

# SHSU STUDENT ORGANIZATION POLICY

Sam Houston State University acknowledges that student organizations contribute richly to student success and persistence. The university further recognizes that students seeking to establish and participate in these organizations must comply with local, state, and federal law, university policies, and the Student Code of Conduct. To receive and retain official recognition, student organizations must annually meet the requirements listed in this policy.

The purpose of this policy is:

- A. To define and describe a recognized student organization.
- B. To outline the requirements for student organizations to be officially recognized by Sam Houston State University.
- C. To establish the rights and responsibilities of students acting in an official organization capacity.
- D. To outline risk management and event planning expectations.
- E. To share additional policies and regulations governing student organization activities.
- F. To provide conduct and disciplinary procedures for recognized student organizations.

## Definition of a Recognized Student Organization

A student organization is a formally recognized group that is joined together by a common lawful purpose, consists of a minimum of 5 student members, and operates in partnership with at least one full-time faculty/staff advisor.

Sam Houston State University student organizations include all student organizations supported by the Department of Student Involvement, Club Sports, and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL). Club Sports and FSL have additional policies for their respective student organizations.

## What does it mean to be a Recognized Student Organization?

When a group of students gather around a cause or share common interests, they may form a student organization, meaning, they can assemble, express themselves, recruit members, and more. Additionally, student organizations may have different affiliations (i.e., affiliate with a national organization).

## Requirements for Official Student Organization Recognition

To become recognized by Sam Houston State University, student organizations initially submit a formal registration, complete assigned training, and agree to comply with university policies and federal, state, and local laws. Once recognized, student organizations are expected to renew their recognition with the university each year. University recognition comes with privileges, resources, expectations, and responsibilities, as outlined in this policy and within the Student Code of Conduct. Club Sports and Fraternity and Sorority Life have additional privileges and resources, as well as expectations and responsibilities outlined in their respective policies.

## Procedure for Recognition of New Organizations

- A. Any group of students who wish to create a student organization may seek recognition with Sam Houston State University. Recognition of a student organization does not guarantee official university approval of all student organization activities. University recognition of a student organization may be withdrawn at any time if the organization is found in violation of any university policies and procedures and/or federal, state, or local laws.
- B. Groups seeking recognition will submit a New Organization Application via OrgLINK ([shsu.edu/orglink](https://shsu.edu/orglink)). The application must be submitted by a responsible student member associated with the group.
- C. Applications must be submitted between the first day of class during the fall semester through the last day of the spring semester of the academic calendar associated with the Huntsville campus. Applications cannot be submitted during the summer to ensure new organizations align with updated training and policies for the upcoming academic year.
- D. The application shall include:
  1. Organization's name (cannot include Sam Houston, Sam Houston State, Sam Houston State University, SH, or SHSU).
  2. Constitution that adheres to the Constitution Checklist provided by the Department of Student Involvement.
  3. Statement of unique purpose/description of the organization.
  4. Name and contact information for president and faculty/staff advisor (advisors can advise no more than 3 student organizations).
  5. Number of student members (minimum 5 required).
  6. Intent to affiliate with on/off-campus organizations (if applicable).
- E. At the time of filing, the president or contact person for the student organization will complete New Organization Training and electronically sign a statement indicating that they are familiar with and will uphold all university policies including the Student Organization Policy and Code of Conduct.
- F. Additional Oversight
  1. Student organizations with high levels of inherent risk that are looking to promote and develop common sport and/or recreation-related interest may be required to also report to Club Sports (within the Department of Campus Recreation) for additional oversight of organization activities.
    - a. Club Sports will be consulted if an organization meets the definition of a Club Sport (i.e., organizations with the primary purpose of providing a program of instruction, recreation, or competition in a specific sport or for a group of students who share a common interest in physical activity, along with promoting and developing the skills necessary for a particular sport).
  2. Student organizations classified as social Greek letter organizations with regional or national governance will be required to report to Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) for additional oversight of organization activities.
  3. Once a recognized organization aligns with Club Sports or FSL, the organization

must remain under these areas of oversight. If a Club Sport or FSL organization loses its recognition as a Club Sport or FSL organization, it will also lose its status as a recognized student organization.

- G. When the New Organization Application has been submitted, university staff will review the application to ensure completeness and that the submission does not duplicate any other student organization or program in existence at the university.
  - 1. If the New Organization Application does not meet the requirements for recognition, the reviewer will notify the pending organization with the recommendations and the decision regarding their status. The organization may then work with university staff to review the requirements for recognition.
  - 2. If an application meets all requirements for recognition, the application will be submitted to the Vice President for Student Affairs or their appointed designee to approve the application.
  - 3. If a New Organization Application is denied university recognition and the applicant wishes to appeal, they may do so by formally appealing, in writing, to the Director of Student Involvement. The Director of Student Involvement or their appointed designee will review the appeal and application and make a final decision regarding the approval/denial of the application.
  - 4. After the review and/or appeal process, the president and faculty/staff advisor will be notified as to whether the application has been approved or denied.

### **Maintenance of Recognized Student Organizations**

#### **A. Annual Registration**

- 1. All student organizations are required to submit an annual registration on OrgLINK to be recognized for the upcoming academic year. Annual registration must be submitted by a responsible student member associated with the organization. Registration includes:
  - a. List of the officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Primary Contact, and On-Campus Advisor must be included).
  - b. Number of student members (minimum 5 required).
- 2. Annual registration opens on April 15 and closes on August 1 for all student organizations other than those associated with the College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM).
- 3. COM organizations will complete an annual re-registration process with embedded training by September 1.

#### **B. Training**

- 1. Student organizations must also satisfactorily complete required annual training through the Department of Student Involvement to be recognized, as outlined in Texas Education Code Sections 51.936, 51.9361, and 51.9362.
  - a. Student Organization Required Training (SORT)
    - 1. One responsible student member from each organization must complete SORT via OrgLINK between July 15-September 1 and then relay the information covered to their membership.
  - b. Student Organization Leadership Retreat (SOLR)

1. One responsible student member from each organization must attend SOLR in its entirety and relay the information covered to their membership. SOLR typically occurs before Fall classes each semester.
  2. COM organizations will complete training as noted in section A.
  3. Once registration and training completions have been processed, recognition will be confirmed or denied. If an organization does not meet the requirements for continued recognition, university staff will provide notification of loss of recognition to the student representatives and the organization advisor.
- C. OrgLINK Updates
1. To maintain recognized status throughout the academic year, student organizations must upload/update the following items on OrgLINK:
    - a. About – Student organizations are required to update their OrgLINK About profile within 3 business days of any changes.
    - b. Roster – Student organizations are required to update their OrgLINK Roster within 3 business days of any changes.
    - c. Events – Student organizations are required to submit any events for approval 5 business days before any events designated as Level 1 or 2, and t days prior for Level 3 events (See Meetings & Events section under Risk Management & Event Planning).
    - d. Travel – Student organizations wishing to travel more than 25 miles away from their home campus are required to submit a travel form through OrgLINK at least 10 business days in advance of travel.
      1. Student organizations that also report to Club Sports or FSL may follow protocols designated by those areas.
- D. Conditional Status
1. Conditional status may be considered for student organizations that do not meet the requirements for recognition but are actively working toward compliance with the minimum requirements to be a recognized student organization.
    - a. FSL organizations may also be placed on conditional status for failing to remain in good standing, as defined in the FSL Policy.
  2. If a student organization fails to meet requirements for recognition at any time during an academic year (i.e., drop below the minimum membership or lose advisement), the organization may be placed on conditional status and supported by university staff to work toward full recognition.
  3. The timeline for conditional status is at the discretion of university staff.
- E. Suspension of Recognition
1. University recognition of a student organization may be suspended at any time if the organization is found in violation of university policies, the Student Organization Policy, the Code of Conduct, or any local, state, or federal laws.
    - a. The first offense may result in a suspension of recognition for a period of at least 1 semester.
    - b. The second offense in the same academic year may result in a suspension of recognition for a period of at least 2 semesters.

- F. Reactivation of an Unrecognized Student Organization
  1. Student organizations who lose recognition or choose to go inactive, may seek reactivation for recognition as a student organization unless suspended.
  2. To reactivate a previously recognized student organization, students must fill out the reactivation form on OrgLINK and provide the requested information.
    - a. Applications must be submitted between the first day of class during the fall semester through the last day of the spring semester of the academic calendar associated with the Huntsville campus. Applications cannot be submitted during the summer to ensure organizations align with updated training and policies for the upcoming academic year.
  3. University staff will review the submission and work with the students towards becoming reactivated and recognized by SHSU.

<b>Rights, Responsibilities, and Limitations of Recognized Student Organizations</b>
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Recognized student organizations exist at Sam Houston State University with the expectation that their activities and programs contribute to the mission and vision of the university. Recognition of a campus organization does not guarantee official university approval of all student organization activities. University recognition of a student organization may be suspended or withdrawn at any time if the organization is found in violation of university policies, the Student Code of Conduct, or any local, state, or federal laws.

- A. Rights: Recognized student organizations may:
  1. Indicate that the organization is recognized by the university.
    - a. If an organization is not recognized by the university, it is not allowed to represent itself as such. Representing a student organization as being recognized by the university, when not officially recognized, will result in disciplinary action by the university for all involved individuals as well as the student organization as necessary.
  2. Request the use of university facilities.
  3. Manage their organization via OrgLINK including rosters, communication, event planning and marketing, social media feeds, form creation, photo albums, and more.
  4. Invite off-campus guests to appear for scheduled meetings and events after submitting the Off-Campus Speaker Request form and receiving approval through the Dean of Students' Office.
  5. Distribute printed and digital materials relating to the student organization's purpose and activities following the Posting & Distribution of Printed Materials Policy.
  6. Use campus news and publicity media for public recognition.
  7. Fundraise for organizational activities following proper university procedures and policies.
  8. Request funding for an organizational event or program through the Campus Life Development Fund and/or Student Affairs Travel Fund.

9. Exercise freedom of choice in the selection of members provided there is no discrimination based on race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, unless otherwise permitted under 20 U.S.C. §1681 section (a)(6) or other federal or Texas law.
  10. Participate in university-sponsored events such as student organization fairs, following all guidelines set by the event host.
- B. Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of a recognized student organization to:
1. Manage itself and carry out its activities following its constitution, local, state, and federal laws, and university procedures and policies.
    - a. Student organizations will refrain from conducting any pledging, initiation, or other activities that will in any way be detrimental, defamatory, ridiculing, or embarrassing to any person(s). Additionally, all student organizations should be aware of the state of Texas Statute on Hazing (outlined in the Student Code of Conduct) and the responsibilities for reporting hazing activities.
  2. Anticipate, provide for, and promptly meet its legitimate financial obligations.
  3. Act accordingly in the best interests of its members and Sam Houston State University and show respect for others associated and not associated with SHSU.
  4. Update OrgLINK reflecting any changes in the roster or other activities within 3 business days of any changes.
  5. Comply with all student organization information distributed by the Department of Student Involvement, as well as Club Sports and FSL (if aligned).
  6. Take reasonable precautions for the safety and comfort of participation at student organization events.
  7. Be held accountable for damages and/or injuries that occur during student organization events.
  8. Ensure continuity by transitioning new officers.
  9. Establish and communicate appropriate advisor expectations.
  10. Consult with advisor and/or university staff for event planning.
- C. Advisor Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of a recognized student organization advisor to:
1. Advise no more than three student organizations at one time.
  2. Be available for advice and consultation.
  3. Advise organizations about potential and perceived risks.
  4. Assist in the planning, coordination, and approval of events.
  5. Attend events and meetings, as agreed upon or required.
  6. Assist the student organization with the verification process for determining organization officer eligibility (i.e., student GPA and enrollment status).
  7. Be aware of and understand rules and policies as well as local, state, and federal laws that pertain to student organization activities and report any violations of rules, policies, and/or laws.
  8. Be aware of the organization's financial status and assist with financial decision-

making (Advisors may not serve as signers on student organization bank accounts).

9. Complete any training requirements assigned by university staff regarding serving as a student organization advisor.

D. Limitations on Rights and Responsibilities

1. Recognized student organizations may not use the name of Sam Houston State University or an abbreviation of the name of the university as part of its name.
2. Sam Houston State University does not grant student organizations the right to speak on behalf of the university.
3. Unless an event is formally cosponsored with a department or program associated with Sam Houston State University, student organizations may not promote an engagement that suggests it is sponsored or sanctioned by the university.
4. The activity of student organizations or their members, taking place off university-owned or controlled property, is entirely the responsibility of the student organization. The university accepts no responsibility for off-campus activities; however, the university will not ignore any activity that reflects adversely on the university or the community and will investigate/adjudicate situations as necessary.
5. Sam Houston State University's tax exemption status does not extend to student organizations.
6. Sam Houston State University accepts no responsibility for student organization activities taking place on or off campus.

### **Risk Management and Event Planning**

In accordance with Texas Education Code, Section 51.9361, all recognized student organizations are required to review and complete annual Risk Management training with the university.

- A. Timeline: For student organizations seeking re-recognition, training must be completed between July 15-September 1. For new student organizations seeking recognition, training will be completed during the application process.
- B. Responsible Parties: A responsible member of each organization is required to complete the Risk Management Training via the Student Organization Required Training (SORT) form on OrgLINK or the new organization/re-activation application process. The training is self-paced and must be completed and passed for the organization to gain credit. The member is then responsible for relaying the information covered to the entire membership of their organization. Advisors must complete training within their first year of advisement and are encouraged to complete training annually.
- C. Training topics will include, but are not limited to:
  1. Possession and use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs including penalties for possession or use.
  2. Overdose awareness and appropriate response training.
  3. Hazing.
  4. Sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct and harassment.

5. Fire and other safety issues, including the possession and use of firearms or other weapons or explosive devices.
  6. Student travel.
  7. Behavior at parties and other events held by a student organization.
  8. Adoption of a student organization risk management policy
  9. Issues regarding persons with disabilities, including a review of applicable requirements of federal and state law, and any related policies of the institution, for providing reasonable accommodations and modifications to address the needs of students with disabilities, including access to the activities of the student organization.
- D. Records of completion will be retained by Student Involvement for 3 academic years unless the university records retention schedule changes.

### **Meetings & Events**

- A. Student organization leaders and advisors are expected to work together to plan meetings/events while assessing and mitigating potential risks.
- B. Student organizations wishing to host a meeting or event in university facilities or on SHSU property must complete an Event Submission in OrgLINK within the following timelines based on event level:
  1. Level 1 and 2 event submissions must be made 5 business days in advance.
  2. Level 3 event submissions must be made 30 days in advance.
- B. Level Definitions & Information
  1. Level 1: Low-risk events (e.g., tabling and reoccurring general body meetings)
    - a. Approvers: Student Organization President, Advisor, and Lowman Student Center/other facility approving entity.
    - b. Submission required in OrgLINK at least 5 business days in advance.
  2. Level 2: Medium-risk events (e.g., open to more than general membership, under 100 people in attendance, events social in nature)
    - a. Approvers: Level 1 approvers + Student Involvement, Fraternity & Sorority Life, or Club Sports.
    - b. Submission required in OrgLINK at least 5 business days in advance.
  3. Level 3: High-risk events (e.g., open event, 100+ attendance, alcohol involved, or hosted at Gibbs Ranch/Austin Hall/Peabody Library)
    - a. Approvers: Level 1 & 2 approvers + Review and approval by the University Event Safety Group comprised of professional staff members at SHSU.
    - b. Submission required in OrgLINK at least 30 days in advance.
- C. Student organizations are prohibited from partnering with 3<sup>rd</sup> party promoters to host events on or off campus.
- D. Events hosted off SHSU property also require an event submission via OrgLINK in accordance with the associated Event Levels and timelines.



## **Additional Policies and Regulations for Recognized Student Organizations**

The following sections outline additional policies and regulations for recognized student organizations. It shall be the duty and responsibility of the student officers and advisors of each student organization to make members aware of university policies and regulations.

### **Student Organization Membership**

- A. Membership in an organization is limited to Sam Houston State University students, faculty, and staff who are currently enrolled or employed.
- B. Student membership in an organization must be no fewer than five.
- C. Membership is not denied to anyone based on race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, unless otherwise permitted under 20 U.S.C. §1681 section (a)(6) or other federal or Texas law.
- D. Membership rosters on OrgLINK are required to be updated by student organizations within 3 business days of any change.
- E. Officers:
  1. Holding an official office or title is limited to currently enrolled SHSU students except when national regulations require that an office be held by a faculty member.
  2. Officers or student leaders representing the university in an official capacity (e.g., university committees, Board of Regents' Advisory Committees, off-campus conferences, or programs, etc.) must be current students; or they must be members of the faculty or university staff.
  3. To be eligible to serve as an officer in a recognized student organization, a student must:
    - a. Be enrolled full-time (12 hours undergraduate or 9 hours graduate).
    - b. Have and maintain a 2.0 SHSU grade point average (GPA) cumulatively.
    - c. Not be on disciplinary probation.
  4. Advisors of student organizations are required to assist the student organization with the verification process for determining organization officer eligibility.
- F. Elections:
  1. When an election is held in a recognized student organization, the names of the new officers must be updated within 3 days after the election via updating the organization's roster on OrgLINK.
  2. Students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirements at the time of elections may not serve in a leadership capacity. In the event a student is elected to office without the minimum GPA requirements, or when an officer fails to maintain a 2.0 GPA while serving in an elected office, the organization must hold a re-election process immediately.

## **Student Organization Name Changes**

- A. Student organizations may not change their student organization's name after formal approval for recognition except in the following situations:
  - 1. The student organization has not registered for recognition on OrgLINK for over an academic year. If the group decides to reapply for recognition, they can request a name change during the reactivation process.
  - 2. The student organization has disconnected or connected with a different national organization/affiliation.
- B. Restrictions:
  - 1. Student organizations may not dissolve a student organization with the sole purpose to rename the student organization with the same purpose.
  - 2. Student organization names are not permitted to duplicate any existing program, department, or student organization already established on campus.
- C. Recognized student organizations may not use the name of Sam Houston State University or an abbreviation of the name of the university as part of its name.
- D. The Department of Student Involvement reserves the right to approve or deny any name change request for student organizations.

## **Student Organization Finances**

- A. Bank Accounts:
  - 1. If a student organization handles any money, they are required to open a bank account of their choosing.
  - 2. Student organization advisors are not permitted to act as signers on student organization bank accounts.
- B. Taxes
  - 1. All student organizations are required to operate as non-profit organizations. Student organizations, however, are *not* automatically registered as 501(c)3 organizations, and do not, therefore, automatically receive tax-exempt status.
  - 2. Tax Exemption Status
    - a. Sam Houston State University's tax exemption status does not extend to student organizations.
    - b. Some student organizations may receive tax exemption status through a "parent" organization that has the tax exemption status (e.g., national social fraternity and sororities).
    - c. Student organizations may pursue obtaining their own tax exemption status through the Internal Revenue Service.
  - 3. Annual Filing Requirements
    - a. Organizations recognized as tax-exempt are generally required to file annual information with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), determined by the organization's annual gross receipts and assets.
    - b. Other organizations should seek advice through the IRS for additional information regarding taxes and reporting responsibilities.

- c. Additional information about taxes and reporting is provided on the Student Involvement website, but the student organization is solely responsible for determining and complying with any tax obligations.

C. Student Organization Solicitation and Fundraising

1. Solicit: To sell or offer for sale any property or service, whether for immediate or future delivery, and the receipt of or request for any gift or contribution.
2. Student organizations may solicit and fundraise with the approval of their advisor, for their projects or charitable activities.
3. Any student organizations collecting financial donations for which there is no exchange of merchandise or services shall keep accurate records and deposit/use the funds according to the organization's financial procedures.
4. Solicitation and fundraising on campus may require approval through various departments.

D. Raffles

Only a Sam Houston State University recognized student organization that is also a qualified organization under the Charitable Raffle Enabling Act (Tex. Occ. Code Ann. § 2002) may conduct raffles. A detailed video explaining the process is available on the Student Involvement website.

1. A raffle is defined as the award of one or more prizes by chance at a single occasion among a single pool or group of persons who have paid or promised a thing of value for a ticket that represents a chance to win a prize.
2. Any raffle requests from Club Sports or FSL organizations should be sent to their respective areas for approval following the State Qualifications.
3. Qualifications for the Charitable Raffle Enabling Act
  - a. To qualify as an organization that can legally conduct a raffle under the Charitable Raffle Enabling Act, groups must meet one of the following categories and must provide documentation:
    - A. CATEGORY 1:
      - i. Is an unincorporated nonprofit organization.
      - ii. Is not distributing any income to members or officers.
      - iii. Has for the 3 years preceding the proposed raffle either had officers elected by the membership or is affiliated with a state or national organization that is organized to perform the same purposes.
      - iv. Does not participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office in any manner.
      - v. Does qualify for and has obtained an exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c), Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
    - B. CATEGORY 2

- i. Is incorporated under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act or is a formally recognized local chapter or affiliate of a parent organization that is incorporated under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act or is a formally recognized local chapter or affiliate of a parent organization that has received a certificate of authority from the State of Texas.
- ii. Is not distributing any income to members or officers.
- iii. Has existed for 3 years before the raffle and elected officers by the membership or formally recognize them as a local chapter.
- iv. Does not participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office in any manner.
- v. Has nationally or locally obtained an exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c), Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

C. CATEGORY 3

- i. Is a qualified religious society that has been in existence in Texas for at least 10 years and distributes no income to its members; Or
  - ii. Is a qualified volunteer emergency medical service Or
  - iii. Is a qualified volunteer fire department.
4. Student organizations who qualify must fill out and submit an SHSU Raffle Request Form at least 5 business days in advance of the scheduled raffle date.
  5. Requesting student organizations must provide documentation to prove qualification for a charitable raffle.
  6. Raffle prizes must be in the possession, or the organization must post bond for the full amount of money value of such prize before raffle tickets are sold. The prize awarded at a raffle may not be money and the value of the prize may not exceed \$50,000.
  7. The following must be printed on each raffle ticket sold or offered for sale:
    - a. The name of the university group conducting the raffle and the address of the organization or a named officer of the organization.
    - b. The price of the ticket.
    - c. A general description of each prize that has a value of more than \$10 and is to be awarded in the raffle.
    - d. The date on which the raffle prize(s) will be awarded.
  8. Student organizations must receive approval before any tickets are sold.
  9. If a student organization does not meet the qualifications to legally conduct a raffle under the Charitable Raffle Enabling Act, it is illegal to conduct a raffle, and the request will be denied.
  10. Student organizations are not allowed to conduct two raffles at one time.

## **Travel**

Student organizations, other than Club Sports, traveling 25 miles or more away from their home campus, must submit a Student Organization Travel Form via OrgLINK at least 10 business days before travel which includes a listing for participants and emergency contact information. Club Sports must follow travel policies dictated by the Department of Campus Recreation.

- A. Student organization leaders are strongly encouraged to meet with university staff to discuss travel plans and to obtain a waiver for travel.
- B. In the event of an emergency while traveling, (such as, but not limited to, a health concern, injury, accident, or natural disaster), local police must be called at 911 immediately during domestic travel. For international travel, the appropriate local authority must be contacted.
- C. Travel leaders must carry an itinerary for the trip and a list of participants at all times during travel and all associated activities. Participants must carry an itinerary and the names and telephone numbers of all travel leaders during the travel and associated activities.
- D. If traveling and staying overnight, student organizations are required to complete and submit a Clery Act Travel Form with the University Police Department for compliance and record keeping.

## **Student Organization Posting & Distribution**

- A. Recognized student organizations may post and distribute materials and electronic media on campus provided they adhere to the SHSU's Posting & Distribution Policy.
- B. Recognized student organizations must receive approval to post or distribute materials through the Department of Student Involvement, Club Sports, or FSL, depending on organization oversight.
- C. All student organization printed materials should include:
  1. Student organization's name.
  2. Contact information.
  3. Name of event (if applicable).
  4. Date of the event (if applicable).
  5. Time of the event (if applicable).
  6. Location of the event (if applicable).
- D. Students are responsible for cleaning up any litter that may result from a distribution, and they must remove their postings once they are outdated.
- E. Failure to comply with the SHSU Posting & Distribution Policy may result in disciplinary action.

## **SHSU Posting & Distribution of Printed Materials Policy**

- A. Purpose
  1. The purpose of this policy is to set forth Sam Houston State University rules and regulations regarding the posting and/or distribution of printed materials on SHSU property to ensure an atmosphere conducive to the educational purposes of the university.
  2. If a posting and/or distribution applies to expressive activity, please review

## SHSU's Expressive Activity Policy.

### B. Definitions

1. A-Frames & Sandwich Boards – any upright rigid supporting frames in the form of a triangle or an inverted V
2. Banners – larger signs, up to six feet in length and three feet in width, or of similar dimensions
3. Flyers/Posters – placards or signs intended for posting on a designated bulletin board
4. Table-Tents – self-standing promotional units created from printed and folded cardstock and designed to be placed on any horizontal surface
5. Yard Signs- temporary signs that are affixed to the ground with stakes or poles and intended to be displayed for a limited period of time

### C. Eligibility

1. SHSU Departments may post and/or distribute printed materials on the university campus in compliance with university policy.
2. Officially recognized student organizations may post and/or distribute printed materials on the university campus in compliance with university policy.
3. Private Enterprises and/or Non-profit organizations will be permitted to post and/or distribute printed materials on the university campus only during Bearkat Mania.

### D. Posting

#### 1. Posting Approval

- a. SHSU Departmental postings must include the full department name and contact information. No stamp of approval is needed.
- b. Officially recognized student organization postings require an approval stamp from the Department of Student Involvement, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, or may post under the approval of a sponsoring university department, provided the university department is listed with contact information. A-frame, Sandwich Boards, and Yard Sign designs must be emailed to the Department of Student Involvement or the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life for approval.
  - i. If the posting includes an event, the event must be submitted and approved in OrgLINK prior to posting approval
- c. Postings must include:
  - i. Sponsoring department and/or student organization's name
  - ii. Contact information
  - iii. Event Name (if applicable)
  - iv. Event Date (if applicable)
  - v. Event Time (if applicable)
  - vi. Event Location (if applicable)

#### 2. Posting Timeframe & Expectations

- a. Postings may be displayed for a period of 10 business days or until the day following the event, whichever comes first.
  - i. Requests for posting in residence halls require the approval of

SHSU Residence Life. No departments or student organizations may freely post in any residential building.

- ii. Banners and table tents require approval from the associated building liaison.
  - b. Postings must
    - i. Identify the campus department or sponsoring recognized student organization
    - ii. Only be posted as one item per bulletin board
    - iii. Not exceed 18x24 inches in size, unless the posting is an A-frame or Sandwich Board
    - iv. Not obstruct another previously posted item
    - v. Not be affixed to any trees, bushes, plants, buildings, walkways, handrails, posts, fences, or any university fixture (e.g., statues, restrooms, elevators, windows, walls (except a bulletin board), trash cans, fire hydrants, etc.), without prior approval from the Director of Facilities Campus Services
    - vi. Not be placed over any other permanent sign or sign that has been properly posted
    - vii. Not be placed on any cars parked on university property
    - viii. Be removed promptly by the sponsoring department or organization
  - c. Each building liaison or their designee is responsible for monitoring their building's bulletin boards.
3. Yard signs
- a. Yard signs size may not exceed 24" x 24"
  - b. Yard signs should be placed in prepared planter beds around campus first
  - c. If yard signs must be placed in turf areas, they must not impede watering systems
  - d. If promoting an event or activity, yard signs must be removed within 24 hours of the end of the event. Yard signs that remain posted after this deadline may be discarded.
  - e. Yard signs must include contact name and information. This information is necessary if the sign is found, damaged, or needs to be moved from its original location.
  - f. Lost, stolen, and/or damaged yard signs are the responsibility of the student organization or department.
4. A-Frame & Sandwich Boards
- a. A-Frame & Sandwich Boards cannot impede or restrict the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic
  - b. Postings may not be chained or locked to university property, including handrails, street or lamp posts, and buildings
  - c. Size may not exceed 48" tall x 36" wide
  - d. Postings should be weighted to withstand wind and other weather conditions

- e. If promoting an event or activity, a-frame or sandwich boards must be removed within 24 hours of the end of the event
- f. Must include contact name and information. This information is necessary if the board is found, damaged, or needs to be moved from its original location.
- g. Lost, stolen, and/or damaged sandwich boards are the responsibility of the student organization or department.

#### E. Distribution

1. Departments and officially recognized student organizations may distribute printed materials on the university campus in compliance with university policy. Printed materials may be distributed, except in recreational and/or athletic facilities, residence halls, and academic buildings. Students must also obtain permission from proper building/campus liaisons for distribution.
2. Direct distribution in residence halls will not be permitted, including door-to-door distribution. Items for distribution or posting in Residence Halls must be submitted to the Residence Life Office for their staff to distribute/post.
3. Permissible distribution of printed material must be conducted in a manner that will not:
  - a. Interfere with academic or other institutional programs being conducted in campus facilities
  - b. Interfere with the free and unimpeded flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on sidewalks and streets and at places of ingress and egress to and from campus buildings
  - c. Use obscene or libelous language, images, or materials
  - d. Harass or intimidate individuals
  - e. Promote the violation of local, state, or federal law or published university policy or Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations
  - f. Constitute disorderly conduct, disrupt classroom proceedings, impeded maintenance of public order, or constitute a danger to the person distributing or receiving the posting
  - g. Litter or deface campus grounds
  - h. May not post on vehicles

#### F. Compliance & Review

1. Appeals of this policy will be reviewed by the Dean of Students' Office.
2. The Dean of Students, or designee, may approve reasonable exceptions to these policies to appropriately address special circumstances.
3. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the removal of access to post and distribute printed materials on campus and may result in conduct procedures.
4. The responsibility to review and recommend the revision or cancellation of this policy statement resides with the Dean of Students' Office.
5. This policy shall be reviewed annually.



## **Student Organization Fairs**

Recognized student organizations will be invited to participate in various student organization fairs throughout each year. Fairs will be announced via email and banner announcements at the top of SHSU's OrgLINK page. To participate student organizations must:

- A. Register to participate via OrgLINK (tables are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, unless communicated otherwise by Student Involvement staff).
- B. Arrive and check in with Student Involvement staff within the communicated timeframe.
- C. Must participate for the entire duration of the fair event.
- D. Provide up to two representatives that must stay at their table the entire time. Representatives are not permitted to roam the fair or surrounding areas. One table will be provided for each student organization and no chairs (unless requested in advance for accessibility purposes by emailing [getinvolved@shsu.edu](mailto:getinvolved@shsu.edu)). Sitting on tables is prohibited.
- E. Cancel a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the fair by emailing [getinvolved@shsu.edu](mailto:getinvolved@shsu.edu), if needed.
- F. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the student organization being penalized or removed from participating in future student organization fairs.

## **Student Organization Service Hour Submissions and Approvals**

Individual students and student organizations may complete service hours anywhere of their choosing. Students may submit service hours for official review and approval via OrgLINK. Due to OrgLINK's role as an official record of Sam Houston State University (for the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement), the following policy governs the submission of community service hours. For service hours to be approved and added to a student's comprehensive co-curricular transcript, submissions must meet the following criteria:

- A. Submissions
  1. Each submission must be completed individually by the student who performed the service.
    - a. Student organization representatives are not allowed to input hours on behalf of their members.
    - b. Submissions must be completed one day at a time. For example, if a project took a week to complete, please submit the hours that were completed each day.
  2. Hours must be submitted within 2 months of service completion to accommodate agency record keeping. Submissions outside of the 2 months will automatically be denied.
  3. Submissions must include:
    - a. A detailed experience (two to three sentences) of the service performed, and how the service directly impacts a community rather than advancing an individual's agenda and meets SHSU's definition of Public Service.
      1. SHSU's definition of Public Service:

- a. Public Service includes community outreach and volunteerism in which university entities (colleges, departments, faculty, staff, and students) provide expertise, resources, and support to or for communities and the general public. Note that community service is sometimes NOT voluntary, but a mandatory sentence, and we, therefore, avoid using the term “community service.”
- b. The community agency served (if applicable, e.g., Huntsville Public Library).
- c. Location where the service was performed (e.g., Huntsville, Conroe, etc.).
- d. Verification contact information.
  - 1. Submissions must contain a verification contact of a person that is directly connected with the agency where the service was completed or who falls under one of the criteria listed below.
    - a. If not directly affiliated with a community agency, the following contacts will be allowed to provide service hour verification:
      - i. Student organization officer – must be listed as an officer on the OrgLINK roster. General organization members cannot verify hours.
      - ii. SHSU Faculty/Staff/Student Employees - must be an employee of the office/department/program through which hours were completed.
    - b. Verification email must be the office email (e.g., department@shsu.edu, not xxx000@shsu.edu).
  - 2. Student organization advisors should only be listed if they are directly affiliated with the service hours/agency.
- e. If a student organization has multiple members of the organization present for a single service project, they can provide a list of students and hours worked to the Department of Student Involvement for verification.
  - 1. Email the list with the following information to [getinvolved@shsu.edu](mailto:getinvolved@shsu.edu):
    - a. Students’ first and last name.
    - b. Hours served.
    - c. Agency through which service was completed.
    - d. Location.
    - e. Date of service.
  - 2. Students will also be required to submit all hours individually through OrgLINK. Approvals will be based on the list submitted via email after the full list is confirmed by the verification contact

(if submitted within the approved timeframe and if meeting all other submission requirements).

**B. Review**

1. Submissions must be reviewed by a representative of the Department of Student Involvement.
2. The following items, or anything similar, will not be approved unless previously approved by the Department of Student Involvement:
  - a. Attending a student organization meeting/social event.
  - b. Donation of money/items.
  - c. Services completed for family members, friends, or self (i.e., babysitting siblings, giving rides, etc.).
3. If hours are denied for any reason, a comment will be placed on the service hour submission in OrgLINK detailing the reason for denial and students will be notified via their SHSU email account.
4. Students who feel that their hours were wrongly denied may submit an appeal by emailing [getinvolved@shsu.edu](mailto:getinvolved@shsu.edu).

**Student Organization T-shirt & Promotional Item Approvals**

All student organizations are required to have t-shirts and printed promotional items approved by the Department of Student Involvement prior to purchasing and distribution unless the organization aligns with Club Sports or FSL. All Club Sports and FSL organizations will need to seek approval through their respective departments. The following criteria must be met for approval:

- A. Design must be appropriate – no drugs/alcohol, no derogatory language.
- B. Design must be for a student organization in good standing with the university
  1. The Department of Student Involvement does not approve designs for other campus departments.
- B. If utilizing any form of 'SHSU' or 'Sam Houston' in the design, the shirt must meet additional branding guidelines set forth by the university's Integrated Marketing and Communications (IMC) Division.
  1. IMC has final approval for designs utilizing university branding. Although the Department of Student Involvement may approve a design, there may be additional changes required by IMC before the design can be printed based on branding standards.
  2. University branding guidelines
    - a. University branding guidelines extend to all possible merchandise or promotional items that student organizations purchase and/or distribute (i.e., t-shirts, lanyards, tablecloths, banners, stickers, keychains, etc.) and must go through proper university approval.
- C. If utilizing any form of university branding in the design, the t-shirts must be purchased through an approved vendor of the university. You can find a list of approved vendors on the SHSU Athletics website.
  1. If the t-shirt design does not have any reference to Sam Houston State University, the student organization may use any vendor of their choosing.

- D. To request approval for a design, students will need to email a copy of their design (jpg, png, pdf) to [getinvolved@shsu.edu](mailto:getinvolved@shsu.edu). If there are two sides to the design, students will need to include both sides for review.

### **Student Organization Conduct and Discipline**

- A. Any member of the university community may file a complaint regarding a recognized student organization when they feel that the student organization has failed to comply with university policies. Complaints regarding FSL or Club Sports will be forwarded to those respective areas.
  - 1. University staff will review complaints regarding the Student Organization Policy, student organization constitutions, and other low-level university policies.
  - 2. All complaints regarding the Student Code of Conduct, other high-level conduct violations, or alleged violations of law will be reported to the Dean of Students' Office or the Office of Equity and Title IX as necessary.
- B. Complaints may be filed with Student Involvement through the Student Organization Conduct-Grievance Form located on OrgLINK.
- C. University staff may investigate the complaint, and if a hearing is needed, they will determine the proper hearing body for the case or refer it to the proper department
  - 1. University staff may investigate the alleged violations, and notify the student organization in writing of any possible policy violations.
  - 2. The student organization will then receive the opportunity to review the allegations and provide any relevant information on their behalf. The organization will be requested to set up a meeting to review information about their case with a university staff member.
- D. After the review, university staff will determine if the student organization is responsible for any violations of university policies. If the group is found responsible, university staff may impose sanctions that include any of the following:
  - 1. Suspensions of the rights of the organization to:
    - a. Use university facilities.
    - b. Sponsor any activity.
    - c. Participate in campus affairs.
  - 2. Suspension of Recognition or Placement on Conditional Status
    - a. An organization placed on Suspension of Recognition may not function on or off campus in any manner and the general rights of recognized student organizations are withdrawn.
    - b. An organization placed on Conditional Status will be required to work with university staff to achieve compliance to become recognized.
    - c. A timeline for suspension or conditional status is at the discretion of university staff and will be for a stated period of time.
  - 3. Restorative Practices
    - a. Instruct the organization to present an acceptable solution for restoration or university staff will dictate an acceptable solution for

restoration.

- E. The organization will be informed, in writing, of the decision by university staff, and a copy of the decision will remain on file with the department.
- F. Appeals:
  - 1. The student organization will have the opportunity to accept or appeal the decision made by university staff.
  - 2. Student organizations wishing to appeal this decision will do so through the Director of Student Involvement, Director of Campus Recreation, or the Dean of Students, or their designee.
  - 3. Written notice of appeal must be received by the appeal officer within 5 business days after the decision. An appeal is not simply a rehearing of the original case. An appeal must be based on:
    - a. Whether or not a fair hearing was afforded. A fair hearing includes notice of the alleged misconduct, and an opportunity to present evidence.
    - b. Whether or not the sanctions levied were appropriate to the offense.
    - c. Whether or not the finding was supported by the evidence.
    - d. Whether or not new evidence is introduced that was not available at the time of the hearing.
  - 4. Both parties, at the discretion of the appeal officer, may submit oral or written arguments, to support their positions. For the appeal to be considered, the appealing party must submit all necessary documentation, including written arguments, when appropriate, to the appeal officer within 5 business days of giving notice of appeal.
  - 5. The appeal officer may approve, reject, modify the decision, or remand the matter to the original hearing officer for reconsideration. The appeal officer shall respond to the appeal within 10 business days after all the documentation was received and all testimony was heard.
- G. University staff reserves the right to adjudicate matters not outlined in any policy related to student organization policies and may adjudicate matters as necessary.
- H. Any matters related to hazing will be investigated and adjudicated, as necessary, by the Dean of Students' Office.

### **Procedure for Amendment**

Amendments to the Student Organization Policy may be initiated by any member of the university community through the Department of Student Involvement. The department will forward the amendments through the appropriate channels for review.