

# Sample Constitution for Student Societies

## University of Colombo

### 1. Paragraph 1: Mission

Clause 1: stating the mission of the society means,

1. Protecting the rights of the student members of the organization
2. Furthering academic/artistic/religious/sports endeavours
3. Promoting student welfare

### 2. Paragraph 2: Membership

Clause 1: The students who obtain registration and membership of a particular registered student society during a particular academic year will be regarded as the total membership of that student society. (The membership fee must be at least Rs. 25/= )

Clause 11: The organization will have the following privileges.

- a) With written permission from the Registrar of the University, buildings, furniture and other equipment belonging to the university can be used for the activities of the organization. (The consent of the Senior Treasurer must be obtained before soliciting permission for the use of the above.)
- b) All members of the organization have the right to speak at meetings and vote.
- c) All members of that student society have the right to run for office and vote at elections.
- d) Members of a particular student organization have the right to nominate candidates for election.

### Paragraph 3: Office Holders

Clause 1: If it is a faculty society, a Senior Lecturer of the University must act as its Patron.

If the society is open to students of the entire University, the Vice Chancellor must be its Patron.

Clause 11: The executive committee of the student society must select a permanent member of the academic staff of the university (a lecturer) as senior treasurer.

Clause 111:

- a) The selection of office bearers for a student society must be done annually by election under the supervision of the Vice Chancellor and the direction of its patron.
- b) The Registrar of the university, on the direction of the Vice Chancellor, will notify the student body of the following by placing a notice in the notice board: when and where elections will be held in order to elect new office bearers for a student organization, the date for handing in nominations and the date on which election results will be announced.
- c) The committee of a student society will comprise the following officers:
  1. President
  2. Vice-president
  3. Secretary
  4. Vice-secretary
  5. Junior treasurer
  6. 4 committee members representing all 4 batches
  7. Editors
  8. An organizer

Clause IV: Elected office bearers of a student society will remain in office for one academic year.

Clause V: If a legally elected officer or officers wish to resign from their posts, they must inform the president or secretary in writing with a copy to the Vice Chancellor.

Clause VI: If as stated in clause V of Paragraph 3, an officer or officers resign from their posts, vacancies created in the process will be filled through a bi-election under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor.

Clause VII: No student can hold more than one office or appear for elections with the intention of holding more than one office in the same student society in a particular academic year.

#### **Paragraph 4: The duties of the committee**

Clause I: Only the officers mentioned in clause III of paragraph 3 of the constitution will be referred to as 'the committee'.

Clause II:

- a) Student organizations must hold at least one meeting per academic semester.
- b) Such meetings must be announced through an open notice.

Clause 111: In the absence of the president the vice-president must preside over such meetings

Clause IV: In the absence of the president and the vice-president any office holder except the secretary of the organization can be invited to preside over the meeting.

Clause V: The quorum at any meeting is 5 office holders. Either the senior treasurer or the patron of the organization must be among these five office holders.

Clause VI: It is the duty of the secretary to summon such meetings and prepare the agenda. The minutes of every meeting must be recorded in a notebook. It is the duty of the secretary to read and edit such records and to get the edited or unedited minutes seconded at the next meeting.

### **Paragraph 5: The President**

Clause 1: The President must preside over all meetings of the organization. The person nominated for the presidency must have been a student of the University of Colombo for a period at least one year.

Clause 11: The president must not reside over meetings where a motion to question her/his conduct is to be raised. The vice president or in her/his absence any office holder except the secretary can preside over such meetings.

Clause 111:

- a) The president or the acting president will be the interpreter of rules and regulations at all meetings over which s/he presides.
- b) The president's judgement cannot be questioned at any time during a meeting. However, a written complaint can be lodged with the secretary within 72 hours of the meeting and the matter can be taken up for discussion at the next meeting in the form of a regular motion.
- c) If the written complaint is heeded, the earlier decision will no longer be valid.
- d) The president or acting president can use a deciding vote in addition to her/his vote in situations that warrant a deciding vote.

### **Paragraph 6: The Vice-President**

Clause 1: In the absence of the president her/his authority will be invested in the vice president.

Clause 11: The vice president has the authority to carry out additional tasks assigned her/him by the president or any other duties.

## **Paragraph 7: The Secretary**

Clause I: The student nominated for the post of secretary must not be a final year student.

Clause II: The secretary will be responsible for all documents belonging to the society.

Clause III: It is the duty of the secretary to summon general meetings of the society, summon committee meetings, keep records, prepare agendas, and publicize them.

Clause IV: Should the Registrar of the University, an office holder or a member of the society wish to examine the records or other documents belonging to the society, the secretary must assist her/him.

## **Paragraph 8: The Junior Treasurer**

Clause I: The person nominated for the post of Junior Treasurer must have been a student of the University of Colombo for at least a period of no less than one year and this person should not be a final year student.

Clause II: The Junior treasurer is answerable to the Senior Treasurer and the University as to how the funds allocated for the society were spent.

Clause III: When requested to do so, the Junior Treasurer must assist the Senior Treasurer in her/his duties.

Clause IV: It is the duty of the Junior Treasurer to get the estimated expenditure of the organization approved at the beginning of each academic year. At the end of each academic year, the responsibility of the finances of the society lies with her/him.

Clause V:

- a) All receipts of expenses incurred with the approval of both the executive committee and the Sr. Treasurer must be presented to the Sr. Treasurer.
- b) \* A receipt must be obtained for all monetary transactions of more than Rs. 20/= in value.
- c) When a printed receipt cannot be obtained, a hand written receipt should only be accepted when the signature, complete name, address, and identity card number of the person issuing the receipt are available.

Clause VI: At meetings, in the absence of the Sr. Treasurer, the Junior Treasurer is answerable on matters of finance.

Clause VII: 72 hours before the meeting at which the proposed expenditure of the society for a particular academic year is to be discussed and the meeting held at the end of each academic year to discuss the society's annual finances, the Junior Treasurer must notify the membership through a notice (placed on a notice board belonging to the society) as to how the society spent its allocated funds during that particular academic year.

## Paragraph 9: The Senior Treasurer

Clause I: The Senior Treasurer will be in charge of all finances belonging to the society.

Clause II:

- a) The Sr. Treasurer must help the junior treasurer prepare the budget estimate for a particular academic year to be presented by the committee to the general body of the organization.
- b) S/he must inform the office bearers of any objections s/he may have with regard to the budget estimate. If the office holders, despite the Sr. Treasurer's objections, present the said budget proposal with or without amendments to the general body of the organization, the Sr. Treasurer must voice her/his objections to the general body and inform the Registrar of the University.

Clause III: (In accordance with clause V11 of paragraph 8) S/he must guide and advise the Junior Treasurer of the society.

Clause IV:

- a) In case of misappropriation of funds by office holders, the senior treasurer must notify the committee of this fact at a committee meeting.
- b) In situations where there is or could be a misappropriation of funds by office holders, s/he must in writing inform the Vice Chancellor of the University of this fact.

Clause V:

- a) All money belonging to the society kept in her/his charge must be deposited in the society's bank account.
- b) When necessary, the Sr. Treasurer can hold a sum of Rs. \*2000/= for emergencies. This sum can be handed over to the junior treasurer to be spent in emergencies as long as the president, secretary, and junior treasurer concur. The Senior Treasurer must file all the receipts of expenses thus incurred. The Sr. Treasurer must make sure of the fact that money belonging to the society is spent only on activities approved by the society.

Clause VI:

- a) When resigning from the post of Sr. Treasurer, 2 weeks written notice must be given to the Vice Chancellor of the University with a copy to the Secretary of the society.
- b) (The post of Senior Treasurer, vacated with the approval of the society, should be filled in accordance with the regulations set down in clause II

of paragraph 111). This must be done within a week of receiving the former Senior Treasurer's letter of resignation.

- c) The former Senior Treasurer must hand over all documents belonging to the society to the new Senior Treasurer within two weeks of handing in her/his letter of resignation. The new Sr. Treasurer must attest to the fact that all such documents were handed over to her/him in a letter to the former Senior Treasurer, with a copy to the Vice Chancellor of the University.

## **Paragraph 10: Finances**

### **Clause I:**

- a) All finances belonging to the organization must be deposited with the People's Bank of Ceylon, in an account opened in the name of the society.
- b) The Senior Treasurer of the society must at all times hold on to the chequebook belonging to the society.
- c) Withdrawals from the bank will only be valid if the Senior Treasurer and either the President or the Junior Treasurer sign the cheques.

### **Clause II:**

- a) If the Senior Treasurer, the President or the Junior Treasurer of an society resigns, the Vice Chancellor of the University must inform the Bank of this fact.
- b) The Secretary of the society must send a letter signed by the former Senior Treasurer, the President, and the Junior Treasurer with the name of the new Senior Treasurer, the names of those who proposed and seconded her/his name through the University to the bank.
- c) This must be done within a week of receiving the former Senior Treasurer's letter of resignation.

### **Clause III:**

- a) The estimated budget for the new official year must be presented and approved by the organization in the second meeting of the year.
- b) Such a budget must receive a 2/3 majority in order to be approved. 1/3 of the members of the society must be present at such a meeting.

### **Clause IV:**

- a) The estimated budget of the society for a particular academic year must be prepared by the Junior Treasurer and presented to the Registrar of the University.

Clause V:

- a) The estimated budget proposal presented to the society at a meeting must be exhibited with or without suggested amendments either on a notice board belonging to the organization or the University.

Clause VI:

- a) If when embarking on some activity approved by the society the assistance of an organization, institution, or person must be sought, the place or person who proposes to charge the most reasonable rate must be hired for the purpose.
- b) The executive committee must go through and approve the estimate provided by the person or institute for this specific purpose and chose the most suitable party for the job. This must also receive the approval of the Senior Treasurer and the said person or organization must be assigned only one task.
- c) No office holder can enter in to a transaction with a person or organization on behalf of the student society, prior to obtaining the approval of its Senior Treasurer and the committee.
- d) No office holder can obtain personal gifts, items, commissions, money, or any other form of profit from a commercial organization.

Clause VII:

- a) An annual general meeting must be summoned at the end of every official year, prior to the long vacation. The annual budget of the society must be presented at this meeting.
- b) At least 3 days prior to the said meeting, the annual budget that has received the approval both of the Senior Treasurer and the executive committee must be placed on a student notice board.

Clause VIII:

- a) At the end of every official year, prior to or during the long vacation, the Junior Treasurer must put in order and submit the society's annual financial report, all receipts and documents connected to it to the Senior Treasurer.
- b) The Senior Treasurer must sign and submit the society's annual financial report and all receipts and documents connected to it (handed over to him by the Junior Treasurer) to the Registrar of the University prior to the long Vacation or within 7 days of receiving the long vacation.

Clause IX:

- a) The Senior Internal Auditor of the University must examine all financial documents belonging to the society.

## **Paragraph 11: Meetings**

### **Meetings Pertaining to Financial Matters**

#### **Clause 1:**

- a) Within three weeks of the commencement each official year, a budget proposal must be presented to the student society.
- b) At the end of each official year, on the date of or before the commencement of the long vacation, the annual financial report must be presented to the student society.
- c) Meetings can be called as and when necessary to discuss amendments to the budget, as in the case of utilizing funds allocated for certain previously approved activities for other activities.
- d) Notices regarding such meetings must be placed on student notice boards at least 3 days (excepting poya days, public holidays and holidays approved by the University authorities) prior to the proposed date for the meetings.

### **General Meetings**

Clause 11: General meetings can be called in order to deal with questions raised about records, constitutions, the official duties of office holders, and the presentation and discussion of new proposals. The calling of such meetings must be done in accordance with point c) of clause 1, paragraph 11. However, with the unanimous consent of the committee, meetings can be called within a 24 hour period.

### **Emergency Meetings**

#### **Clause 111:**

- a) Such meetings can be called for emergency purposes. At least 24 hours notice must be given before holding such meetings.
- b) With the unanimous consent of the executive committee, such meetings can be called with less than 24 hours notification.



## Special Meetings

### Clause IV:

- a) Such meetings can be called to discuss special issues such as motions of displeasure and no confidence motions.
- b) Such meetings can be called by the Secretary on the orders of the President or on the request of 1/3 of the society's membership.
- c) Such meetings can be called in order to prove to the membership that the society keeps records of its activities and that any of its members can examine these.

Point c) of clause 1 of paragraph 11 is directly applicable to these meetings as well.