



REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATION CODE OF CONDUCT

Rationale/Purpose of the Policy

The university recognizes that participation in student organizations constitutes an integral aspect of the living-learning environment, and it expects that students will adhere to high standards of behavior while participating in Registered Student Organizations (RSOs). This policy helps protect the rights of RSOs while making sure organizations and the students acting on their behalf are held accountable to their members, the university community, and the community-at-large.

Definitions

Event	Any activity (including all meetings, internal or other), regardless of the location (on or off university property), coordinated by a Registered Student Organization or its representatives to bring people together.
Hearing Committee	Two students and one faculty or staff member from the appointed faculty, staff, and students trained to be hearing committee members. A hearing committee may hear a case and make a recommendation as long as it has quorum. Hearing committee members are primarily selected by appropriate shared governance bodies. The majority of the members selected are students. The pool of hearing committee members is composed of: • Up to 10 faculty or academic staff representatives. Academic staff must be from departments outside the Dean of Students reporting line. At least one academic staff representative will be from the Office for Student Organizations, Leadership & Involvement. • Up to 15 student representatives appointed by the Associated Students of Madison (ASM). • Up to five student representatives appointed by Director of the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS).
Investigating Officer	An individual designated by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards or Dean of Students to conduct investigations of Registered Student Organization misconduct as defined in this policy.
Quorum	For hearing committees means one student and one faculty or staff member.



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Registered Student Organization (RSO)	A group, composed mainly of, and directed by, students, consisting of at least four students and an advisor, and which has filed all appropriate registration forms with the Office for Student Organizations, Leadership & Involvement (SOLI) and been confirmed by SOLI as meeting the eligibility criteria for registration.
Sanction	Any action affecting the status of a Registered Student Organization (RSO), as an RSO, that is imposed in response to the organization's misconduct. The term includes, but is not limited to, a Written Reprimand, Disciplinary Probation, Disciplinary Suspension, Termination, Recommendation for Charter Revocation, and Educational Sanctions.
Student	Any person who is registered for study at the university for the academic period in which the alleged misconduct occurred, or between academic periods for continuing students.
Witness	Anyone with knowledge of the incident that the investigating officer or a Registered Student Organization's representative(s) bring(s) to a hearing.

Scope

Registered Student Organizations.

Policy

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I. ☐ Jurisdiction

- A. The Registered Student Organization Code of Conduct applies to all University of Wisconsin-Madison Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and shall be deemed a part of the terms and conditions of RSO registration. The Registered Student Organization Code



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of Conduct applies to all RSOs while participating in university or organization-sponsored or related activities including conduct:

1. On or off university premises, and
 2. During school sessions, holidays, breaks, and university closures.
- B. RSOs can be held accountable for the actions of their members when any of the following are met:
1. An alleged violation arises out of an organization event, where the RSO provided the context for the alleged violation.
 2. A pattern of individual violations has occurred and/or continues to occur within the organization without adequate control, response, or disciplinary action on the part of the RSO or its executive board members or officers.
 3. The action resulting in the alleged violation received either implied or overt consent of the RSO or any executive board members or officers of the RSO.
 4. The RSO or any executive board member or officer of the RSO fails to report and take reasonable action against attendees/members responsible for the alleged violation.
 5. The RSO overtly places or implicitly allows active members of the RSO to be in a position to act on behalf or with authority of the organization and that action results in the alleged violation.
 6. The RSO chooses to protect one or more individual offenders who are active members of the RSO from official actions.
- C. If an RSO disaffiliates from the university before the completion of a disciplinary process in which it is involved, this will not preclude that disciplinary process from continuing. Regardless of any outcome in that disciplinary process, all disaffiliated RSOs attempting to reaffiliate must petition through the [Registered Student Organization Reinstatement Process](https://guide.cfl.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2022/02/Registered-Student-Organization-Reinstatement-Process.pdf) [\[https://guide.cfl.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2022/02/Registered-Student-Organization-Reinstatement-Process.pdf\]](https://guide.cfl.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2022/02/Registered-Student-Organization-Reinstatement-Process.pdf) . The reinstatement process includes consideration of any incomplete sanctions for the petitioning RSO.

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II. **Organizational Rules of Conduct**

RSOs are expected to abide by the following rules. These rules should be read broadly and are not designed to define prohibited conduct in exhaustive terms. The prohibited conduct outlined in the section applies to RSO behavior and will not be used to impose sanctions for the lawful



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expression of ideas. The rights of all students to seek knowledge, debate, and freely express their ideas is fully recognized by the university. Any violation of the following regulations by an RSO may result in disciplinary sanctions against the organization.

- A. RSOs are not exempt from discipline for such actions which constitute violations of federal, state or local laws and may be subject to additional action by appropriate judicial bodies or governmental authorities. Individual members of RSOs may also be held responsible for violations of [Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 14](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14) [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14] , [Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 17](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17) [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17] , or [Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 18](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18) [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18] for behavior that occurs as part of organizational activity.
- B. The university may sanction an RSO found responsible for engaging in, attempting to engage in, or assisting others in engaging in any of the following:
 1. Eligibility and Financial Requirements
 - a. Failure to comply with eligibility requirements (e.g., updating leadership contacts, proper composition and direction, required training completion) outlined in the [Student Organization Resource & Policy Guide](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/) [<https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/>] .
 - b. Failure to comply with the financial regulations (e.g., updating the financial contact, maintaining and sharing financial records [account statements, checking and savings records, and all other records of receipt or payment of funds from any source of organization funds]) published in the [Student Organization Resource & Policy Guide](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/) [<https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/>] .
 2. Harmful Behavior
 - a. Discrimination in Membership: Discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed other than commitment to the beliefs of the organization, religion, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sex, or gender identity or expression unless pursuant to an exception recognized by applicable federal and state law. Student organizations that select their members or officers on the basis of commitment to a set of beliefs (e.g., religious or political beliefs) may limit membership, officer positions, or participation in the organization to students who, upon individual inquiry, affirm that they support the organization's goals and agree



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with its beliefs, so long as no student is excluded from membership, officer positions, or participation on the basis of their race, color, creed other than commitment to the beliefs of the organization, religion, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sex, or gender identity or expression unless exempt under Title IX.

- b. Reckless action that poses an unreasonable risk of physical harm to others.
- c. Retaliation against or harassment of reporters (the person who brings forth information that may allege possible misconduct by an RSO), other person(s) alleging misconduct, or any other person participating in this process (e.g., investigating officers, hearing committee members).
- d. Discriminatory Harassment: as defined in [Regent Policy Document 14-6, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/discrimination-harassment-and-retaliation/) [<https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/discrimination-harassment-and-retaliation/>].

3. Violation of Law

Conduct that could constitute a violation of any local, state, or federal law, including violations of City of Madison Ordinances and Regulations.

4. Damage to or Theft of Property

- a. Damage to public or private property (e.g., land, buildings, fixtures, movable property, personal property).
- b. Failure to exercise reasonable caution to ensure that the Registered Student Organization's contracted agents and vendors do not cause harm or damage to the property of the university, another person, a business, or an organization.
- c. Possession of property that can reasonably be determined to have been stolen from the university, another person, business, or organization.

5. Violation of UW-Madison, UW System Administrative, or UW System Board of Regents Policies

Failure to comply with UW-Madison, UW System Administrative, or UW System Board of Regents policies including, but not limited to, the use of university facilities and grounds, fleet vehicles, electronic information technology, and facility reservation contracts.

6. Disruptive Conduct



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- a. Any act that impairs, interferes with, or obstructs the orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the university or any part thereof or the rights of one or more individuals.
 - b. Failure to ensure that invitations to events taking place in a university facility are limited to students, faculty, and staff of the university unless an exception is specifically authorized in accordance with appropriate facility use policies.
 - c. Knowingly coordinating, sponsoring, cosponsoring, or in any way participating in any event with a Registered Student Organization that has been prohibited from participating in that type of event, [has had its Registered Student Organization status suspended or terminated, or has disassociated from the university during a conduct process](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/student-organizations-not-in-good-standing/) [<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/student-organizations-not-in-good-standing/>] .
 - d. Failure to comply with sanctions following the Registered Student Organization Disciplinary Process or with the terms of interim measures.
 - e. Engaging in violent, abusive, indecent, profane, boisterous, unreasonably loud or otherwise disorderly conduct under circumstances in which the conduct tends to cause or provoke a disturbance. This definition shall not be interpreted to abridge the rights of the university community to freedom of expression protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and any other applicable law.
 - f. Failure to comply with the directives of university officials (any person employed by the university [e.g., faculty, staff, administration, residence hall staff, university contractor]), or authorized agents, acting within the scope of their duties.
7. Possessing or Providing False or Misleading Information or Withholding Information
- a. Knowingly making an oral or written false statement to, withholding related information from, or refusing to attend an investigatory meeting with any university employee, committee, or agent on a matter relating to the activities of the organization or its members.
 - b. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any document, material, file, record, or instrument of identification.
8. Alcohol Beverages Violation
- a. Use or possession (including distribution) of alcoholic beverages except as permitted by law and university policy.



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b. Furnishing, or causing to be furnished, any alcoholic beverage to any person in a noticeable state of intoxication. Indications of intoxication include but are not limited to: slurred or unusually loud speech, boisterousness, crude behavior, aggression, stumbling, drowsiness, and difficulty standing up. NOTE: As stated on the [Amnesty Through Responsible Action](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/) [\[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/) website, “A representative of a student organization hosting an event is expected to promptly call for assistance if they become aware of an emergency. Failure to call will be considered an ‘aggravating circumstance’ and will be factored into disciplinary action for the student organization.”

9. Drug Related Misconduct

- a. Unlawful use or possession of any controlled substance. NOTE: As stated on the [Amnesty Through Responsible Action](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/) [\[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/) website, “A representative of a student organization hosting an event is expected to promptly call for assistance if they become aware of an emergency. Failure to call will be considered an ‘aggravating circumstance’ and will be factored into disciplinary action for the student organization.”
- b. Sale or distribution of any [controlled substance](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/961) [\[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/961\]](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/961) .

10. Hazing

Any violation of [UW-2001 Hazing](#) [\[library/UW-2001\]](#) .

11. Sexual Misconduct

Any violation of [UW-146 Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence](#) [\[library/UW-146\]](#) .

12. Academic Misconduct

- a. Unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material.
- b. Commercial use of academic material: Selling of course material to another person without the express written permission of the instructor of record.
- c. Violating or knowingly helping any student violate [Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 14](#) [\[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14\]](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14) .

13. RSO Events



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Any violation of [UW-2003 Registered Student Organization Events](#) [[library/UW-2003](#)]

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- **Registered Student Organization Rights through the Registered Student Organizations Disciplinary Process**

The following rights shall be afforded to an RSO during the Registered Student Organization Disciplinary Process and shall be provided to the RSO in writing when they are charged with violations of the Organizational Rules of Conduct. RSOs have a right to:

- I. Receive written notice of the charge(s) made against them, including a brief description of the allegations.
- II. An advisor (or support person), selected by the RSO to assist them through the disciplinary process. The advisor (or support person) may attend meetings with the RSO and advise them through the process, however they cannot serve as a witness or speak on record during a formal proceeding. If a potential advisor (or support person) was witness to or knowledgeable of an incident pertinent to the RSO's disciplinary process, the RSO may have this individual serve as a witness during a formal proceeding, but a different individual must be selected as the RSO's advisor (or support person) for that disciplinary process.
- III. Inspect any information submitted in support of the charge(s).
- IV. Submit information on their own behalf.
- V. Be presumed Not Responsible for violation(s) of the Organizational Rules of Conduct until found Responsible by a preponderance of the evidence (evidence, considered as a whole, shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not).
- VI. Speak on their own behalf.
- VII. A formal hearing.
- VIII. Question any adverse witnesses who participate in a formal hearing.
- IX. Appeal following a formal hearing.
- X. Waive any of the above stated rights.

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- **Sanctions**

- I. Written Reprimand



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An official warning that a Registered Student Organization (RSO) is in violation of the Organizational Rules of Conduct and any future misconduct by the RSO may result in a more serious disciplinary response from the university.

II. Disciplinary Probation

A period of time during which a Registered Student Organization is permitted to remain registered and have access to RSO [privileges and benefits](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/benefits/) upon the condition that it complies with the Organizational Rules of Conduct. Restrictive conditions may be imposed as part of Disciplinary Probation and will vary depending on the severity of the incident. Violation of Disciplinary Probation requirements shall be grounds for further sanctions up to and including Termination. All assigned Educational Sanctions must be completed prior to the conclusion of Disciplinary Probation; otherwise, the Disciplinary Probation will remain in effect until the Educational Sanctions have been completed and approved by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS). Disciplinary Probation may be reviewed by OSCCS for an early lift after half of the assigned period is served.

III. Disciplinary Suspension

A temporary loss of an RSO's [privileges and benefits](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/benefits/) for a specified period of time, not to exceed four years from the decision date. The purpose of Suspension is to provide a focused opportunity for an RSO to address issues that led to its violation(s) while limiting the day-to-day organizational activities of the group. The terms of Suspension include, but are not limited to, ceasing all organizational activity except for one executive board meeting per week. This includes not cosponsoring activities or coordinating with other RSOs. The Dean of Students or the Director of OSCCS, or their designees, may allow additional organizational activity that would assist in the RSO's development. Additional violations of the Organizational Rules of Conduct while under Suspension may lead to Termination. Notices of Suspension will be sent to campus service providers (e.g., reservations offices, funding providers). Unless an RSO has a period of Disciplinary Probation following its Suspension, all assigned Educational Sanctions must be completed prior to the conclusion of Disciplinary Suspension; otherwise, the Disciplinary Suspension will remain in effect until the Educational Sanctions have been completed and approved by OSCCS.

IV. Termination



The revocation of a student organization's status and privileges. Terminated organizations are required to cease operations and disband as a Registered Student Organization. If a terminated student organization petitions for reinstatement as an RSO, all post-termination behavior may be considered in the reinstatement review process.

V. Recommendation for Charter Revocation

An official request to a Registered Student Organization's national or international office that the local chapter's charter be revoked.

VI. Educational Sanctions

In conjunction with a sanction listed above, an RSO may be assigned educational requirements. These types of sanctions are intended to provide an RSO with opportunities to repair the harm of their actions and to engage in experiences that will help the RSO to reflect on the behavior and assist in avoiding future violations of university policy. Educational Sanctions include, but are not limited to, workshops, trainings, performance improvement plans, community service, and restitution or restorative acts. If the RSO has any outstanding (overdue) Educational Sanctions at the end of their Disciplinary Probation or Disciplinary Suspension, the Probation or Suspension status will remain in effect until such time that all requirements are met and approved by OSCCS.

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Related UW-Madison Policies

[UW-146 Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence](#) [\[/library/UW-146\]](#)

[UW-2001 Hazing](#) [\[/library/UW-2001\]](#)

[UW-2003 Registered Student Organization Events](#) [\[/library/UW-2003\]](#)

[UW-2006 Amnesty Through Responsible Action](#) [\[/library/UW-2006\]](#)

[UW-6000 Use of Facilities and Land](#) [\[/library/UW-6000\]](#)

[UW-6013 Expressive Activity](#) [\[/library/UW-6013\]](#)

Related UW–Madison Documents, Web Pages, or Other Resources



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[Amnesty Through Responsible Action \[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/what-is-amnesty-through-responsible-action/)

[Registered Student Organization Benefits \[https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/benefits/\]](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/benefits/)

[Registered Student Organization Disciplinary Appeal Process \[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/274/2024/08/Registered-Student-Organization-Appeal-Process.pdf\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/274/2024/08/Registered-Student-Organization-Appeal-Process.pdf)

[Registered Student Organization Disciplinary Process \[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/274/2024/08/Registered-Student-Organization-Disciplinary-Process-1.pdf\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/274/2024/08/Registered-Student-Organization-Disciplinary-Process-1.pdf)

[Registered Student Organization Disciplinary Probation Review Process \[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/274/2024/08/Registered-Student-Organization-Disciplinary-Probation-Review-Process.pdf\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/274/2024/08/Registered-Student-Organization-Disciplinary-Probation-Review-Process.pdf)

[Registered Student Organization Reinstatement Process \[https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2022/02/Registered-Student-Organization-Reinstatement-Process.pdf\]](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/157/2022/02/Registered-Student-Organization-Reinstatement-Process.pdf)

[Student Organization Resource & Policy Guide \[https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/\]](https://guide.cfli.wisc.edu/)

[Student Organizations Not in Good Standing \[https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/student-organizations-not-in-good-standing/\]](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/student-organizations-not-in-good-standing/)

External References

[Chapter 961, Wis. Stats., “Uniform Controlled Substances Act” \[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/961\]](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/961)

[Regent Policy Document 14-6, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation \[https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/discrimination-harassment-and-retaliation/\]](https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/discrimination-harassment-and-retaliation/)

[Regent Policy Document 30-06, Recognition of Student Organizations \[https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/recognition-of-student-organizations/\]](https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/recognition-of-student-organizations/)

[StopHazing.org \[http://www.stophazing.org/\]](http://www.stophazing.org/)

[Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 14, Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures \[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14\]](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14)



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[Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 17, Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures](#)

[\[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17\]](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17)

[Wis. Admin. Code § UWS 18, Conduct On University Lands](#)

[\[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18\]](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18)

Policy Administration

Approval Authority

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Policy Manager

Assistant Dean of Students/OSCCS Director

Policy Contact

Assistant Dean of Students/OSCCS Director -- Jennifer Horace, jennifer.horace@wisc.edu, (608) 263-5700

Policy History

Effective Date	4-25-1996
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