**Constitution Template for Student Organizations**

**University of Southern California**

**\*All articles and sections are required.** Underlined parts must be included. Other parts are strongly suggested and should be completed with your own information. You may add other articles, sections, or parts to this template as needed.

Purple text is designed to guide you as you decide what to include. Please fill in and/or delete all purple text. Constitutions will not be accepted until all purple text is removed.

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

Section A: NAME

Part 1.The official name for this organization is [ORGANIZATION NAME].

Part 2.This organization will use the name or its acronym, [ACRONYM], in all publicity materials and correspondence.

RSOs at USC must comply with naming policies as listed in the student handbook p. XYZ. RSOs may not use USC at the beginning of the name or acronym, but you may use “at USC,” “Trojans,” “Southern California”, or “’SC” when naming your group. Your constitution name must match what you have listed on EngageSC, social media, and other places.

Section B: PURPOSE

Part 1.The purpose of this organization is to [PURPOSE].

Part 2. All activities of this organization must be directed toward this purpose.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section A: LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

What different levels of membership do you have? Consider the categories/levels that represent your organization’s structure, and remember that all RSOs must be open and must have meaningful opportunities for any member of the university community to participate.

Part 1. Voting Membership: Voting members are those members who [CRITERIA].

What constitutes a voting member? Is there minimum participation or attendance required to become a voting member? Do members automatically become voting members after a certain amount of time with the organization? Should they be students in a certain school or program? Please note this is different from your officers or executive board - you need to define who will vote on business items such as By-Laws or constitution amendments.

Part 2: General Members: General members are those who [CRITERIA].

Are new members automatically considered general members (i.e., they have not earned voting member status yet? Do they complete an interest form? Do they need to attend a certain number of meetings or events?

Part 3. Open Membership: Open members are those members who [CRITERIA].

All other USC students and USC staff, faculty, alumni, and alumnae are eligible to be non-voting members.

These may be members who stop by intermittently or attend some events but are not typically involved in general body meetings or event planning.

Section B: PARTICIPATION AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Every part of this section is required. Please do not alter or delete any part of the statements below.

Part 1. Non-Discrimination Statement: Membership decisions will not discriminate on the basis of age, race, religion or creed, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

Part 2. Non-Hazing Statement: USC has a zero-tolerance stance with respect to hazing. This organization will not participate in any act or series of actions, whether or not the act is voluntarily agreed upon, tied to initiation, continued membership, or participation in any group or organization, that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm or humiliation. All Trojans are obligated to comply and have the responsibility to report possible and known hazing incidents. Further information on reporting options is available at [report.usc.edu](https://report.usc.edu).

Part 3. Open Membership Statement: All other USC students and USC staff, faculty, alumni, and alumnae are eligible to be non-voting members.

**All student organizations at USC must be open. You must maintain eligibility for non-voting membership.**

Section C: MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

Will you have attendance requirements? Are the attendance requirements based on a percentage of meetings or a certain number per semester? Is attendance required for meetings, events, or both? What responsibilities do officers have with respect to both new and returning members at all levels?

Part 1. All members are required to demonstrate support for the purpose of this organization.

Part 2. All members are required to comply with university policies and expectations as outlined in the Student Handbook and elsewhere.

Part 3. Officers will add new members to EngageSC and maintain an up-to-date roster.

Part 4. Voting members must attend at least [# of %] of all meetings. General members must attend at least [# of %] of all meetings..

Ex. Voting members must attend at least 75% of the meetings per semester. General members must attend at least 2 meetings per semester.

Part 5. Dues: All members are required to pay a $[FEE, IF APPLICABLE] per semester membership fee prior to taking part in any organization activity. Member dues will be used to [USE OF MEMBER DUES]. Members who are having financial difficulties preventing them from paying dues will have the following options: [OPTIONS].

What will you use your membership fees for? It might be for event planning, purchasing tees or other merch, obtaining a national organization membership for the group, etc.

**We strongly encourage you to have a plan for those who cannot afford dues.**

Section D. RIGHTS

What rights will you confer on members? Will you provide a new member Orientation or guide? What meetings or events can members attend? Some examples are listed below – are there other rights you wish to add?

Part 1. Constitution: All members will have access to the RSO Constitution, bylaws, meeting minutes, and results of votes.

Part 2. All members are eligible to attend all meetings and events of this organization.

Part 3. If a fee is charged to attend a particular event, the executive board will establish a fee scale for voting members, non-voting members, and others as appropriate.

Section E. MEMBER REMOVAL

**You must clearly outline your member removal below.**

What will your process be for removing a member? Who will be involved? How will you keep records of the removal process?

Part 1. [ORGANIZATION NAME] may remove any member for failure to uphold provisions of the Constitution and/or By-Laws and/or failure to adhere to the requirements for membership as stated above.

Part 2. Officers must first notify the advisor of intent to remove the member and reasons for their removal.

Part 3. Members to be voted upon in this regard will be notified of the intention to do so in writing [AMOUNT OF TIME] prior to the meeting at which the vote will be taken.

What notice will you provide? We recommend at least one week.

Part 4. [TYPE OF MAJORITY] majority at a regular or special meeting shall be sufficient to withdraw membership.

Will you require a quorum, a simple majority, etc.?

ARTICLE III. OFFICERS

Section A: OFFICER TITLES

Part 1. REQUIRED POSITIONS

President

Vice President

Secretary/Historian

Treasurer

Programming Chair

The positions above are required for all RSOs. You may indicate the names you use internally that align with those positions in parentheses if they differ. **You should list both the required positions and any additional positions below according to whether they are elected or appointed.**

Part 2. ELECTED POSITIONS

Which positions will be elected by your voting membership? **Consider the required positions**  **listed in Part 1 as well as any other executive board positions you have.**

Part 3. APPOINTED POSITIONS

Which positions will be appointed by your executive board? **Consider the required positions listed in Part 1 as well as any other executive board positions you have.**

Section B. DUTIES

Part 1. All officers must complete the annual requirements for recognition status including Hazing Prevention and RSO Training modules.

Part 2. The President shall [RESPONSIBILITIES].

What responsibilities will the President have? Will they plan and chair meetings and/or call special meetings? Will they supervise the progress or planning of certain events or other activities? Will they serve as a liaison between the student organization and the advisor? Will they prepare an annual report of the organization’s activities? Will they coordinate with any other officer on event planning, budgeting, record-keeping, or any other activities?

Part 3. The Vice President shall [RESPONSIBILITIES].

What responsibilities will the Vice President have? Will they chair ad hoc committees or task forces? Will they supervise meetings in the absence of the President? Will they provide support and resources for committee chairs? Will they work with the President to prepare an annual report of the organization’s activities? Will they coordinate with any other officer on event planning, budgeting, record-keeping, or any other activities?

Part 4. The Secretary/Historian shall [RESPONSIBILITIES].

What responsibilities will the Secretary have? Will they organize and maintain the group’s files and history? Will they be responsible for communication with members? Will they work with the President to prepare an annual report of the organization’s activities? Will they coordinate with any other officer on event planning, budgeting, record-keeping, or any other activities? Remember that all RSOs must keep meeting minutes and up-to-date membership rosters.

Part 5. Treasurer shall [RESPONSIBILITIES].

What responsibilities will the Treasurer have? Will they monitor the organization’s budget and prepare financial reports? Will they maintain a current accounting of the organization’s transactions? Will they prepare and submit funding requests? Will they be a signer and main point of contact for the USC Credit Union account? Will they work with the President to prepare an annual report of the organization’s activities? Will they coordinate with any other officer on event planning, budgeting, record-keeping, or any other activities?

Part 6. The Programming Chair shall [RESPONSIBILITIES].

What responsibilities will the Program Committee Chair have? Will they direct the planning of the organization’s education and social programs? Will they be responsible for reserving spaces and submitting the University Events Permit Application? Will they create event checklists and other documents? Will they work with the President to prepare an annual report of the organization’s activities? Will they coordinate with any other officer on event planning, budgeting, record-keeping, or any other activities?

Part 7. Other Officers: Please list any other officers and their responsibilities.

Section C. REQUIREMENTS FOR RUNNING FOR AND HOLDING OFFICE

Part 1. All officers and candidates for office must be currently enrolled USC students.

Part 2. All officers must be voting members of [ORGANIZATION NAME].

Section D. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

**You must clearly outline your election process below**

Part 1. Elections will be held according to the USC academic year.

Elections must be held prior to the end of spring semester so new officers have time to transition and be listed as officers for the next recognition cycle.

Part 2. Nominations for all offices will be taken [DATE OR WEEK OF ACADEMIC CALENDAR THAT ELECTIONS ARE HELD].

Part 3. [WHO] may nominate any other member, including self-nominations.

Part 4. Elections will be held [DATE OR WEEK OF ACADEMIC CALENDAR THAT ELECTIONS ARE HELD].

Part 5. Nominations may also be made during the election meeting itself, prior to closing of nominations and taking the vote.

When will you take nominations? Consider your overall timeline for nominations, elections, and orienting/transitioning new officers. How many meetings do you want to leave before the end of the semester to start this process?

Part 6. A [TYPE OF MAJORITY] majority vote of the quorum present at that meeting will be sufficient to elect an officer. If there are more than two candidates and no candidate receives a majority, there will be a run-off vote between the top two vote recipients in the general meeting.

What will be required for a nominee to be elected? A relative majority (recipient of the most votes)? An absolute majority (50% + 1)? A two-thirds majority? A simple majority?

Part 7. Current officers must update Campus Activities with the names and information of the new officers prior to the end of the academic year.

Section E. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

**You must clearly outline your officer removal process below.**

What will your process be for removing an officer? Who will be involved? What notice will be provided? How will you keep records of the removal process?

Part 1. Officers may be removed from office for failure to perform duties or for violation of membership clause.

Part 2. Officers must first notify the advisor of the intent to remove the member and reasons for removal.

Part 3. Officers to be voted upon in this regard will be notified of the intention to do so in writing [AMOUNT OF TIME] prior to the meeting at which the vote will be taken.

What notice will you provide? We recommend at least one week.

Part 4. [VOTING REQUIREMENT] at a regular or special meeting shall be sufficient to withdraw membership.

Will you require a quorum, a simple majority, etc.? A quorum is the minimum number of voting members of a group who must be **present** at a properly convened meeting in order to conduct business.

 Part 5. The advisor must receive results of the vote and give approval for member removal.

What role will your advisor play in elections? Consider how their oversight might provide guidance and ensure fairness and adherence to the processes you have outlined in this constitution.

Section F. TERMS OF OFFICE AND VACANCIES

Annual terms of office with opportunities for re-election are recommended.

Part 1. The term of office shall be [TERM LENGTH] from [TERM START AND END DATES].

How long is the term? When will the term start and end? Ex. The term of office shall be from the last meeting of spring semester until the second-to-last meeting of the subsequent spring semester.

Part 2. Should a vacancy in office occur, there will be another nomination procedure and election for the vacant office/appointment by the executive board.

Part 3. In the interim, the Vice President will assume the duties of the President, the Secretary/Treasurer will assume the duties of the Vice President, and the Program Chair will assume the duties of the Secretary/Treasurer should those offices be vacant.

 Section G. OFFICER TRANSITIONS

 **You must clearly outline your officer removal process below.**

Part 1. Officer transitions will follow the following procedure:

How will you support officer transitions? Will you share transition guides and records from prior years? Will incoming officers shadow outgoing officers or hold meetings? What responsibilities will your Secretary/Historian and other officers play in keeping records for future officers.

ARTICLE IV. OPERATING PROCEDURES

Section A. MEETINGS

Part 1. A meeting of [ORGANIZATION NAME] shall be held [FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS].

How frequently will your organization hold meetings?

Part 2. Adequate advance notice must be given to all student members.

How will members be notified of meetings?

Part 3. Special meetings may be called by [WHO?]. Notice of special meetings must be communicated to all members at least [LENGTH OF TIME] in advance of the meeting.

Part 4. To conduct business at any meeting, [QUORUM DEFINITION] must be present to form a quorum.

Quorums ensure the board has enough representation at meetings before making

any changes or decisions. Consider the benefits and drawbacks of different types of quorums. Common types include simple majority, two-thirds majority, or a fixed number. Think about the size of your executive board or membership and your historical attendance patterns when deciding.

Section B: DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

How will decisions be made in your organization? How will decisions be shared to your membership? What else will help guide your decision making as a group?

Part 1. The Executive Board shall put-to-vote any decisions being made concerning the general membership of the RSO to the membership / executive leaders.

Part 2. A quorum is required to constitute a passing vote to conduct business.

ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

Section A. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Part 1. The only standing committee of [ORGANIZATION NAME] is the Program Committee, whose purpose is to plan events and programs for the organization.

Part 2. All decisions of the Program Committee involving committing organization funds in amounts greater than will require the approval of the majority of those members present at the regular or special meeting of [ORGANIZATION NAME]. Similar decisions, but for [DOLLAR AMOUNT] or less may be approved by the Program Chair with consent from all other officers.

Section B. OTHER COMMITTEES

Part 1. Other committees may be appointed by a majority vote of the members at a regular meeting of [ORGANIZATION NAME].

Part 2. In appointing such committees, [ORGANIZATION NAME] members must specify the purpose and chair or co-chair of that committee, and establish its duration.

What committees will you have to ensure your organization runs smoothly? Consider the events and activities your organization will conduct and how to best organize your members around successful outcomes. Will any of the committees’ decisions need to be approved by vote of your executive board or general membership? How will new committees be appointed?

ARTICLE VI. AFFILIATIONS

**This section is required exactly as written. Please do not delete this section or alter it in any way.**

Section A. USC

Part 1. This organization is a recognized student organization at the University of Southern California, but is not part of the University itself.

Part 2. In all correspondence and business transactions, it may refer to itself as an organization at USC, but not as part of USC itself.

Part 3. [ORGANIZATION NAME] accepts full financial and production responsibility for all activities it sponsors.

Part 4. [ORGANIZATION NAME] agrees to abide by all pertinent USC policies and regulations. Where USC policies and regulations and those of [ORGANIZATION NAME] differ, the policies and regulations of USC will take precedence.

Part 5. This organization recognizes and understands that the University assumes no legal liability for the actions of the organization, and that the University is not providing blanket indemnification insurance coverage for any activities of the organization, unless those activities expressly benefit and further the goals of the University, and have received prior review, approval, and consent of Campus Activities, Risk Management, and/or General Counsel.

Section B. [NATIONAL ORGANIZATION NAME]

This section is required exactly as written **if you are affiliated with a national organization.**

Part 1. [ORGANIZATION NAME] is the USC chapter of the [NATIONAL ORGANIZATION NAME]

Part 2. Where [NATIONAL ORGANIZATION NAME] guidelines, regulations, or policies differ from those of USC, USC's policies, regulations, and guidelines take precedence.

 Section C. SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT /PROGRAM AFFILIATION

This section is required exactly as written **if formally affiliated with a USC school or department.**

Part 1. [ORGANIZATION NAME] is formally affiliated with [SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM NAME].

Part 2. Where [SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM NAME] guidelines, regulations, or policies differ from those of USC, USC's policies, regulations, and guidelines take precedence.

ARTICLE VII. FACULTY/STAFF ADVISOR

Section A. ADVISOR REQUIREMENTS

Part 1. As a recognized student organization at the University of Southern California, [ORGANIZATION NAME] is required to have an official advisor from the USC faculty and/or staff.

Part 2. The Advisor is required to be a full-time faculty or staff member who can act as a Campus Security Authority.

Part 3. Other persons may serve as special advisors as needed.

Section B. DUTIES

Part 1. The advisor must sign the recognition application each year.

Part 2. Officers should meet with the advisor [NUMBER] times per semester.

How many times per semester will you meet with your advisor? Consider what is sufficient for your needs and level of support required.

Part 3. Advisors must maintain awareness of organizational activities, including programs and events, votes, and other RSO business.

Part 4. Advisors must maintain open lines of communication with the RSO officers/members and act as a liaison when connecting students with university resources.

Part 5. An advisor may not vote in [ORGANIZATION NAME] matters, hold office or unduly influence decisions of the student organization.

Part 6. Advisors must complete annual trainings as assigned by Campus Activities.

ARTICLE VIII. BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Section A. BYLAWS

Part 1. Bylaws can be added to this constitution by a [TYPE OF MAJORITY] vote of the entire membership at a regular meeting of [ORGANIZATION NAME].

What vote is required to add by-laws to the constitution?

Part 2. This constitution takes precedence over any and all bylaws.

Section B. AMENDMENTS

Part 1. This constitution can be amended by a [TYPE OF MAJORITY] vote of the entire membership at a regular meeting of [ORGANIZATION NAME].

What vote is required to pass amendments?

Part 2. Notification of such a motion must be made to members at least [LENGTH OF TIME] in advance of the one in which the actual vote is taken.

What notice will you give members?