

CONSTITUTION TEMPLATE

Because each recognized club is an independent sport and recreation organization, it requires a written instrument of governance. This instrument, known as a Constitution, establishes the fundamental rules and principles by which the club operates.

On the following pages is a template which club members may use when writing or revising their club's Constitution. This document is intended to serve as a model only. A recognized Club Sport may structure and govern itself in any way it deems appropriate, as long as the provisions of its Constitution do not contradict the Club Sports Constitution or the established policies and procedures of the Club Sports program, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and Physical Education, Columbia University, or state and federal law.

Constitution of the Columbia University <name of sport> Club Ratified/Revised on <Date>

Preamble

An introductory statement, usually no longer than two or three sentences, stating the club's mission. A mission statement defines the core purpose of the organization – why it exists. Effective mission statements are concise, long-term in vision, and easily understood and communicated.

Article I. Name of Club Sport

The name of the club shall be Columbia University _____ Club, hereinafter referred to as (*shortened name of the club as it will appear throughout the constitution* [optional]).

Article II. Purpose

Section 1. (*In one, clear, concise statement, state the purpose of the club.*)

Section 2. (*Enumerate the aims and goals of the club, such as "to provide participation opportunities for novices in [your club's sport], to enhance the skills and strategies necessary to win [your club's division, section, state, nationals], to gain valuable management and leadership experience through the efficient and creative administration of the club, etc.*)

Article III. Membership

REMEMBER: Clubs must be open to all Columbia University students, faculty, staff, alumni, and affiliates who have current Dodge Fitness Center memberships and clubs may not discriminate in membership policies on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, (including gender identity and expression), pregnancy, religion, creed, marital status, partnership status, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, military status, or any other legally protected status. A club may be required to limit participation in certain kinds of activity (such as practice, competition or exhibition) to a certain class of individuals (such as undergraduate students, men, women, individuals registered with the sport's National Governing Body, etc.), but membership in the club cannot be circumscribed.

Section 1. Eligibility (*Indicate who is qualified for membership.*)

Section 2. Active Membership (*Enumerate what a member must do to be recognized as a member-in-good-standing [such as pay dues on a timely basis, have a current and valid individual membership in the club's National Governing Body, attend 80% of all practices, participate in competition]*)

Section 3. Privileges (*Enumerate the rights and privileges to which a member-in-good-standing is entitled.*)

Article IV. Officers

REMEMBER: Clubs must have four undergraduate officers: a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. Clubs may have as many committee chairs, captains, equipment managers, competition managers, etc. as it likes, but the officers of a club are the only individuals vested by the club's membership to assume the fiduciary and liability responsibilities of the club.

Section 1. Duties of Office

- A. President (*List and define all of the President's duties and obligations*)
- B. Vice-President (*List and define all of the Vice-President's duties and obligations*)
- C. Treasurer (*List and define all of the Treasurer's duties and obligations*)
- D. Secretary (*List and define all of the Secretary's duties and obligations*)

Section 2. Eligibility (*Indicate any requirements needed to hold office –e.g. President must be a senior, must have been a member-in-good-standing for two semesters, must have served as a committee chair, etc.*)

Section 3. Elections (*Identify who will elect the club's board of officers, when they will elect them, the procedures used for elections and who is eligible to cast a vote*)

Section 4. Term of Office (*Define whether an office is held for one academic year, one calendar year, several years, if there are term limits, what the resignation procedure is, and how [and under what grounds] an officer can be prematurely removed from office.*)

Article V. Committees

(Enumerate and define what standing and/or ad-hoc committees or what divisions [such as a men's division, a women's division, a disabled athletes division, etc.] will exist in the club and the duties and obligations of each.)

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1. Executive Board (*Indicate the frequency with which the club's Board of Officers meet. It is suggested that club officers meet at least once a month to attend to the administrative business of the club.*)

Section 2. General Meetings (*Indicate how many meetings of the general membership are to be held during a year and when they are to be held. It is recommended that clubs have a minimum of three general meetings each academic year: one early in the Fall Semester, one at the beginning of the Spring Semester and one near the end of the Spring Semester.*)

Section 3. **Special Meetings** *(Indicate the circumstances under which a special or emergency meetings is to be called, by whom the meeting is called, and how members are to be notified.)*

Article VII. Affiliations

Section 1. **National Governing Body** *(Indicate whether the club has a collegiate, general or masters membership in the sport's NGB, enumerate the rules of NGB membership and enumerate the obligations individual club members have to maintain the club's NGB member status.)*

Section 2. **Leagues or Consortiums** *(Indicate any affiliations with local, state, regional or national organizations.)*

Article VIII. Coaching / Instruction

Section 1. **Goals** *(Explain the club's performance goals and indicate the nature and scope of coaching or instruction needed to meet those goals.)*

Section 2. **Coach/ Instructor** *(Indicate the procedures of soliciting the services of a Club Sport Coach, the qualifications necessary for an ideal candidate and the selection of process.)*

Article IX. Club Funds

Section 1. **Dues** *(Indicate how much membership dues are, when they are collected, and how they are to be paid.)*

REMEMBER: Clubs must charge a minimum of \$15 per member per semester in dues. A club which engages the services of a Recreational Sports Consultant must charge a minimum of \$30 per member per semester in dues.

Section 2. **Sponsorships** *(Indicate the procedures for procuring sponsorship income.)*

Section 3. **Gifts** *(Indicate the procedure for soliciting and receiving cash donations [as opposed to donations of goods and services-in-kind].)*

Section 4. **Expenditures** *(Enumerate the nature and scope of expenditures, the process by which the club authorizes expenditures [for instance, by majority vote of the Board of Officers, by a vote of 2/3 of the general membership, for certain expenditures by approval of the President and Treasurer, etc.], and any time or dollar amount limits to expenditures.)*

Article X. Amendments

(The amendment process should be defined to provide for a desire or need on the part of a club's membership to revise, correct, articulate or augment an article or section of a ratified Constitution.)

Section 1. Procedure for Amendment

(Indicate the procedure for presenting an amendment of the Constitution to the general membership. Indicate whether amendment proposals require the formation of a Constitutional Committee to review the proposal. Indicate whether such a committee refers its recommendation to the club's Board of Officers. Define the form an amendment should take.)

Section 2. Ratification

(Define the process by which a proposed amendment is reviewed, discussed, revised and adopted. Fix a timeline for each step in the ratification process. Indicate the margin of a vote of the club's general membership [in-good-standing] which must be in favor of a proposed amendment in order to ratify an amendment.)

REMEMBER: A club's Constitution is an evolving document and should keep pace with changes in the sport, the club's focus and composition and the club's ever-evolving mission. Club's Constitutions should also be revised to reflect any changes in the policies and procedures of the Club Sports program as a whole. A club should review its Constitution every two years. Once a club has formally amended its Constitution and/or By-laws, the amended Constitution must be submitted to the Club Sports Governing Board for approval.

Article XI. Bylaws

(While a Constitution is an instrument of governance, establishing the structure, composition and fundamental principles of a club, By-laws are a set of policies and procedures—rules, as it were—that define how the club executes the principles mandated in Constitution. By-laws are a set of separate and more fluid clauses and should be revised and updated with more frequency than a club's Constitution. Certainly, By-laws should be amended when needed but routinely plan on doing so once a year. Enumerate in this article the rules and regulations specific to the club.)