

**Guidelines for establishing and
functioning of Student Societies in
the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka**

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Guidelines for establishing and functioning of Student Societies in the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Students wishing to set up a society within a department or a faculty or the University should pay attention to the following guidelines in proposing the society and drafting its constitution. With the guidance of respective Head of the Department and Senior Treasurer, any proposed society should have freedom to formulate their own constitution and terms of agreement, the University does not wish to authorise or recognize any proposed Society which is not upholding democratic principles and norms in its constitution or functioning. It is therefore proposed that any proposed society will have freedom to formulate its constitution provided that they adhere to the following guidelines in the formulation of its constitution and functioning:

1. Formulation of a Society

1.1 Name of the society:

It should, as far as possible, indicate the nature of society proposed to be formed. The selected name should not be misleading or scandalous. Abbreviated form of the name of the society should be different from those of existing societies.

1.2 Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Society:

They should be stated clearly and as far as possible precisely, though they can be very wide-ranging and broad. Any person who reads the constitution should know what the proposed society stands for. Any aims and objectives the achievement of which is declared illegal by the law of the land cannot be included as aims and objectives of the proposed society. Similarly, the aims and objectives cannot be violated the fundamental freedoms and rights of people of the country.

1.3 Membership:

The constitution should state the eligibility requirements to become members of the proposed society. However, the membership should not be restricted to any selected

groups; all who are associating with and standing for the stated objectives of the proposed society should be competent to become members. However, a department-based-society can restrict its membership to the students belonging to the department; similarly a faculty-based-society can restrict its membership to the students of the faculty and the university-based-society can open its membership to the students of the University. But no outsiders should be permitted membership in a proposed society, except in exceptional cases the University may consider granting permission if a prior request is made such inclusion. The constitution should also provide for the validity of period of membership, renewal and lapsing of membership. It should also state who will keep the register of membership and the right of the members to have access to the register. Voting rights of the Membership shall be spelt out in the constitution. Further the actions on which the membership will terminate should also be included.

1.4 Executive Committee

The following should be provided for – the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Junior Treasurer, Editor etc. It should also include the number of committee members in the Executive Committee. The method and timing of election and eligibility requirements to hold these positions shall also be stated. The constitution shall also provide for the vacation of position by an office bearer and committee member. The procedure to be followed in effecting and recognizing the loss of position shall also be provided. It is suggested that the President, Secretary and Junior Treasurer must not be in the Final Year of his/her programme of study. This is to ensure that the office bearers will be made responsible and answerable for their functioning to the membership of the society and the University. The constitution shall provide for the positions of Senior Treasurer. How he/she is elected or permanently recognized by their office should also be provided for. Rules and regulations of the Executive Committee (EC), and other important factors needs to be addressed should also be included in the constitution.

1.5 Meetings of the society

The constitution shall provide for regular and other types (such as special, annual general, etc) of meetings of the general membership; the quorum for meetings, and who could ask for and the minimum number required calling for such meetings of the general membership. It should also be stated who will chair these meetings, and in the absence of designated officers who else could preside the meetings.

1.6 Meetings of the Executive Committee

The constitution shall provide for regular meetings and other types (such as emergency, special, etc) of meetings of the EC; the quorum for such meetings, and who could ask for and the minimum number required to call for such meetings. It should be also stated who will chair these meetings, and in the absence of designated officers who else could preside the meetings. At the first meeting, the EC should nominate a Permanent Senior Lecturer as its Senior Treasurer and forward it through the Head/Department and Dean/Faculty to the Vice Chancellor for the appointment.

1.7 Powers, functions, duties and responsibilities of the Executive Committee

Powers, functions, duties and responsibilities of the Executive Committee are listed in the Model Constitution for a Student Society – Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. (Annexure I)

1.8 Fund of the Society

The Constitution shall provide for the setting up of a Fund for the Society and what shall go into it and its operational details. The Senior Treasurer shall play vital role in the maintenance of the fund. Dispersals from the fund have to be made with the concurrence of the Senior Treasurer.

1.9 Conflict resolution amongst the membership

No confidence against office bearer/s or EC; consequences arising from them.

1.10 Period of transition from one Year to the next Year

It is a responsibility of all the office bearers and the Senior Treasurer; consequences of failure to effect a smooth transition.

1.11 Dissolution of the Society

- The Society may be dissolved at a General Meeting provided that at least seven (07) days written notice of the intention to dissolve the Society has been given to the members. At least two thirds of those present and voting at the General Meeting must vote in favour of the motion for dissolution for it to be effective;
- Any motion for dissolution of the Society shall provide that assets remaining after all liabilities have been met shall be transferred either to another Registered University Society, or to the Societies' Syndicate.

1.12 Amendment to the Constitution and Special Meeting to consider and pass such amendments.

1.13 Any other matters of importance.

2. Functioning of students' Societies

2.1 Registration of a Society

Any society having an appropriate number of current undergraduate students in the University may forward the request it through the Head of the Department and Dean of the Faculty to the Vice-Chancellor for registration as a University society. Registration is a mandatory requirement and only registered societies will be considered as valid societies and entitled for request certain facilities such as resources, conducting events and other facilities which can be approved by the university authorities. A club or society applying for registration should submit to the Vice-Chancellor;

1). Request for registration

This shall be a letter which has forward to the Vice-Chancellor with the recommendation of Senior Treasurer, Head of the Department and Dean of the Faculty. The request should be made either by the President or the Secretary of the Society.

2). Application for registration

A duly filled application should be attached which has obtained by the Students' Welfare branch (Annexure II)

3). Minutes of the First meeting

The Minutes of the first meeting should be attached. This may include the appointed members of the society, agreed vision, mission and functions and other agreed factors.

4). Constitution of the society

Assistant Registrar of the Students' Welfare branch is responsible for forwarding memo to the council seeking approval for registration of the society. Further, the memo should be forwarded under the guidance of Registrar of the University.

2.2 Renewal of registration

It is necessary for a society to renew their registration for every academic year within the university. However, to renew the registration, forward the request it through the Head/Department and/or Dean/Faculty to the Vice Chancellor, by last date of the first month of the each academic year, the following:

1). Request for renewal of Society

This shall be a letter which has forward to the Vice Chancellor with the recommendation of Senior Treasurer, Head of the Department and Dean of the

Faculty. The request should be made either by the President or the Secretary of the Society.

2). Application for renewal

A duly filled application should be attached which has obtained by the Students' Welfare branch (Annexure I)

3). Minutes of the AGM

4). Financial statements for the previous year or the budget of the year (this should be certified by the senior treasurer and Head of the Department).

5). an up-to-date copy of their constitution, with any changes clearly highlighted.

3. Legal status for a Society

Societies, whether or not they use the name of the University in their title, and whether or not they carry on their business on University premises, are bodies independent of the University. **The University does not accept liability or responsibility for any debts they may incur.**

Most societies are **unincorporated members' society** and, as such, cannot be sued. Any claim against a society can be brought only against its officers or its members. It is important for a society to take reasonable steps to safeguard its officers, and in particular the Senior Treasurer, against liability. It is therefore desirable that the constitution of a society should expressly provide that the Senior Treasurer shall not be liable for any debt or other obligation of the society, except where they have personally authorised it in writing.

4. Any changes of the Societies

During the year, registered student societies must report to the Vice-Chancellor (Through Senior Treasurer, Head of the Department and Dean of the Faculty) any amendments to or changes in its name, constitution, student representatives, and/or any other matters within two weeks of the changes becoming effective. Societies also must submit any additional information requested from time to time by the registering authority.

5. Accounting procedures of the society

Every society should maintain proper set of financial statements with the guidance of senior treasurer of the society.

Essential procedure

- a). The bank account should be in the full name of the society.
- b). Cash must be safeguarded and banked promptly
- c). Specimen signatures of responsible officers must be supplied to the bank. At least two signatures should be required before a withdrawal can be made from a deposit or investment account and it is recommended that the Senior Treasurer should be one of the signatories to the bank account in order to provide continuity when junior members go out of residence.

5.1 Recommended to follow

- All cash received by the society should be paid into the bank account, recorded in a Receipts and Payments Book, and receipts issued from a numbered counterfoil receipt book. No cash disbursement should be made directly from cash received.
- Where payments received are numerous (e.g. subscriptions), a separate receipts Book may be maintained. Such a book should be ruled off and the totals brought to account in the Receipts and Payments Book each time the money is paid into the bank.

- The Petty Cash Book should only be used for minor disbursements and run on an Imprest system (i.e. the cashier is started with a fixed cash sum and at each balancing period is given cash for the exact amount of the disbursements, bringing the balance back up to the starting amount).
- Payment for major disbursements should only be made on the evidence of individual invoices. Where frequent purchases are made from a supplier, it is advisable to check the statement (the monthly or periodic summary of invoices, issued by a company or other supplier) to ensure that all invoices have been received for payment. It is advisable to quote the numbers of all the invoices for which payment is being made.
- All payments and receipts made by cash should be recorded in the Receipts and Payments Book.
- All receipts and payments recorded in the Receipts and Payments Book should be specifically analysed according to the needs of the society (e.g. postage, subscriptions etc). At the end of the financial year the Receipts and Payments Book should be ruled off, added up and balanced. The bank statements (records of the bank account) should be reconciled (i.e. checked so that you can confirm that what is in your accounts actually matches what came in and went out of the bank account) with the balance shown in the Receipts and Payments Book.
- All vouchers and invoices supporting payments should be filed in the order of payment recorded in the Receipts and Payments Book.
- If the society authorises a member to incur expenditure, he/she should sign each invoice to authorise its payment before submitting it to the Junior Treasurer. An application for a refund in respect of minor cash payments should be supported by payment slips, proofs of purchase or other vouchers, etc. If the sale of tickets is involved, these tickets should be numbered. The Treasurer should be given the cash for tickets sold, any unsold tickets, and a reconciliation.

- Proper records of any assets held by the society should be kept. Purchase of a major piece of equipment may be recorded as a payment in its year of purchase or a portion of its purchase price may be spread over time. If, however, the society were asked by the Societies Syndicate to list its assets, the full purchase price should be shown and an estimate given, when relevant, of the current replacement cost.

6. Preparation of Financial Accounts for Audit

At the end of the society's financial year the junior Treasurer should prepare the accounts for audit and approval by the AGM. To do this he/ she should:

- a. Rule off the receipts and the payments book and reconcile this with the bank statement
- b. Rule off the petty cash book and check that the cash in hand agrees with the balance shown
- c. Rule off other books which may be kept by the society.
- d. Prepare a list of any receipts and payments which do not belong to the current financial year.

From the above records the society should prepare its annual accounts for presentation to its members and to the Internal Auditor of the University (through Registrar) simple & form as possible. The record books themselves or photocopies of bank statements are not sufficient as valid accounts.

The Internal Auditor encourages all registered societies to publish their accounts (as approved by the Internal Auditor) on the club or society's webpage.

The junior Treasurer should make available to the Internal Auditor of the university all books, invoices and other records, including minutes of meetings.

6.1 General notes for guidance of Auditors

These are not comprehensive notes applicable to all audits. In all cases the auditor must have complete freedom to investigate.

Nevertheless there are a number of basic checks which should be made. The auditor should ensure that the Junior Treasurer has:

- a. reconciled the bank statement (bank details) with the Receipts and Payments Book balance,
- b. checked that the Imprest Account balance agrees with the amount of cash in hand,
- c. properly balanced and cross costed the Receipts and Payments Book,
- d. checked that all members have paid their subscriptions,
- e. issued a receipt for each member's subscription,
- f. updated any record of equipment and other assets belonging to the society and verified the continuing existence of the items contained therein,
- g. made sure that all paid invoices have been properly signed to authorise payment.

The auditor should establish by reference to the Receipts and Payments Book and bank statements that:

- a. all receipts have been promptly paid into the bank,
- b. the level of cash held on the current account is no more than necessary to meet normal requirements and that any excessive amount has been placed on deposit,
- c. proper security exists for cash and club assets.

The auditor should also:

- a. establish that proper account is being taken of the replacement value of equipment and other assets, and that subscriptions are at a level which will enable the accumulated funds of the society to replace them if it should become necessary (if any),
- b. make any recommendation with respect to these matters which he/she thinks desirable.
- c. certify that, as far as he/she can determine, the accounts are accurate, complete and in accordance with accounting standards, and give a fair and accurate record of the society's financial position.
- d. complied with any regulations which may have been laid down by the University,

Model Constitution for a Student Society - Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Section 1: Vision, Mission, goals and objectives of the Society

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

Section 2: Membership

Clause I: 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 can be decided by the society)

Clause II: The society 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.

Section 3: Office Bearers

Clause I: If it is a society of a Faculty or a Department a Senior Lecturer of the University (attached to relevant Faculty or Department) must act as its Patron. If the society is open to students of the entire University, the Vice Chancellor must be its Patron.

Clause II: The executive committee of the student society must select a permanent member of the academic staff of the university (a lecturer) as the Senior Treasurer.

Clause III:

- a) The selection of office bearers for a student society must be done annually by election under the supervision of its patron.
- b) If needed 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. The President
 2. The Vice-President
 3. The Secretary
 4. The Assistant-secretary
 5. The Junior treasurer
 6. The Editor (if any)
 7. 12 Committee Members representing all 4 batches (if appropriate)

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 the Secretary in writing with a copy to the Vice-Chancellor through the Senior Treasurer, Head of the relevant department and the Dean of the relevant faculty.

Clause VI: If as stated in clause V of Section 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 its patron.

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.

Section 4: The duties of the committee

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

Clause II:

a) Student society must hold at least one meeting per academic semester.

b) Such meetings must be announced through an open notice.

Clause III: In the absence of the President the Vice-President must preside over such meetings

Clause IV: In the absence of both President the Vice-President any office bearer except the secretary of the organization can be invited to preside over the meeting.

Clause V: The quorum at any meeting is two thirds (2/3) of office holders. Either the Senior Treasurer or the Patron of the organization must be among these two thirds of members.

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.

Section 5: The President

Clause I: The President must preside over all meetings of the organization. The person nominated for the presidency must have been a registered student of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka and must not be a final year student.

Clause II: 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 III:

- a) The President or the Acting President will be the interpreter of rules and regulations at all meetings over which he/she 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 three working days 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 his/her vote in situations that warrant a deciding vote.

Section 6: The Vice-President

Clause I: In the absence of the President his/her authority will be invested in the Vice-President.

Clause II: The Vice-President has the authority to carry out additional tasks assigned him/her by the President or any other duties.

Section 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 bearer or a member of the society wish to examine the records or other documents belonging to the society, the secretary must assist her/him.

Section 8: The Assistant Secretary

Clause I: In the absence of the Secretary his/her authority will be invested in the Assistant Secretary.

Clause II: The Assistant Secretary has the authority to carry out additional tasks assigned him/her by the Secretary or any other duties.

Section 9: The Junior Treasurer

Clause I: The person nominated for the post of Junior Treasurer must have been a student of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for at least a period of not 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 him/her.

Clause V:

a) All receipts of expenses incurred with the approval of both the executive committee and the Senior Treasurer must be presented to the Senior Treasurer.

b) A printed receipt must be obtained for all monetary transactions of more than Rs. 20/- in value.

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

Clause VII: seven days 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.

Section 10: The Editor

The editor of the Society is responsible for Making editorial decisions with reasonable speed and communicating them in a clear and constructive manner

Section 11: The Senior Treasurer

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

Clause II:

- a) The Senior 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) He/she must inform the office bearers of any objections which may have with regard to the budget estimate. If the office bearers, despite the Senior Treasurer's objections, present the said budget proposal with or without amendments to the general body of the organization, the Senior Treasurer must voice his/her objections to the general body and inform the Head and Dean of the Faculty.

Clause III: He/she must guide and advice the Junior Treasurer of the society.

Clause 1V:

- 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, He/She must in writing inform the Head, Dean and Vice Chancellor of the University of this fact.

Clause V:

- a) All money belonging to the society kept in his/her charge must be deposited in the society's bank account.

b) When necessary, the Senior 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 Senior 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 Senior Treasurer, 02 weeks written notice must be given to the Head, Dean and 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 within two weeks 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 week of handing in her/his letter of resignation. The new Senior 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.

Section 12: Finances

Clause I:

- a) All finances belonging to the organization must be deposited with the Bank of Ceylon in an account opened in the name of the society.
- b) Withdrawals from the bank will only be valid if the Senior Treasurer and either the President or the Junior Treasurer signed.

Clause II:

- a) If the Senior Treasurer, the President or the Junior Treasurer of a society resigns, the Vice Chancellor of the University must inform the Bank of this fact.