

Create a Constitution for Your New Student Organization

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Sample Constitution for CIOs at UVA

***Disclaimer: This constitution shows what is required of each part of your Constitution.**

***The only required verbiage from the CIO Agreement that must be in your Constitution is highlighted in red. The rest is up to you to design!**

Constitution Example

The constitution of

The Harry Potter Club at UVA

[INSERT DATE/YEAR OF RECOGNITION by Student Council]

Article I: NAME.

REQUIRED:

-If your Organization Name includes "UVA," it MUST be stated as "Organization Name at UVA," in all forms of media, including the Constitution.

- The name of your organization

Article II: PURPOSE (or MISSION).

The Harry Potter Club at UVA is established for the expressed purpose of:

1. Bringing fellow Muggle and Magic people together for lively, enjoyable, and intellectual discussions on the Harry Potter fiction series and current events related to Harry Potter (i.e. J.K. Rowling's new 2016 book).
2. Collaborating with other CIOs and departments to host Harry Potter themed events on grounds

The Harry Potter Club at UVA understands school policies and is committed to abiding by said policies.

REQUIREMENT: The Purpose or Mission of your CIO is to be explicitly stated in your Constitution.

Article III: MEMBERSHIP.

While anyone who is affiliated with the University of Virginia in an official capacity (ie. students, faculty and staff) is welcome to attend general body meetings of the Harry Potter Club, active membership shall be limited to persons who satisfy the following requirements:

1. Attend at least three meetings during a given semester.
2. Participate in at least two activities/events sponsored by the Harry Potter Club each semester unless the activities interfere with either scholastic or financial constraints.
3. Assist in the planning of at least one Harry Potter Club-sponsored activity each semester.

If a member fails to satisfy one of these requirements, that member will retain active membership at the discretion of the officers (by a majority vote). To retain membership, the member must provide a reasonable excuse for failing to satisfy one of the requirements (i.e. class, exams, illness, etc.) and must still make meaningful contributions to the organization during the course of the semester.

REQUIREMENT: *Membership must be clearly defined*, including the parameters of what determines memberships and its requirements.

THIS *EXACT* VERBIAGE IS MANDATORY IN YOUR CONSTITUTION:

The Harry Potter Club at UVA does not restrict its membership, programs, or activities on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, marital status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, veteran status, and family and genetic information.

Note: There are no dues/fees associated with being a member of The Harry Potter Club at UVA.

Article IV: OFFICERS.

Any member can become an officer after being listed on the official roster for one (1) complete academic semester. Officers shall be elected annually in the Spring semester by a majority vote of the membership and shall take office thirty (30) days prior to the end of the semester. All elected officers will be currently registered students.

The officers of this organization will be:

President

- Calls and presides over official meetings of the organization
- Acts as the tie-breaking vote in matters of business
- Maintains organization in good standing with UVA via communication with Student Engagement and/or other interested University entities

- Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law¹

Vice President/Co-President

- Shares/supports responsibilities of President; makes sure that active members fulfill the requirements for active membership each semester.

Secretary/Historian

- Maintains the official roster of the organization on @UVA
- Records minutes of all official meetings of the organization and emails them to everyone after the meeting; if not present – designates another member to take minutes in their place
- Maintains official historical file for the organization (constitution, by-laws, minutes, rosters, financial records, risk management, records, etc.)²
- Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law

Financial Officer

- Maintains accurate ledger and financial records
- Approves all expenditures from the organization financial account
- Approves (i.e. signs) all requests for allocations from third-party sources
- Delivers a financial report to the membership once a semester in Fall and Spring
- Serves as an ex-officio member of any committee that is created through by-law

The officers will form an executive committee. Although each officer has specific responsibilities, officers and members are encouraged to work together to complete tasks so that no single member becomes overwhelmed at any given time. Executive Board members are expected to meet independently of the general body to plan meetings and events.

REQUIRED: Officer positions must be clearly outlined with their responsibilities. The organization of the leadership team must be clear.

Article V: ELECTIONS.

1. **Voting Eligibility:** Currently registered members who meet all requirements of active membership as set forth in Article III will be granted voting privileges.
2. **Election Process:** All officers shall be elected by a majority vote of eligible voting members of the Harry Potter Club. All elections will be held on an annual basis at the end of March,

¹ Note: This is a safeguard against a fractured organization. By making the officers Ex-Officio, the power of the committee is maintained while allowing oversight and advisement of officers. This also means that committees can still operate if the officer decides not to attend meetings.

² This is very important to the longevity of the organization. DukeGroups.com can be a useful tool to keep documents online in perpetuity.

with interim elections being held at the end of November as needed. The President will take nominations from the floor, the nomination process must be closed and the movement seconded. The nominated parties will be allowed to vote. All voting shall be done by secret ballot to be collected and tabulated by the Secretary and one voting member of the Harry Potter Club, appointed by the outgoing President. Officers elected during February will be trained by the incumbent officers during the remainder of the spring semester. The officers elected in February will officially begin their term in May, and at the end of the spring semester. The officer then serves a term that starts during the summer semester following their election and extends through the fall and spring semesters of the subsequent academic year.

3. **Removal:** Any officer in violation of the Organization's purpose or constitution may be removed from office by the following process: a. A written request by at least three members of the Organization. b. Written notification to the officer of the request, asking the officer to be present at the next meeting and prepared to speak. A two-thirds (2/3) majority member vote is necessary to remove the officer.

REQUIRED: The information on Elections MUST include the following:

1. When the elections are held
2. Who has voting eligibility
3. The lengths of term for office
4. How officers can be removed and who has the power to do so

Article VI: MEETINGS.

Meetings will occur at least once a month, but meetings may occur more frequently depending on member interest and on what the President deems necessary. The date of the next meeting will be agreed upon at the end of each meeting and will be included in the Secretary's minutes of the meeting. For a standard meeting, half of the active members are required for a quorum. Two-thirds of the active currently enrolled members are required for an election meeting.

REQUIRED: Any sort of prevalent information about your organization's meetings. Please feel free to use this sample constitution as a basis.

Article VII: FINANCE.

We do not collect dues. However, in the case that we do receive funding, all funds will be handled by the Treasurer. Any funds received will go towards on Quidditch Bowl to be held at the end of the year.

REQUIRED: The information on Finances MUST include the following:

1. If your organization collects dues
 - a. If so, who collects dues
 - b. How may dues be spent?
2. If your organization DOES NOT collect dues, in the even that funding is received
 - a. Who may handle the funding
 - b. How may the funding be spent?

Article VIII. BY-LAWS.

By-laws will be created to dictate the structure and procedures of the organization.³ By-laws may be proposed by any member and must obtain a majority vote of the membership. No by-law shall infringe on the authority of the constitution. Required by-laws, which shall be ratified, include:

- Organization Committees for specific events/projects
- Parliamentary Modification (ratified at first meeting of a new executive board's term)
- Election of Officers

REQUIRED: Your organization's by-laws are REQUIRED. There is no maximum or minimum of by-laws.

Article IX. COMMITTEES.

Committees of the organization will be created from time-to-time by the executive board in order to organize and distribute the workload of the organization. Committees shall be governed by by-law and shall not have authority over the executive board or the general body. Any active member (including the officers) may serve as a committee chair. Committee chairs will be appointed by the President and will coordinate the planning and execution of the committee project. Any number of active members may be on a committee.

Article X. ADVISORS. (if applicable/desired)

³ Note: If it doesn't need to be in the constitution for authority put it in the by-laws, these are easier to approve and are meant to be adjusted more frequently than the constitution.

1. If our organization deems it necessary or desirable, one or more University of Virginia faculty, staff, or graduate student can serve as an advisor (preferably someone who looks, sounds, and acts like Albus Dumbledore).
2. [Insert a description of how the advisor will be selected and the duties/responsibilities of advisor].
3. [Insert a description of how the advisor can be removed if needed].
4. List Advisor name and contact information.

REQUIRED: If your organization chooses to have advisors, please state how that advisor may be **CHOSEN** and **REMOVED** (by vote, etc.)

Article XI. AMENDMENTS

The constitution is binding to all members of the Harry Potter Club, but the constitution is not binding unto itself.

1. Amendments to the constitution may be proposed in writing by any active member of the Harry Potter Club. Amendments should be submitted to the President, who will then designate time for discussion of the proposed amendment at the following full-body meeting.
2. Proposed amendments will become effective following approval of two-thirds (2/3)-majority vote of active voting members.

REQUIRED: It must be clear **HOW** to amend and **WHO** may amend the bylaws and the Constitution

Recommendations

- The most effective Constitution documents are created through a joint process with input from all members rather than those that were written by one person. This way, your CIO can promote ownership and pride amongst all members in which every member has a “seat at the table.” [Inspire a Shared Vision!](#)
- For Club Sport CIOs, participants can only be faculty, staff, and students. For all other CIOs, we recommend that membership be open for anyone to join (including community members)
- Consider recruiting a Faculty/Staff Advisor to advise your CIO throughout the year. They can help you draft your with your constitution and connect you with other CIOs, departments, people on grounds that would be great guest speakers, etc. If you do decide to have an advisor, please add this into your Constitution (could be a separate section).
- Check out “Robert’s Rules of Order” (<http://www.rulesonline.com/>) to learn more about how to run a meeting and write a Constitution. Remember that your Constitution is the “GLUE” that holds your organization together and keeps your organization running smoothly during the academic year and during transitions between officers, etc. **Spend some time on it!**
- Review several Constitutions from other CIOs (available in Documents section on @UVA) to see how theirs are structured before you finalize your own. For example, some CIOs have a “Preamble” section outlining how they were formed and other relevant information to be included before the “Purpose/Mission” – you might be interested in including that!

Whenever you update or finalize a new version of your Constitution, please upload it to [@UVA](#).

1. Please go to @UVA - <https://atuva.student.virginia.edu/>
2. Click on the Organizations tab at the top of the page
3. Search and find your CIO
4. Once you are on your CIO’s webpage, click on “Manage Organization” (Presidents and Primary Contacts have access to do this)
5. Open the Menu on the top left and add the file to the Documents section.

Leave your old ones there for reference & title your new one to indicate the current year. If you’d like to “hide” old Constitution documents, email us and we can change the “type” of your Constitution documents so that you can sort them into a folder if you’d like.



Please reach out to Student Engagement at studentengagement@virginia.edu
or

Email the Organizations Recognition Committee at studco-orgrec@virginia.edu.

Constitution Template

Constitution for {Double-click this box and enter your organization's name}

Article I: NAME.

{Double-click this box and enter the full official name of the organization as well as any acronyms or aliases.}

Article II: PURPOSE.

{Double-click this box and enter a general statement about the organization's purpose, aims, and objectives.}

Article III: MEMBERSHIP.

{Double-click this box and enter the organization's requirements/process for membership selection. Please note that no organization may set arbitrary membership restrictions and each organization must follow the University's Non-Discrimination Policy.}

Article IV: OFFICERS.

{Double-click this box and enter the officer position titles within the organization, as well as the description/duties of each. Please note that organization officers must be officially registered as full-time students.}

Article V: SELECTION OF OFFICERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS.

{Double-click this box and enter the procedures the organization follows for the selection of officers or other official positions. The duration of the term in office, procedures for removal, etc. should also be included in this section.}

Article VI: COMMITTEES.

{Double-click this box and enter a list of all standing committees, sub-committees, or other sub-sections of the organization as well as their respective purposes, duties, and functions.}

Article VII: MEETINGS.

{Double-click this box and enter any information about the meetings held by the organization such as which officers shall preside over official business, what quorum is required for official business to be conducted, etc.}

Article VIII: FINANCE.

{Double-click this box and enter the organization's procedure for expenditure of self-generated funds and/or Student Activities Fee money. Please note that only the student members may have voting powers with regard to expenditures of the SAF.}

Article IX. AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS.

{Double-click this box and enter the organization's procedures for adding/amending the constitution or by-laws.}

