



**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR
RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

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STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

I. Introduction

The University of Michigan- Ann Arbor (the University) has a long and proud tradition of student activism, student-led community service and philanthropy, and student self-governance. Student organizations provide tremendous benefits to both the University and surrounding communities. The University, therefore, is committed to supporting student organizations through a recognition system that serves the interests of both the University and student organizations; that recognizes and respects the right of students to freely associate and freely express themselves without coercion or undue influence from the University; that ensures that student organizations operate consistently with the University's core values of diversity, non-discrimination, financial accountability, responsible stewardship of public resources, full academic engagement, and the maintenance of a healthy and safe living and learning environment. **Student organizations that choose to be recognized by the University, accept the rights and responsibilities outlined in this policy.** Within the University, schools, colleges, funding sources, student governing bodies or other entities have developed policies regarding the operation of student organizations. These *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations (Standards of Conduct)* do not replace those standards, limit the procedures and sanctions provided by those policies, federal, state, or local laws, nor contradict or lessen the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations*.

II. Definitions

A. Student Organization

1. Student organizations at the University of Michigan are based on, centered around, led, governed, and directed by students. Each organization is focused around a guiding mission and works to realize this mission. Student Organizations at the University of Michigan:
 - a) Are student led and organized.
 - b) Provide opportunities for the development of leadership skills such as organization, budget handling and development, vision growth, strategic planning, creative thinking, and problem solving.
 - c) Adhere to the policies and procedures of the University of Michigan.

B. Recognized Student Organizations

1. The University recognizes only those organizations that are registered with the Center for Campus Involvement, as either Sponsored Student Organizations or Voluntary Student Organizations. Only these Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) are eligible to access University resources and benefits reserved for student organizations.
 - a) ***Sponsored Student Organizations*** (SSOs) work in full partnership with the University to accomplish their missions.
 - (1) ***Eligibility Requirements***. To be eligible for status as a Sponsored Student Organization, a student organization must satisfy the following requirements:
 - (a) Register as a student organization with the Center for Campus Involvement;
 - (b) Complete annual mandatory student organization training;
 - (c) Sign a commitment statement to comply with the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations* on an annual basis;
 - (d) Maintain a SOAS account or University account for all funds;

- (e) Obtain sponsorship by an Executive Officer, Dean, or Director of a major programmatic or operational unit;
 - (i) The Sponsorship Agreement must show that a substantial relationship exists between the student organization and the unit.
 - (ii) This relationship can be shown in many ways including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Direct and regular allocation from the University
 - (b) Office Space
 - (c) Administrative Support
 - (f) Have missions that are consistent with the University's mission and the goals and objectives of the sponsoring unit; and,
 - (g) Maintain good standing with the University.
- (2) **Student Organizations Not Eligible for Sponsorship.** Because of the University's status as a governmental entity and a tax-exempt charitable organization, certain student organizations are not eligible for sponsored status. Organizations that are not eligible for sponsored status are:
- (a) religious organizations;
 - (b) political or partisan organizations;
 - (c) local chapters or affiliates of other incorporated organizations;
 - (d) organizations that are independently incorporated with the exception of organizations recognized by the Board of Regents of the University as authorized student activities.
- b) **Voluntary Student Organizations (VSOs)** operate independently to accomplish their missions.
- (1) **Eligibility Requirements.** To be eligible for status as a Voluntary Student Organization, a student organization must satisfy the following requirements:
- (a) Register as student organization with Center for Campus Involvement;
 - (b) Complete annual mandatory student organization training;
 - (c) Sign a commitment statement to comply with the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations* on an annual basis;
 - (d) Maintain a SOAS account for all funds allocated from the University or raised on University property; and,
 - (e) Maintain good standing with the University, all governing boards within the University to which the organization belongs and all chartering, sponsoring or governing organizations with whom the organization affiliates.
2. **Recognition of Student Organizations.** The recognition of student organizations is the responsibility of the Center for Campus Involvement within University Unions in the Division of Student Life. Decisions on recognition will be made consistent with established policies and procedures.

C. **Center for Campus Involvement (CCI)**

The Center for Campus Involvement is a department specifically designed to assist students in making the most of their co-curricular experiences. Developing students, student organizations and their leaders through transformative experiences, a vibrant community, and lifelong memories is CCI's mission.

D. **Central Student Judiciary (CSJ)**

The Central Student Judiciary of the Central Student Government (CSG) is the default Student Governing Body (SGB) for the SOAR Accountability Process. CSJ hears complaints against RSOs

unless the RSO is governed by an SSO with an approved SGB. CSJ hears all complaints against CSG and RSOs.

E. **CCI Director**

In this document, “CCI Director” means the Director of the Center for Campus Involvement or their designee.

F. **Dean of Students (DOS)**

In this document, “DOS” means the Dean of Students or their designee.

G. **Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR)**

1. OSCR administers the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
2. OSCR provides campus with pathways for Adaptable Conflict Resolution that complements the SOAR Accountability Process.

H. **Day**

1. In this document, the word “day” means academic day (i.e., no weekends, holidays, final examination periods, or University breaks) unless specified otherwise.
2. All time limits in this document may be changed by the sole discretion of the CCI Director.

I. **Formal Resolution Process**

The purpose of this accountability process is for student organizations to be governed by students with shared accountability with the University. The Formal Resolution Process is the process that involves on a student governing body.

J. **Informal Resolution Process**

The Informal Resolution Process is any means of resolution outside the Formal Resolution Process. This includes unit conflict resolution or alternative dispute resolution. University of Michigan staff and faculty most often conduct the Informal Resolution Process.

K. **Vice President for Student Life**

In this document, “VPSL” means the Vice President for Student Life or their designee.

L. **Student Governing Body**

1. To be eligible to hear official SOAR complaints, a Student Governing Body must meet the following conditions:
 - a) All members of the SGB have completed the student governing body training program with a member of the CCI staff;
 - b) The faculty or staff advisor as applicable has completed the advisor training program regarding the accountability procedures;
 - c) The SGB agrees to use the *Student Governing Body Hearing Panel Procedures* (see *SOAR Accountability Procedures*); and,
 - d) The SGB governs the activities of recognized student organizations.

III. **Standards of Conduct**

- A. All recognized student organizations (sponsored or voluntary) are expected to act consistently with the values of the University community. The University places the highest value on student organizations’ expressive activities. Except as necessary in cases of misconduct, the University will not interfere with the internal affairs of RSOs. RSO’s are not presumed to be responsible for the independent acts of their individual members or autonomous RSOs that are subordinate to the original RSO (hereinafter collectively referred to as *members*). A RSO is responsible for a violation of the *Standards of Conduct* if:
1. a member acts in contravention to the *Standards of Conduct* as a representative of the organization;
 2. the member’s actions, which contravene the *Standards of Conduct*, result from the practices or dispositions of the RSO; or,

3. the member's actions, which contravene the *Standards of Conduct*, have been explicitly or tacitly approved by the organization.
- B. The following contradict the values of the University community and are subject to corrective action under the *Standards of Conduct*.
1. **Health and Safety.** RSOs must not foster, promote, or participate in activities that unreasonably threaten the safety or well being of their members, other people, or animals.
 - a) **COVID-19.** All registered student organizations must follow COVID-19 public health informed policies and act in a manner that demonstrates respect, safety and consideration for others. Organizations must follow health and safety laws, orders, regulations, and guidance adopted by the CCI and the University of Michigan that include, but are not limited to, physical distancing, limitations on gathering sizes and out-of-area travel, contact tracing, and wearing face coverings. Current policies and guidelines can be found at campusinvolvement.umich.edu/rso-guidelines. Registered student organizations are encouraged to adapt their meetings, events, and experiences into virtual formats.
 2. **Hazing.** Hazing is strictly prohibited. RSOs must comply with the University of Michigan policy on hazing and are strongly encouraged to follow the *Hazing Guidelines For SOAR* found in the *Guidebook for Recognized Student Organizations*.
 3. **Use of University funds.** RSOs may not use University funds in ways that are inconsistent with university guidelines as stated in the *Guidebook for Recognized Student Organizations*.
 4. **Fundraising.** RSOs may not engage in fundraising or soliciting activities in violation of the University's fundraising guidelines for recognized student organizations.
 5. **Financial Stewardship.** RSOs may not use or account for student organization funds in violation of university financial and accounting procedures. Violations include but are not limited to:
 - a) breaching contractual obligations.
 - b) using student organization funds for purposes not authorized by the student organization and/or outside the realm of these *Standards of Conduct* and University Policy.
 - c) failing to provide accounting of all contributions and reporting said contributions to the proper University unit.
 - d) using contributions for a purpose other than as stated by the contributor and/or failing to submit a report of expenditures against those contributions to the proper University unit.
 - e) failing to follow Student Organization Account Services (SOAS policies and procedures).
 6. **Appropriate Use of Space.** RSOs must use University-controlled spaces in accordance with the standards of the particular space.
 7. **Non-Discrimination.** RSOs must commit to comply with the University's Nondiscrimination Policy on an annual basis. RSOs are not permitted to discriminate in any membership practices based on individual's membership in a protected classification as defined by the University's Nondiscrimination Policy.
 8. **Compliance with University's naming and trademarks policies.** VSOs may not use the University's name, logo, symbols, seal, or trademarks without obtaining express written permission from the University. SSOs may only use the University's name, logos,

symbols, seal or trademark as permitted by the guidelines and policies established by the Office of the Vice President for Global Communications.

9. **Violation of the Student Organization Constitution.** RSOs are bound by the constitution submitted during the recognition process. Any organization that violates their published constitution, is in violation of these *Standards of Conduct*, even if an amendment has been made and submitted, but has not yet been approved.
10. **Adherence to Other University Policies.** RSOs must adhere to University policies, including but not limited to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities, University's computer use policies, Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, Student Sexual Misconduct and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence Policy, Dance and Party Policy, Diag Policy and housing policies.
 - a) **Allegations of Sexual Misconduct.** RSOs are encouraged to report allegations of sexual misconduct directly to the Office of Institutional Equity. It is neither the role nor the responsibility of RSOs to investigate or make determinations concerning allegations of sexual misconduct.
11. **Adherence to Law.** RSOs must adhere to federal, state, and local laws.
12. **Adherence to the *Standards of Conduct*.** RSOs may not file a false complaint, use this policy to harass or intimidate a student organization, or fail to cooperate or participate in the accountability process.
13. **Interference with RSO or University business.** RSOs may not engage in intentional interference that impedes or disrupts the business of an RSO or University unit. Ethical competition is not considered to be interference.

IV. Educational Interventions and Restorative Measures

- A. The University of Michigan pursues educational potential in unconventional situations and incidents. Working with student organizations is no exception. The educational value of student organizations is the primary reason for the strong university support that they receive. Unfortunately, some of the best educational opportunities come through mistakes and adversity. A student governing body may recommend and the DOS may issue one or any combination of the following interventions and restorative measures. These measures may take the form of, but are not limited to, any of the following:
 1. **Formal Written Reprimand.** A formal notice that the *Standards of Conduct* have been violated and a warning that future violations will be dealt with more severely.
 2. **Fines.** Payment of a monetary fine.
 3. **Inability to Access University Funds.** Rendering a student organization's SOAS or other University account inactive so as to prevent access to funds or services being granted or disbursed.
 4. **Restricted Activities.** Restricting the student organization's ability access University-controlled benefits and resources.
 5. **Disciplinary Suspension.** Separation of the student organization from the University for a period of at least one semester.
 6. **De-Recognition.** Permanent separation of a student organization from the University. Student organizations that are de-recognized are not eligible to apply to be a recognized student organization for at least four years.
 7. **Suspension of Sponsorship.** To suspend the agreement, either party to the agreement must notify CCI and their respective sponsor or sponsored student organization. The suspension is effective upon receipt of this notification. Any person, office, or organization

outside the Sponsorship Agreement may recommend the suspension of sponsorship. However, only the SSO and the Sponsoring Unit have the power to suspend the agreement.

8. **Dissolution of Sponsorship.** If an occasion arises such that one party of the sponsorship agreement wishes to dissolve the sponsored relationship, that party may suspend the agreement (see above). If both parties agree to dissolve the agreement, CCI must be notified, and the agreement is dissolved. At this time, the student organization will become a VSO. If either party contests the dissolution of the sponsored relationship, the CCI Director will facilitate a meeting with both parties. The meeting will be held within two weeks of CCI's notification of the suspension of sponsorship and will aim to establish a mutual agreement between the parties. If no agreement is met, the sponsored relationship is considered dissolved. Any person, office, or organization outside the Sponsorship Agreement may recommend the dissolution of sponsorship. However, only the SSO and the Sponsoring Unit have the power to dissolve the agreement.
 9. **Written plan for reconstruction of the Organization.**
 10. **Restitution.** Required compensation for loss, damage, or injury to the appropriate party in the form of service, money, or material replacement.
 11. **Class/Workshop Attendance.** Attendance and completion of a class or workshop that will assist the student organization avoid future non-compliance with the *Standards of Conduct*.
 12. **Educational Project.** Completion of a project specifically designed to assist the student organization avoid future non-compliance with the *Standards of Conduct*.
 13. **Service.** Performance of a task, or tasks, designed to benefit the community and that also assists the student organization avoid future non-compliance with the *Standards of Conduct*.
- B. **Emergency Suspension.** In cases where students' health and safety is alleged to be significantly jeopardized, the Office of the Vice President for Student Life may suspend the activity of a student organization for 30 days. The organization then is entitled to a hearing within 10 days.

V. Scope of Policy

RSO behavior that occurs within the City of Ann Arbor, on University-controlled property, or at University sponsored events or programs may violate the *Standards of Conduct*. Behavior that occurs outside of the City of Ann Arbor or outside University-controlled property may violate the *Standards of Conduct* if the behavior poses an obvious and serious threat or harm to any member(s) of the University community.

VI. Procedures

The University will follow the procedures outlined in the *SOAR Accountability Procedure Manual* to respond to student organizations that violate the *Standards of Conduct* for student organizations. These procedures reflect the University's commitment to behavior modification through education, student self-governance, alternative dispute resolution, and accountability. The accountability and appeals procedures are administrative functions of an education process and are not subject to the same rules of civil or criminal proceedings.

VII. Miscellaneous

- A. **Procedural and Interpretive Questions.**
All procedural and interpretive questions concerning the *Standards of Conduct* will be resolved by the VPSL. At any time, the VPSL may consult the Office of the General Counsel about a case or procedures.
- B. **Records of Resolution Actions**

Records will be maintained by CCI with regard to all actions taken under the *Standards of Conduct* in accordance with procedures outlined in the *SOAR Accountability Procedure Manual*. Confidentiality of records will be maintained to the extent permitted by law and the University of Michigan [Student Rights and Student Records](#) policy.

C. ***Reports of Actions.***

Upon request from University departments, statistical reports of actions taken through the *Standards of Conduct* will be shared. These reports will cover the number of complaints and the types of violations, resolutions, and sanctions. Personally identifiable information will be removed from all records prior to any review.