

Constitution & By-laws
Office of Student Activities
University of New Hampshire at Manchester

What is a Constitution?

A constitution contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. It provides a foundation upon which an organization operates. A constitution does not have to be lengthy, just long enough to serve its purpose.

Why should I have a Constitution?

Every official student club at UNH Manchester is requested to file a current copy of their constitution and bylaws with the Office of Student Activities. An updated copy should be filed promptly should the document change during the year. Your constitution serves to help:

- Clarify your purpose
- Outline your basic structure
- Provide the cornerstone for building an effective club
- Allow members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the club is all about and how it functions.

What should I include in my Constitution?

A constitution should provide the structure for a club, describe its purpose, and define the duties and responsibilities of the officers and members. The objective is to draft a document that covers these topics in a simple, clear, and concise manner.

What are By-laws?

By-laws are secondary principles that govern the internal affairs of an organization. By-laws are essentially an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps the organization must follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.



The Office of Student Activities
Jamie Saucier, Student Activities Coordinator
(603) 491-4395 (Jamie.Saucier@unh.edu)
Room 108 | 400 Commercial Street | Manchester, NH 03101

Sample Outline for a Combined Constitution/By-laws Document:

Article I - NAME

The name of this club shall be called _____.

Article II - PURPOSE

The purpose(s) of this club shall include the following:

If your club is affiliated with other groups, mention that here too (i.e. a chapter of a national organization).

Article III - MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to all registered students at UNH Manchester regardless of age, race, sex, religion, or disability.

(NOTE: Official student clubs at UNH Manchester are required to be non-discriminatory in membership. As such, you should review your constitution to ensure that it does not contain discriminatory language or provisions.)

If your club wants to include membership requirement information, here is an example:

As a member, one is required to attend club meetings regularly, pay dues if required, and actively support club projects."

Article IV – OFFICERS

Every organization must have two officers minimum. Every student club is expected to designate one officer as the main student leader (usually titled “president”) and one officer authorized to deal with the club’s finances (usually titled “treasurer”).

Section I – Officers

Officers shall consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.

Section II – Duties of the Officers

Duties of the _____ shall be to _____.

Example Officer Duties:

1. President
 - a. Preside over all meetings
 - b. Represent organization on campus



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- c. Ensure that the organization is operating in conformity with the standards set forth by UNH Manchester and the Office of Student Activities
 - d. Maintain communication with club advisor
- 2. Vice-President
 - a. Preside over meetings in the absence of the President
 - b. Coordinate club promotion and publicity of events
- 3. Secretary
 - a. Maintain an accurate record of all club meetings
 - b. Maintain membership directory
- 4. Treasurer
 - a. Maintain an accurate record of club transactions
 - b. Collect dues if required

Article V – MEETINGS

How often held, when, by whom, where, how announced.

Article VI – ADVISOR

Each club must have a UNH Manchester faculty or staff member as an advisor. The advisor will provide leadership, guidance, advice, and supervision to the officers and members of the club.

Article VII – DUES

Explain financial procedures including the amount and collection procedures for dues, if any will be required for membership.

Article VIII – AMENDMENTS

An amendment may be initiated by any member of the club and passed by a two-thirds (2 / 3) majority of the general membership.



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