

Constitutions

Creating constitutions for student groups

This resource will explain why it is useful for student groups to have a constitution. The guidance also explains the elements of a good constitution.

Introduction

Students' unions are democratic organisations and must have a constitution to outline the activities and procedures of the organisation.

The students' union constitution is designed to:

- Provide a framework for the running of the union
- Outlines where and how union members can raise concerns
- Shows how the executive committee can act on behalf of members
- Defines what the union can and cannot do

Although not compulsory, it's a good idea to encourage your clubs and societies to have a constitution or similar document. It will help the club/society to identify their governance procedures and encourage democratic processes. A constitution also highlights that the society/club committee are accountable to their membership.

Elements of a constitution

The constitution of your students' union is a useful starting point as it should give you a good idea of the structure and contents of a this type of document.

A typical constitution will contain at:

- Articles – what people can and cannot do, the aims and objectives of the union
- Schedules – rules covering particular areas, typically more operational
- Appendices – rules that the membership cannot directly change

For example, the Articles will state that elections will take place at a certain time for certain posts. The Schedules will contain the rules and regulations of the election. The Appendices may contain the union opt-out procedure.

These may not be ordered Articles, Schedules and Appendices, but they will be present in some way within the constitution.

For clubs and societies, the constitution doesn't need to be particularly long or detailed. It can be a brief document that covers just the fundamental rules and procedures. It is however important to encourage your club and society committees to understand why they need a constitution and to encourage them to spend time thinking about what is needed in theirs.

Creating a club or society constitution

There are different ways of doing this:

1. Create a generic constitution for all clubs and societies where they simply amend the 'Name' and the 'Aims & Objectives' for their own constitution.
2. Create a generic constitution where committees *must* amend a number of elements, not just name, aims and objectives.
3. Provide a guidance document that tells them what must be included, but ask them to write their own constitution.

This can be done in paper format, but it doesn't need to be. Perhaps consider either a digital constitution that is saved as a pdf or word file, or maybe there's a way you can create an online constitution.

The content will depend on a few things. We've identified some questions to consider:

- Which are the compulsory elements of the main students' union constitution that must be included in the club/society constitution?
- Is there any extra information or rules that should be included in the clubs/societies constitution?
- How much do we want the club/society committees to amend in their constitution?
- If you run both sports clubs and non-sporting societies: will their constitutions be the same or different?

Making it official

When you have decided what your club/society constitutions will look like and how the committees will create theirs, you need to ensure that this is approved by the students' union.

The essential elements of your club/society constitution will need to be ratified by the trustees or governors of your students' union.

The proposed document may also need to be passed by your union council or executive committee. This will depend upon the rules identified in the main students' union constitution. If this is unclear then ensure you encourage the trustees of your union to clarify such processes.

Implementing a new constitution

Once the document has been approved you can then introduce the clubs and societies to the new constitutional process. Think about how you do this, as they will only benefit from having a constitution if they understand the purpose of the document.

Avoid just sending the constitution out and asking for a completed version returned. Try to find time to talk committees through the process, even if you're only asking them to amend the name, aims and objectives.

Contents

This inspiration sheet contains content from:

- FXU (Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union)
- Worcester Students' Union

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest any amends please contact rosie.hunnam@nus.org.uk



Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union

About

This case study is about the template club and societies constitution created by FXU.

The idea

Over the years FXU have developed the template looking at constitutions from a range of established organisations and guidance offered by other SU to produce a generic constitution which clubs and societies can use as a basis and adapt to reflect their individual needs. The aim is to make it as simple as possible for committee members to create and adopt the constitution while making them think about its purpose and importance.

Development stages

We looked at the guidance provided by other SU's and online resources about constitutions.

The submission of a constitution is a compulsory requirement for all FXU affiliated clubs and societies, so we wanted to make it as easy as possible for our committee members. The template is available via our website.

Each year we review the template to ensure that it covers all relevant areas and is up to date.

Indicators of success

Making the process of writing a constitution simple has meant that more clubs and societies can create theirs.

Further information

For more information about this, please contact [Hanna Royle](#) at the Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union.

Template FXU Club/Soc Constitution

This document is a guide to writing a club/society constitution; it should be adapted to reflect your individual club/soc. If you wish to compose your own or use an alternative template please ensure that each of the headings below is addressed.

Contents

1. Name
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Membership
4. Subscriptions and Finance
5. Fundraising
6. Committees
7. Voting/election of committee
8. AGM's, EGMs and Meetings
9. Resignation
10. Alterations to the constitution
11. Dissolution
12. Club Complaints Procedure
13. Discipline Procedures
14. Declaration

1. Name

The full title of the Club/Society will be:
The (FXU)..... Referred to as 'the club/society' and shall be affiliated to FXU and the (*County/Regional/National*) Governing Body/Organisation (if applicable).

2. Aims and Objectives

Aims = Particular improvements, changes or differences the club/soc will make to students (e.g. The club/soc aims to offer its members the opportunity to play competitive football).

2.1 The aim of the club/soc

is:.....

2.2 The objectives of the club/soc are:

Objectives = The areas of activity or overall practical steps a project or organisation plans to accomplish its aims.

- a)
- b)
- c)

3. Membership

State eligibility criteria, membership fee and date of when payment is due.

3.1 Full membership is open to all University College Falmouth and University of Exeter Cornwall Campus students.

3.2 Associate membership is open to persons over 18 years:

- Staff
- Students at other HE and FE institutions
- The community

(FXU is only able to subsidise the activities of its students so there should be two classes of membership; students and non FXU students).

3.3 The club shall be affiliated to FXU (Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union), by way of a £1 fee per paid member of the club/soc. This fee is retained by FXU.

3.4 The club/soc membership fees are as follows:

You may wish to consider offering different membership rates as shown below.

- FXU students £....
- Social member £....
- Recreational member £....
- Associate member £....

3.5 Membership fees are payable to the FXU Sport and Recreation Office. Members can

- join at any time throughout the year.
- 3.6 The club/soc membership shall run from 20th September – 31st July of the following year.

4. Subscription and Finance

State the main financial responsibility of the members as well as the means of administration. A separate budget proposal giving detailed information about the expected income and expenditure should be submitted annually to FXU during the summer term for the next academic year.

- 4.1 A membership fee is required from all club/soc members. The club/soc will set this fee through the budgeting process. All membership fees must be paid by the individual directly to FXU.
- 4.2 In addition to the membership fee all members shall pay weekly training fee of £..... *(this may not be applicable for all clubs/socs).*
- 4.3 There may be a charge to take part in and attend some club/soc activities in addition to the membership fee.
- 4.4 Club/soc bank accounts shall be held with FXU and all finances will be processed in accordance with FXU guidelines and procedures.
- 4.5 The instructor/coach shall be paid £.....per session by FXU by cheque/BACS on a *(monthly/termly)* basis.
- 4.6 Clubs/socs are not permitted to pay or reward drivers of the mini bus as our insurance states that we can not provide transport for hire or reward. Approved drivers of the FXU minibuses, who have completed the MIDAS training, shall drive on a voluntary basis.
- 4.7 Members may not receive financial payment or profit as a result of the club/soc activities.

5. Fundraising

State details of intended fundraising or means of additional income.

- 5.1 The Social or Fundraising Secretary shall be responsible for all fundraising activities.
- 5.2 The purpose of the fundraising event/activity and how funds that are generated will be used will be advertised and made clear to all contributors and participants.
- 5.3 The committee will decide how funds raised through organised events shall be used, although all suggestions from the club/soc shall be considered.
- 5.4 The club/soc will seek sponsorship to contribute to the running costs/new equipment/team kit.

6. Committee

6.1 The committee shall consist of at least 3 current UCF or UECC students.

Delete and add roles to the list as appropriate

- President/Chair/Captain
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Fixtures Sec
- Social Sec
- Fundraising Sec
- Safety Officer
- Team Captain

6.2 The committee as a whole are responsible for:

- a) Promotion of the club/soc throughout the year to attract membership.
- b) Ensuring that activities and the use of funds reflect the aims and objectives of the club/soc and are for the benefit of all members.
- c) Adhering to all FXU guidelines and procedures as stated in the Club and Society handbook (including financial,

health and safety, drinking policies, Equal opportunities and data protection).

- d) Preparing minutes for all club/soc meetings including the annual AGM.
- e) Ensuring that the club/soc is represented at all relevant FXU training and meetings.
- f) The club/soc is represented at all Sport and Society Forum meetings.
- g) Upholding all FXU policies and procedures in accordance with the FXU constitution.
- h) Complying with the data Protection Act 1998 and its eight principles.
- i) Preparing a handover for their successors.
- j) Preparing an annual report at the end of the year.

7. Voting/Election of Committee

7.1 Voting will take place for the elections of committee members and on any other issue deemed of importance.

7.2 Elections will be decided by a secret ballot.

7.3 Only current paid members are entitled to stand for elections or permitted to cast a vote.

7.4 The committee must be elected by the club/soc at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), which must be held during the month of March.

7.5 All Officers are elected for a period of one academic year, but may be re-elected to the same office or another office for subsequent years.

7.6 If any vacancies occur in the committee during the academic year, they shall be democratically filled as soon as is convenient via an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).

7.7 Committee members may be removed from

their position by a motion of no confidence by a two thirds majority of club/soc members present at an EGM.

8. AGM's, EGMs and Meetings

State how often official society meetings will take place and outline the purpose of the meetings.

8.1 The committee shall meet (*week/bimonthly/termly*) at a time and place agreed by the committee members (called by the Chair/President/Captain). The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Receive reports of matters arising since the last meeting
- Ensure the general smooth running of the club/soc.
- The committee has the power to fill vacancies and co-opt other members.

8.2 Annual General Meeting

State provision and procedures for the club/soc meetings and AGM

The committee shall agree the date of this meeting at the earliest convenience during the month of March. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Elect the new committee for the following year
- To receive the annual report from the Chair which has been compiled by the out going committee
- Present a financial report
- Prepare plans for the following year

8.3 An EGM can be called by:

- The President/Chair/Captain
- Club/Soc Committee
- The voting membership, upon written request
- At the request of the FXU Sport and Societies Committee

8.4 The President/Chair/Captain shall inform the FXU of the intention to hold an EGM.

8.5 The quorum for an AGM or EGM is 50%+1 of the voting membership.

9. Resignation

Detail what the club/soc intends to do should a committee member resign from their post.

9.1 Any member wishing to resign their position must give written notice to the committee and FXU, so that an alternative member can be elected to take on the position.

10. Alterations to the Constitution

10.1 Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by a (*two thirds*) majority vote obtained at an annual or a general meeting of the club/soc and with consent from the Sport & Recreation Team where appropriate.

10.2 Amendments to this constitution or dissolution of the club/soc must be conveyed to the FXU Sport & Recreation Team formally in writing.

11. Dissolution

11.1 The club/soc may be dissolved if deemed necessary by the members in a majority vote at a an official club/soc meeting (AGM, EGM). Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid shall be retained by FXU and held in a separate account for two years. If the club/soc (or one similar) does not start up again within this period the funds will be reallocated to FXU clubs/socs.

12. Club Grievances and Complaints Procedure

12.1 This procedure allows members to raise complaints about any issues relating to the club/soc this may include

- The safety of activities
- The standards of instruction or leadership
- The standard of equipment used for the activities
- Disregard to the FXU Equal Opportunities policy.

12.2 Complaints should first be addressed to the club/soc President/Chair. If this does not prove satisfactory, a complaint should be made to the FXU Sport & Recreation Team in writing.

12.3 The FXU complaint/ grievances procedure will be adhered to address any formal complaints.

13. Discipline Procedures

Details the club/soc proposed procedures in cases where club/soc or FXU rules and code of conduct are broken.

13.1 As part of the affiliation process all committee members must sign FXU Code of Conduct for affiliated Clubs and Societies agreeing to behave in accordance with the FXU Constitution and guidelines as set out in this FXU Sport and Recreation Handbook whilst representing or working on behalf of a club/soc.

13.2 Breaches of the FXU Code of Conduct for affiliated Clubs and Societies will be addressed in accordance with the FXU Complaints and Grievances process.

Penalties for a breach of the FXU Code of Conduct for affiliated Clubs and Societies could be as follows;

- Imposing a fine on the club/soc or individuals
- Suspension of club/soc activities
- Restricting the club/soc from applying for funding
- Disaffiliation from FXU of the club/soc concerned
- Disciplinary proceedings by FXU against individual society members.
- Disciplinary proceedings by the University academic schools against individual club/societies and their members.
- University sanctions including disqualification

14. Declaration

Theclub/soc, its officers and activities shall operate in accordance with this

constitution, FXU Constitution, FXU policies, procedures and the as per the guidance in the FXU Sport and Recreation Handbook.

This constitution was adopted at an AGM held at(e.g. Tremough Campus) on(Date) by:

Name: _____ Club Position: _____
Signed: _____

Worcester Students' Union

About

This case study is about the template sport and societies constitution created by Worcester Students' Union

The idea

The constitution was designed to support sports and society committees to create a constitution. We used our experience of issues that have arisen in the past to identify what should be included in the document.

Development stages

When designing the document, we first researched other Students Union to see what others were doing to support sports and societies in creating constitutions.

Whilst designing the template document we checked the main students' union constitution to ensure that the sports and societies one was in line with it and contained all of the essential elements.

Further information

For more information about this, please contact [Hannah Chenneour-Cocking](#) at Worcester Students' Union.



June 2013

1. Name

The name of the club/society [delete as appropriate] shall be [insert name here} herein after referred to as 'the club/society' [delete as appropriate].

2. Affiliation

2.1 The club/society shall form part of the University of Worcester Students' Union and as such the club/society shall adhere to the principles of the Students' Union constitution and any subsequent guidelines or regulations issued by the Students' Union.

2.2 In addition to the University of Worcester Students' Union the club/society shall be affiliated to [insert relevant body here]

3. Aims and Objectives

The key aim of the club/society shall be [insert aim here; for example: ...to promote and maintain interest in Korfbal at the University of Worcester and give students the chance to further their involvement in the sport]

4. Membership

4.1 Membership of the club/society shall be open to all current full members of the University of Worcester Students' Union

4.2 All members will be liable to pay an annual membership fee of a figure as determined year on year by the club/society in conjunction with the Students' Union.

4.2.2 All members are also required to pay a Student Groups Subscription (SGS) fee to the Students' Union. However this is not applicable to those who have already made a SGS payment for an alternate club/society. A student need only pay the SGS fee once, regardless of how many clubs/societies they join.

4.3 Membership fees must be received prior to any involvement in club/society activity.

4.4 [You may want to implement a further point here in reference to membership. Perhaps, associated membership; i.e. non-student coaches or advisors, however please take into account the

Students' Union's own guidelines when doing so. Or alternatively membership criteria specific to your society, such as safety issues.]

5. The Committee

5.1 The committee shall be responsible for the running of the club/society and will convene [insert regularity here e.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly] on a day outlined at the first committee meeting of an academic year.

5.2 The members of the committee shall be as follows:

- i. Chair
- ii. Treasurer
- iii. Secretary
- iv. and onwards [insert any additional positions within your committee]

6. Appointment of the Committee

6.1 The appointment of committee members shall be via a democratic vote to take place at the club/society Annual General Meeting.

6.2 Only current full members of the University of Worcester Students' Union shall be permitted to run for a committee position. [Insert any additional criteria for committee positions here].

6.3 Any changes in committee personnel shall be communicated to the Students' Union

7. Removal of Committee members

7.1 A motion of no confidence in any Committee member may be called in any committee by either a petition signed by at least 15% of the membership of the Club or Society or 10 (whichever is greater), or by a two-thirds majority vote at a Club or Society committee meeting.

7.2 If a no confidence motion is called then an EGM must be held, and in order for the no confidence motion to be carried it must be supported by two-thirds of those present and voting. See the guides on How to organise an EGM for full details of how to organise an EGM.

7.3 If the no confidence motion is successful, then the President or Treasurer should immediately inform the Vice President Student Experience and the Sports and Societies Coordinator. Your Club or Society will then need to hold another EGM to re-elect a new person to that position.

8. Duties of Committee Members

8.1 The club/society Chair shall:

i. chair club/society meetings democratically, ensuring they are conducted properly and communicate minutes to the Students' Union

ii. Act as the first delegate to the Students' Union and ensure that the club/society is represented at all Student Groups Committee meetings if he/she is unable to attend

iii. Ensure at all times that health and safety precautions have been taken in relation to club/society members

iv. Act as the club/society's first representative to all external bodies and ensure the club/society members act as good ambassadors for the University and the Students' Union

v. and onwards [insert any additional duties relevant to your group]

8.2 The club/society Treasurer shall:

i. Oversee the financial accounts of the club/society as made available by the Students' Union and be responsible for ensuring that the club/society follows the Students' Union's financial regulations at all times.

ii. Collect all monies received from club/society events and ensure all money is banked with the Students' Union along with the necessary documentation.

iii. Liaise with the rest of the committee to complete the Grant Allocation forms and ensure they are handed into the Students' Union by the agreed deadline.

iv. Submit an annual financial report to the VP Student Groups

v. be responsible for maintaining overall control over the club/society's finances and ensuring all club/society activities or expenditure is financially viable

vi. and onwards [insert any additional duties relevant to your group]

8.3 The club/society Secretary shall:

i. maintain up to date records of club/society membership including contact details for all club/society members, and ensure that the Students' Union also has the equivalent up to date information.

ii. Minute and keep record of all club/society meetings and ensure that these details are made available to the Students' Union.

iii. Ensure that the club/society is, on an annual basis, affiliated to the appropriate National and Regional Governing Bodies and entered into necessary leagues or competitions. This shall be done in conjunction with the Sports and Societies Co-ordinator.

vi. and onwards [insert any additional duties relevant to your group]

(8.4 and onwards) [insert any additional committee positions for your club/society in a similar format to above]

9. Meetings

9.1 General Meetings shall take place at least once per semester and may be called by the following methods:

- i. as directed by the club/society committee
- ii. on the request of the Students' Union Executive Committee
- iii. by written request of the club/society members via a letter signed by no less than one quarter of the club/society membership.

9.1.2 [enter suitable time period here; e.g. 1 week, 10 days] notice of a General Meeting shall be given to all members.

9.1.3 Only student members of the club/society are permitted to vote at meetings and only those members present are permitted to vote.

9.2 Annual General Meetings shall take place within the second semester [insert more specific date if you require; e.g. the second week in March or nearest available Tuesday to the 15th April] and will feature the appointment of committee members for the following academic year.

9.2.1 Details of committee members for the following academic year elected at the AGM shall be provided to the Students' Union before the 31st May.

9.2.2 [enter suitable time period here; e.g. 1 week, 10 days] notice of an Annual General Meeting shall be given to all members.

9.2.3 Only student members of the club/society are permitted to vote at meetings and only those members present are permitted to vote.

9.3 The quorum (i.e. the minimum number of members needed for a meeting to take place) for General Meetings and the Annual General Meetings shall be [insert suitable figure here; eg. 40%, one third, one half, 20 members] of the total club/society membership.

9.4 Should any General Meetings or the AGM fail to meet the above quorum then the meeting shall be reconvened within [insert appropriate time frame here; e.g. ten days, a fortnight] and this second meeting shall be automatically quorate.

10. The Constitution

10.1 Copies of the constitution shall be made available to all members via the club/society webpage [or enter alternative method here].

10.2 Alterations and amendments to the constitution must be first proposed and seconded at the Annual General Meeting. Subsequently the amendment must be passed by [insert appropriate figure here; eg. 51%, 60%, two thirds, more than half] of the membership present.

