



Students' Society of McGill University

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Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

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Constitutional Checklist

Constitutional Requirements

This document covers clauses and other stipulations that should be covered in all service constitutions. These clauses ensure that service constitutions comply with McGill and SSMU policies and regulations. Furthermore, this document outlines the components of an effective constitution for running a service.

SSMU Requirements



The following must be stated in your constitution as they are written here. These are based on either SSMU, McGill, or Quebec requirements for SSMU that services and service members must comply with to maintain service status.

Land Acknowledgement

In order to comply with SSMU's Indigenous Solidarity Policy Article 2.2, all services should include a land acknowledgement at the beginning of their constitution. Below is the territorial acknowledgement used in the SSMU constitution. You are welcome to use this one or you are encouraged to create your own that acknowledges how your service interacts with colonial legacies today.

*'The **SSMU** acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which it is located.'*

Code of Conduct

All SSMU volunteers, members, and services are mandated to abide by the code of conduct. This text must be included somewhere in your constitution.

1. *Code of Conduct*
 - 1.1. *The Service shall carry forth its mandate from an anti-oppressive and equitable standpoint AND equal respect shall be given to all members, including those of disadvantaged backgrounds, regardless of but not limited to gender orientation, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality or sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities, language, or social class.*
 - 1.1.1. *No member shall make personal profit from the Service.*
 - 1.2. *The Service is a legal entity of the SSMU and shall not enter into contracts or agreements.*
 - 1.3. *Any executive member who fails to fulfill their responsibilities shall be subject to the expulsion procedure outlined in this constitution.*
2. *Student Group Civility*
 - 2.1. *The Service will maintain cordial and respectful relations with all other clubs, services, independent student groups, and SSMU staff.*
 - 2.2. *The Service will not use SSMU resources and/or their Service status to prevent other clubs, services or independent student groups from fulfilling their mandate, including but not limited to their acquisition of resources and pursuit of activities.*



- 2.3. *If problems arise between groups, the Service shall be responsible for contacting the SSMU Vice President of Student Life, in their absence, the SSMU President and attempting to remedy and solve the problem in a collegial fashion.*

Language

The official languages of SSMU are English and French, which should be reflected in the Service's constitution as well.

1. *Language*
 - 1.1. *Both English and French shall be the official languages of the Service.*

Membership

Per SSMU's constitution and SSMU's Memorandum of Agreement with PGSS. Only members of SSMU and PGSS can be official members of a SSMU service.

1. *Membership*
 - 1.1. *Membership for a Service under the Students' Society of McGill University is open to all SSMU and PGSS members, including those of disadvantaged backgrounds, regardless of but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality or sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities, language, or social class.*
 - 1.2. *Only Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) and Post Graduate Students' Society (PGSS) members are eligible to be elected as officers and to hold voting privileges.*
 - 1.2.1. *Associated non-voting membership is open to all others.*

SSMU Constitution

Since services are under SSMU, when there are gaps or inconsistencies in a service constitution, the SSMU constitution and regulations will take precedent.

1. *In case of any inconsistencies between the Club Constitution and the SSMU Constitution and Internal Regulations, the SSMU Constitution, Internal Regulations, and Policies shall take effect.*
2. *If there are any areas not covered in this Constitution, the SSMU Constitution, Internal Regulations and Policies shall take effect.*

SSMU Policies

SSMU policies outline specific requirements that all SSMU services have to uphold in the [Policy and Plan Book](#), which consists of all the policies approved by the SSMU. These clauses exist to incorporate



those requirements into the service structure. In addition to these clauses, services are mandated to comply with all SSMU policies such as the Equity Policy and Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy.

1. *Environment*

- 1.1. *The Service shall make attempts to regularly monitor the environmental impact of all its events and operations.*
- 1.2. *Services must attempt to utilize the services and resources available at SSMU in order to maximize capacities for equitable decision-making and environmental stewardship. These include but are not limited to the use of the environment-focused SSMU services, green events guide, applications for the SSMU Green fund, assistance of the SSMU environment commissioners, environment committee and green events coordinators.*
- 1.3. *The Service must attempt to find sustainable alternatives to the non-recyclable #6 plastic, effective waste management, providing vegan and vegetarian options, purchasing clothing which is ethically sourced and environmentally-friendly, fair trade coffee and tea, and local and/or organic foods.*

2. *Accessibility*

- 2.1. *All Service events must make every effort to be accessible to all Members, and must be held in venues that are physically accessible to individuals with limited mobility.*
- 2.2. *All Service events must publicize in their promotions a list of accessibility services available upon request, including but not limited to whisper or sign language translation, childcare, and adapted physical access.*

3. *Against Unpaid Internships*

- 3.1. *The Service shall not offer, promote, circulate, or otherwise communicate unpaid internships as one of their primary activities.*
- 3.2. *The Service shall not host, co-host, or support, in any manner, events that offer, promote, circulate or otherwise communicate unpaid internship opportunities.*

Structural Requirements

The role of this section is to ensure that your constitution has all the necessary parts to act as an effective outline for how to run your service. Your constitution might have different section names or processes, but it is important that things like decision making, composition, and elections are included in your constitution.

Executive or Collective Committee

This section should be used to define the make up, role, responsibilities and decision making process of the governing group of your service.

1. *The Executive Committee (EC) shall administer the Service and oversee its events.*



2. *The EC is composed of the following portfolios:*
 - 2.1. *President (chair)*
 - 2.2. *Vice President External*
 - 2.3. *Vice President Internal*
 - 2.4. *Treasurer*
 - 2.5. *Secretary*
3. *The EC shall meet every 2 weeks throughout the Fall and Winter semester.*
4. *Quorum of the executive committee shall be a simple majority and is required for the meeting to proceed.*
5. *Votes of the Executive Committee shall be carried by a simple majority of those members present, where a tie is not sufficient for the vote to pass.*

Portfolios

This section should be used to define the different roles in your service. The following are examples taken from the [Executive Club Constitution Template](#), which can give you an idea of the different tasks and roles that need to be assigned. In order for SSMU to recognize an executive position in your service, it needs to be outlined in your constitution.

Responsibilities that should be outlined in your constitution include, but are not limited to, the following: signing authority, communicating with SSMU, running elections, chairing meetings, ensuring compliance with the service constitution and SSMU policies and regulations, and managing the finances of the Service.

1. *The President shall:*
 - 1.1. *Oversee all aspects of the Club.*
 - 1.1.1. *Be the chief representative, and chief spokesperson of the Club.*
 - 1.1.2. *Ensure the smooth running of the Club as a whole through facilitation of, and mediation with the various EC portfolios with a vision that is consistent with the Club mandate.*
 - 1.1.3. *Ensure that the Club is abiding by the Constitution, By-laws and Policies of McGill University.*
 - 1.2. *Be the main point of contact between the SSMU VP Student Life and the Club*
 - 1.2.1. *Ensure that an up-to-date copy of the Club Constitution is on file with the SSMU VP Student Life.*
 - 1.2.2. *Ensure that the Club is abiding by the Constitution, By-laws and Policies of the Students' Society of McGill University.*
 - 1.2.3. *Be responsible for ensuring Club representatives attend all mandatory SSMU workshops and trainings as required.*
 - 1.3. *Chair all EC meetings.*
 - 1.3.1. *In the case of a tie, the President may cast a second, deciding vote.*
 - 1.4. *Co-sign all financial transactions with another executive.*



- 1.5. *Co-sign all minutes with the Secretary.*
2. *The Vice President External shall:*
 - 2.1. *Act as representative of the Club to the community within and outside of the University.*
 - 2.2. *Be responsible for developing healthy relations with student and community organizations within and outside McGill University, and particularly those in the Montreal area.*
 - 2.3. *Be responsible for promoting the image of the Club to the community within and outside McGill University.*

General Meetings

The meetings section should include how often meetings should occur, how they will be run, and quorum.

1. *There shall be at least one General Meeting, open to all Service members, per semester.*
 - 1.1. *Quorum for a general meeting shall be no less than a simple majority of the Service membership.*
 - 1.2. *General Meetings may be held in-person or online.*
 - 1.3. *Special General Meetings shall be called at any time by the Executive Committee.*

Elections or Selection Procedures

This section should outline how people are elected or hired for positions within the service. Additionally, it should include who is responsible for running the election.

1. *The Executive Committee shall appoint a Chief Electoral Officers(CEO) to oversee the running of elections.*
 - 1.1. *There shall be one General Meeting, open to all Service members, held in the fall semester before the fall final exam period for the purpose of ratifying the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer by the Service membership.*
2. *There shall be one General Meeting, open to all Service members, held in the winter semester before the beginning of the winter final exam period for the purpose of electing new members to the EC.*
 - 2.1. *The general membership must be notified of the date of the general meeting 2 weeks in advance to the date of the General Meeting called for elections purposes.*
 - 2.2. *Candidates shall inform the CEO three days prior to the election of their intention to run.*
 - 2.3. *Candidates may make a speech if the election is at a general meeting or write a blurb if the election is conducted online.*
3. *Executives shall be appointed by a 2/3 majority of the members in attendance at the general meeting or participating in an online vote.*
 - 3.1. *Elections are to be conducted by secret ballot.*



- 3.2. *Elections may be held in-person or online.*
4. *By-elections may be held with the approval of the executive committee.*
 - 4.1. *In the absence of a CEO during a by-election, the president may take on the role.*
5. *The SSMU Vice-President (Student Life) should be notified immediately by the CEO in the event of contested electoral results or violations of any governance procedure that would affect the electoral results.*
 - 5.1. *The Vice-President (Student Life) of SSMU or their representative shall have final authority over electoral procedures and validity of results.*

Removal from Office

This section should outline the process for removing someone from their role in the service in the event that an individual is not fulfilling the position requirements.

1. *Any Executive member or the CEO may be removed from office for impropriety violations of the provisions of the SSMU or Service Constitution or the SSMU's Internal Regulations, delinquency of duties or misappropriation of the Service's funds.*
 - 1.1. *This may include, but is not limited to: failure to attend executive committee or general meetings, failure to fulfill duties, or violation of the Service or SSMU constitution.*
2. *The removal from office process requires a vote by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) at a Special General Meeting called exclusively for this purpose.*
 - 2.1. *To initiate the procedure, a Service member should contact the CEO who will be responsible for overseeing impeachment procedures and calling the Special General Meeting.*
 - 2.1.1. *If the CEO is the one being removed from office, the president will oversee the process.*
3. *The Executive member against whom a request for removal from office is directed shall be notified of the place, the date, and the time of the General Meeting called to remove them within one week.*
 - 3.1. *Any Executive member shall have the right to attend and address the meeting or, in a written statement read at the General Meeting, to put forth the reasons why the Executive member opposes the proposed removal from said Executive position.*
4. *The SSMU Vice President Student Life may remove or suspend an executive or CEO at any point for violation(s) or for the purpose of investigating suspected violation(s) of the McGill, SSMU or Service rules, regulations or policies.*

Amendments

This section is to ensure that the constitution can be modified and updated to evolve with the running of the service.



1. *Any member of the Service may propose an amendment to the Constitution.*
2. *In order to amend the constitution, a two-thirds majority vote at a General Meeting must be in favour of the proposed amendment.*
3. *All amendments shall be submitted to the Services Review Committee, will be reviewed by the Services Committee and ratified by the SSMU Legislative Council and Board of Directors before they take effect.*

Constitutional Suggestions

The following are recommended for you to include in your constitution but are not required. These can ensure that your constitution is an efficient guideline for the running of your services.

Definitions

It can be helpful to begin your constitution with a series of definitions so that your constitution is not vague or open to interpretation. Here is an example definition section from the [Club Constitution Template](#).

- A. *“SSMU” shall refer to the Student Society of McGill University/L’Association Etudiante de l’Université McGill, the corporation duly incorporated pursuant to the laws of the Province of Quebec pursuant to the Act Respecting the Accreditation and Financing of Students’ Associations, CQLR c A-3.01;*
- B. *“Conflict of Interest” shall refer to any situation that is sufficient to affect, or provide incentive to affect, the Concerned Individual’s impartiality in their conduct of Club activities;*
- C. *“Unpaid Internships” shall refer to situations outlined in the SSMU Policy on Unpaid Internships;*
- D. *“PGSS” shall refer to the Post Graduate Student Society of McGill University;*
- E. *“Memorandum of Agreement” shall refer to the contract signed by the PGSS and SSMU;*
- F. *“General Meeting” shall refer to the body of the Club established in accordance with section 7 of the Club Constitution;*
- G. *“Executive Committee” or “EC” shall refer to the body of the Club established in accordance with section 4 of the Club Constitution;*
- H. *“Chief Electoral Officer” or “(CEO)” shall mean the person appointed in accordance with Article 8 of the Club Constitution;*
- I. *“Simple Majority” shall mean over fifty percent (50%) of the votes cast of the Executive Committee or General Meeting.*

By-laws and Policies



1. *The Club may create and maintain by-laws that cover the operations of the Club which are not specified in the Constitution.*
 - 1.1. *The Club's by-laws shall not contravene the Club Constitution, in the event of conflict or ambiguity the Club constitution shall prevail.*
2. *The Club by-laws must be available to any member of the SSMU when and if requested.*
3. *The by-laws should be submitted for approval through the same process as the constitution, and should be attached once ratified.*

Finance

Constitutional Checklist

Requirement	How the requirement is met	Rating (0 or 1)
SSMU Requirements		
Code of Conduct		
Official Language		
Membership		
SSMU Constitution		
SSMU Policies		
Structural Requirements		
Decision-making/governing body		
Portfolios/Roles/Responsibilities		
General Meetings		
Election or Selection Procedures		
Removal from Office		



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Amendments		
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