

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION</b> STAF Division of Student Affairs and Academic		<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> STAF 3.10
<b>POLICY TITLE</b> Student Organizations		
<b>SCOPE</b> USC Columbia	<b>DATE OF REVISION</b> June 17, 2025	
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b> Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE</b> Department of Student Life	

**PURPOSE**

This policy outlines privileges, responsibilities, and procedures to become a student organization on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Constitution:** contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of a student organization.

**Inactive Student Organization:** a student organization that lost its active status and all designated privileges.

**Prospective Student Organization:** a group of students that express their intent to register as a student organization to the Leadership and Service Center.

**Reactivation:** the process an inactive student organization completes as they seek to regain active status as a student organization.

**Registration:** the collection and recording of specific information required of student organizations.

**Renewal:** the annual process that all active student organizations complete to maintain active status as a student organization.

**Student Leader:** any student appointed or elected to a leadership role within their student organization (i.e. officer, committee chair, etc.).

**Student Organization:** a student group that maintains active status on the University of South Carolina campus, has fulfilled all responsibilities of a student organization and represents a group of students who desire to come together to support a particular view, explore common interests or accomplish identified tasks. Student organizations must be student-initiated and student-led. Two types of student organizations exist at the University of South Carolina:

**Associated Student Organization (ASO):** student organizations to which the University has delegated certain limited authority to perform specific tasks aligned with the University’s mission. These groups are required to maintain a University

Advisor who is acting within the context of their University employment. An ASO may serve as a governing body over other RSOs.

**Registered Student Organization (RSO):** student organizations that are independent legal entities from the University, have no delegated authority from the University, and do not perform functions on behalf of the university. These groups are not required to maintain a University Advisor. The University views RSOs as private affiliations and does not endorse the mission, goals, or purpose of the organization.

**Fraternity and Sorority Life Organization:** A Registered Student Organization and Title IX exempt social Greek-letter fraternity or sorority chapter (as defined under the provisions of Section 1681 of the U.S. Education Act of 1972) which meets membership requirements of the Interfraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, or the College Panhellenic Association. A student organization meeting these criteria will be automatically assigned as a Fraternity and Sorority Life Organization and must comply with additional requirements mandated by the University's Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

**Sports Club Organization:** A Registered Student Organization which also meets the sport club criteria set forth in the [University of South Carolina Sport Club Manual](#). A student organization meeting these criteria may elect to become a sport club and must comply with additional requirements set forth by the University's Sport Programs office within Campus Recreation. Those clubs not meeting the criteria set forth in the USC Sport Club Handbook, may become Registered Student Organizations.

**University Advisor:** a faculty or administrative staff member acting in an advisory capacity, as opposed to a directive relationship, to an Associated Student Organization. They are designated by the appropriate Dean, Associate Vice President, or their designee to advise the ASO on their activities and University policies and procedures. A University Advisor is not a faculty or administrative staff member who volunteers beyond the scope of their employment to serve as an advisor with a Registered Student Organization.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The University of South Carolina recognizes both the right to exist and the mutual benefit of the existence of co-curricular activities. Student organizations must not: have illegal goals and objectives; propose or participate in activities which would violate regulations of the Board of Trustees, the University, or federal, state, or local laws and regulations, or materially disrupt activities and discipline of the University; advocate incitement of imminent lawlessness; or violate the university's nondiscrimination policies. Student organizations will be classified as a Registered Student Organization (RSO) or an Associated Student Organization (ASO).

## **PROCEDURES**

- A. Registration - Students wishing to form a student organization must contact the Leadership and Service Center. The Leadership and Service Center will advise Prospective Student Organizations of all components of the registration process and will oversee the registration

of the group as an ASO or RSO. The Prospective Student Organization will gain active status as a student organization once it has been determined that the registration has been completed accurately and all responsibilities outlined in this policy have been met.

- B. Renewal – All student organizations must renew their registration annually. The Leadership and Service Center will be responsible for overseeing the annual renewal process.
  - 1. All Fraternity and Sorority Life Organizations, Sport Club Organizations, and their respective governing councils, must complete renewal within the first three weeks of the spring semester.
  - 2. All other student organizations must complete renewal within the first three weeks of the fall semester.
- C. Loss of Student Organization Status/Disciplinary Procedures - a student organization may lose its status as an active student organization and/or all related privileges if:
  - 1. It violates University policy as determined by the Office of Student Conduct. See university policy [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#) for disciplinary procedures for violations of University policies, procedures, rules, and regulations for all student organizations.
  - 2. It submits a written notification of its disestablishment.
  - 3. It fails to fulfill the respective RSO or ASO responsibilities of a student organization per this policy; or
  - 4. It fails to renew annually; at which point, the organization will be listed as an Inactive Student Organization and will lose all related privileges.
- D. Reactivation Process – Inactive Student Organizations wishing to reactivate on campus must contact the Leadership and Service Center. The Leadership and Service Center will advise students of all required components of the reactivation process. If an Inactive Student Organization has outstanding conduct requirements, those must be completed prior to reactivating as a Student Organization.
- E. Student Organization Privileges and Responsibilities:
  - 1. Registered Student Organizations:
    - a. Privileges

A RSO will obtain the following privileges in accordance with procedures and guidelines set forth within the student organization handbook:

- i. reserve university facilities
  - ii. conduct meetings on campus
  - iii. use the student organization technology platform
  - iv. request financial support for funds from Campus Activity Fees
- b. Responsibilities

A RSO must satisfy the following responsibilities in accordance with procedures and guidelines set forth within the student organization handbook:

- i. Maintain a student organization name which does not include the University of South Carolina's name (or any variation) in any form. The University of South Carolina does not allow RSOs to represent the university or act on behalf of the university.
  - ii. Maintain an updated roster with a minimum of 7 members, 2 of which must always be in leadership roles, who are enrolled at the University of South Carolina.
  - iii. Complete standard trainings and meetings required by the Leadership and Service Center.
  - iv. The control and operation of the RSO must remain student-led and student-initiated. The student members and leaders assume the responsibility for the organization's activities and conduct.
  - v. If an RSO is affiliated with an external governing organization, the RSO must receive official recognition from that entity to use their likeness (i.e. name, logo, etc.). In these circumstances, where an affiliation to an external governing organization exists, an RSOs must still comply with all university policies and procedures. Where university policies and procedures are in conflict with requirements of an external governing organization, university policies and procedures supersede external governing organization requirements.
2. Associated Student Organizations:

a. Privileges

In addition to the RSO privileges, an ASO will have the opportunity to access the following additional privileges in accordance with procedures and guidelines set forth within the student organization handbook:

- i. Faculty or staff support through a University Advisor;

- ii. Use University of South Carolina names, logos, symbols, or seals. Any use of logos, seals, names, etc. shall be in accordance with policies and procedures established by the University; and
- iii. Access to additional university resources as approved and overseen by the associated department.

b. Responsibilities

An ASO must satisfy the following responsibilities in accordance with procedures and guidelines set forth within the student organization handbook:

- i. A university department must provide verification that the ASO's purpose directly furthers that associated department's mission.
- ii. The control and operation of the ASO must remain student-led and student-initiated.
- iii. If the ASO's name includes the University of South Carolina's name or any variation, the ASO's name must be distinct from the name of the associated department.
- iv. Create and maintain a constitution which meets the requirements set forth by the Leadership and Service Center. All constitutions must be reviewed and approved by the Leadership and Service Center before becoming official.
- v. Maintain an updated roster with a minimum of 7 members, 2 of which must always be in leadership roles, who are enrolled at the University of South Carolina.
- vi. Elect student leaders who meet and maintain throughout their term the cumulative GPA requirement for graduation, maintain at least part-time enrollment status, and are in good standing. Students who do not meet the requirements may not serve in a leadership role. In the event a student is elected to office who does not meet the requirements listed above, the organization must follow their election procedures within their constitution to make the replacement and update their organizational roster with the Leadership and Service Center within two weeks. Faculty and staff will not be eligible to hold elected or appointed office in an ASO unless they are enrolled as a full time student and have received supervisory approval.
- vii. Complete standard trainings and meetings required by the Leadership and Service Center.
- viii. Maintain a University Advisor to act in an advisory capacity to the ASO. The

advisor must:

1. Be employed as a full-time faculty or administrative staff member at the University of South Carolina and be employed with the associated department. Part-time faculty and administrative staff and university affiliate military personnel may serve as an advisor to an ASO under special circumstances with the approval of the Department of Student Life.
  2. Be designated by the appropriate Dean, Associate Vice President, or their designee to act in an advisory capacity, as opposed to a directive relationship to the ASO.
  3. Complete all additional requirements (trainings, workshops, etc.) set forth by the Leadership and Service Center.
  4. Become familiar with, understand, and advise the ASO on their activities and to abide by all university policies and procedures, and federal, state, and local laws.
  5. Sign or co-sign appropriate university forms, such as those for use of University facilities, purchase orders, travel requests, or the registration of visiting speakers or lectures.
  6. Contact the Leadership and Service Center when questions or problems arise.
- ix. Receive and maintain approval from the Associate Vice President for Student Life to remain an ASO.
- F. Funding - A student organization may request financial support for funds from Campus Activity Fees in accordance with the finance codes and guidelines created by the respective finance committee designated to the student organization.
1. Prior to review by the designated finance committee, student organizations must complete an assessment of risk and receive approval for the identified risk control measures for activities they request to receive funding.
  2. Student organizations will not be denied funding nor given preferential treatment in funding based upon the viewpoint of the student organization requesting the funds as outlined in University policy and federal, state or local law.
- G. Fronting – student organizations are expected to serve as the primary planners and implementers of events or activities they sponsor on campus. “Fronting” occurs when a student organization misrepresents the true nature or sponsorship of an event by allowing a non-university entity (e.g., off-campus group, organization, non-profit, business, or individual) to improperly access university facilities, services, or benefits reserved for student organizations. This includes situations where the student organization is not

substantially involved in the planning, funding, and execution of the event, or where an external group uses the student organization’s name for reduce costs, to reserve space, or access university resources.

1. Permissible Collaboration – Collaborations between student organizations and external entities are permitted when the student organization remains the primary sponsor and the organizer of the event. To avoid violations, student organizations must:
  - a. Maintain full control over event logistics and decision making (this includes initial conceptualization of the program or event).
  - b. Publicly list the student organization as the primary host in marketing and communications.
  - c. Receive prior approval from the appropriate university office for any co-sponsorship or external involvement.
  - d. Provide funding for staffing the program or event, including but not limited to ticket taking, ushering, house management, security, etc.
  
2. Accountability and Guidance – Student organizations found to be fronting may face loss of reservation privileges, denial of access to university resources, or other sanctions as outlined in the Student Organization Conduct (STAF 3.11) process. Organizations are encouraged to consult with Student Life staff when planning events that involve external partners to ensure compliance and avoid unintended violations.
  - a. If a student organization is found in violation of this policy or during the planning process becomes non-responsive and/or no longer part of the planning and execution process, the event may no longer be considered a campus event. At this point the event will be transitioned to an external client request and will require all necessary steps be completed, including funding and space reservation requirements.

**RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES**

[STAF 3.02 Alcohol Policy and Guidelines for the University Community](#)

[STAF 3.05 Hazing](#)

[STAF 3.25 Use of University Facilities](#)

[STAF 3.26 Procedures for Accommodating Distinguished Guests](#)

[STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)

[UNIV 6.00 Freedom of Expression and Access to Campus](#)

**HISTORY OF REVISIONS**

<b>DATE OF REVISION</b>	<b>REASON FOR REVISION</b>
June 1, 1992	New policy approval

October 16, 2016	Policy revised to reflect definitions and oversight of student organizations including role of Leadership and Service Center and eligibility requirements for advisors.
January 31, 2019	Policy revised to add new requirements to student organizations and update procedures to reflect current practices. Policy was also revised to new format.
July 21, 2020	Policy revised to further define types of student organizations.
August 9, 2023	Non-substantive change to update URL link.
June 17, 2025	Policy reviewed to update procedures