**What is a Constitution?**

A constitution is a set of rules for running a club / society. It provides guidelines for conflict resolution and a framework for action so that your club / society can accomplish its goals. To write your own constitution, you’ll need to meet with your committee to discuss your principles and policies. Once you and the other members have agreed on a clear vision, it’s time to start writing and implementing your constitution!

**Preparation**

1. **Meet as a Committee**

Try to find a time when all or most club / society members can meet. In this meeting, you should discuss the different elements that your constitution will address, including your club / society name, mission, membership requirements, and officers.

1. **Assign Note Takers**

Have two committee members take notes during the meeting. That way, you’ll have a summary of everything that was discussed, and the writing process will be easier!

You’ll get a more comprehensive summary of the meeting, and you’ll be less likely to miss something important.

**Discussing your Constitution**

1. **Club / Society Name**

Your club / society name is important. This is the title that will represent your club in your community and possibly beyond.

1. **Define your Purpose**

Every student group is founded for a reason. In your meeting, talk about your club / society’s long term goals and how you will accomplish them.

1. Try to answer the following questions: Where will your club / society perform its work? Who benefits from your work? In what way do they benefit?
2. This is the most important part of the constitution, so make sure everyone is on the same page.
3. **Decide on Membership Policies**

Discuss who can be a member of your group, and outline members’ privileges and responsibilities. (Note: The SU allows up to 10% of your members to be external / associate. The remainder must be registered AU students.) Don’t forget to address the conditions under which membership can be revoked too.

* 1. This is also the time to decide if you will have a membership fee. If so, how much will it be, and how often will members have to pay?
  2. Members might be anyone who pays dues, anyone who attends meetings, or anyone who participates in the club / society activities.

1. **Outline your Committee Structure**

Your club / society should have some sort of leadership structure, the members (you!) that run your group. Make a list of the positions you have in your club / society. Discuss responsibilities and rules for appointing, removing, and replacing committee members.

1. Committee positions must include President, Secretary / Vice President, and Treasurer. Other positions can also be added dependant on the club / society needs. For competitive sports clubs, you will also need a Captain.
2. When writing your constitution, use the committee position title rather than the member’s name. After all, committee members will come and go each academic year.
3. **Discuss Meeting Details**

Discuss how often committee meetings will take place and how meetings will be scheduled.

1. You can also include some information about meeting procedures in your constitution. Think about how decisions will be made. If you want to make decisions by voting, provide a brief description of the voting criteria.
2. You should also detail when your AGM will be held, and the procedures for running it.
3. **Talk about Finances**

You may want to include a section about finances in your constitution. Discuss how often finances will be reported, and who will record of the group’s transactions (this is usually the Treasurer).

1. Don’t forget to include a statement about how funds will be spent. Club / society money should only be spent on materials and activities that are relevant to and benefit the club / society as a whole. Sports clubs may also want to spend additional funds on their representative team for coaching etc.
2. **Changing the Constitution**

In the course of your club / society life, members may want to make changes to the constitution. These changes are called amendments. Your constitution should contain rules for proposing and implementing amendments.

1. Any changes, all members should have the opportunity vote to ratify a change at an EGM (Emergency General Meeting). Majority vote will decide.

**Writing your Constitution**

1. **Divide into Articles.**

The broad sections of your constitution are called articles. You should have articles for major categories like your club / society name, purpose, membership policies, committee positions, meetings, finances, and amendment procedures. Generally, your group name and purpose should be the first two articles.

1. Feel free to add additional articles. For example, if members of your club / society are paying dues, then you could include a separate article for dues, if you want. However, you could also place dues under the membership article.
2. Label articles by number and category. For example, your first article should be titled “Article 1. Name” and so forth.
3. Refer to the Aberystwyth University Students’ Union constitution where relevant.
4. **Divide Articles into Sections**

These sections address different aspects of the broader article category. The text of your constitution goes in the sections.

1. For example, in your article about officers, you might want to include sections about different officer titles, the responsibilities of each officer, the election process, and officer eligibility requirements.
2. Write a sentence or two for each section.
3. Label sections by number. For example, the first section in any article would be labelled “Section 1.”
4. **Be Clear and Concise**

Clarity is key when writing a constitution. Keep your language simple, professional, and to-the-point.

1. For example, when writing about your club / society name, opt for a simple sentence like, “the name of the club will be The Youth Rangers.”
2. **Be Comprehensive, but not Overly Specific**

Your constitution should contain the core principles of your organization and its general policies. Try to find a balance between comprehensive guidance and administrative freedom. Things can get complicated if it’s too specific. More flexible documents generally work better.

1. For example, you should include rules about meeting frequency in your constitution, but not about meeting time or location. Those things will likely change based on members’ schedules and space availability.
2. **Write a Draft**

You should select a committee member (usually the President, with the help of an additional member) to write a first draft of your constitution, based on notes taken during your discussions.

1. Look at the AberSU Club / Society Sample Constitution to help you
   1. This can be made available to you by emailing your relevant coordinator, or by downloading the document from the ‘Resources’ page of the SU website

**Adopting your Constitution**

1. **Review as a Committee**

Call a meeting, and have everyone in your group look over the constitution. The majority of your group should accept the constitution. If this is not the case, you should make some edits based on member feedback.

1. If your constitution wasn’t accepted the first time, you’ll need to call another meeting after making edits to get it approved.
2. **Sign and Date**

Once the constitution has been accepted, have at least two committee members’ sign and date it. This is usually done by the President and Secretary. Remember, signing makes the constitution valid so it is important to get it signed off.

1. **Submit the Constitution**

Once your constitution is complete and has been agreed by all members, a digital copy must be sent to your relevant co-ordinator prior to any club / society activities taking place.

1. **Distribute Copies**

Make sure that all members have access to the constitution by making it available on your club / society webpage, Facebook page, or by emailing a copy to each of your members upon them joining.

**Key Contacts**

Opportunities Officer – [union.activities@aber.ac.uk](mailto:union.activities@aber.ac.uk)   
Lucie Gwilt - Sports Coordinator – [leg13@aber.ac.uk](mailto:leg13@aber.ac.uk)   
Tom Morrissey - Societies Development Coordinator – [thm35@aber.ac.uk](mailto:thm35@aber.ac.uk)