution to be private, that's not okay – your members need to be able to participate in the operations of your student group.

Q. Can we have a one-page constitution? What about a 100-page constitution?



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SGS has no requirements for the length a constitution must be to be valid. We do, however, recommend that the constitution is 6-8 pages so that members can easily read it. If your group has a 100-page constitution, people likely won't be able to read and interpret it effectively. (If you find that your group actually needs 100 pages of material to cover your governance, we'd suggest that you meet with us or Discover Governance to figure out how better to structure your operations!)

Q. How often should we/can we change our constitution?

It is highly recommended that amendments take place once every two years at minimum. Too much change to the constitution from year to year can cause problems that end up losing the original spirit of the organization, and cause confusion year-to-year within the club.

Q. Can we make jokes in our constitution?

Sometimes. Your group is welcome to customize certain elements of your constitution to be more entertaining or engaging, if that's what you're looking for – you could assign the president the title of "Master Jedi" if you wanted to. However, writing that the "Master Jedi" of the organization has supreme dictatorial powers would not be okay. Even if it were a joke to those of you who wrote it, that item would immediately be flagged at administrative levels and likely not approved.

Q. If one of our executives leaves part way through the year, can we just pick someone to replace that person?

Yes. If it's in your constitution that vacancies will be filled by appointment, SGS knows that is sometimes necessary. However, be careful – if you appoint a President to take over a Treasurer's responsibilities, and they both have signing authority, you'll have effectively enabled one person to clear out your bank account. Manage your risk!

Q. What happens if our group shuts down?

First of all, you need to let SGS know. Some basic procedures for group dissolution should be outlined in your constitution. Things you'll want to think about are where any extra funds go (and it's not okay to simply give them to the executive members) and where your resources should go if your group has collected any. SGS can help you navigate the processes of getting your group closed down if that happens, and we're happy to help. If your group is a Faculty Association in danger of shutting down for any reason, you will need to talk to Discover Governance, and we will direct you there as necessary.

Q. Our external organization appoints our executive – is that okay?

No. Your executive needs to be democratically elected in some fashion. Every member should have a say in how the group is run. External affiliates should not be entirely controlling a



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student group's operations; for information on ideal external affiliate relationships with student groups, contact SGS.

Q. What are voting thresholds?

A voting threshold is the number of votes required for a motion to be passed. In Robert's Rules of Order, there are three common voting thresholds – a **simple majority** (more than 50%, or 50% plus one vote), a **substantive majority** (2/3 or 66.67%), or **supermajority** (3/4 or 75%). Your group can decide which of these you would like to use; Robert's Rules again has some guidelines for you. You can also decide that 100% of members should be in favour – if you'd like to do this, search for consensus-based models of procedure or decision-making.

Other Resources

Student Group Services (www.su.ualberta.ca/services/studentgroups)

- [Default GSA constitution](#)

Discover Governance (www.su.ualberta.ca/governance/discover/resources)

- [New group Starter kit](#)
- [Simplified glossary of Robert's rules of order](#)
- [Tips for constitution reviews](#)