GENERAL POLICIES & STUDENT RULES

Student Organization Recognition

Student Rule 41 states that, "Student organizations may be officially recognized when formed for purposes that are consistent with the philosophy and goals that have been developed for the creation and existence of Texas A&M University. Approval for recognition is granted by the Vice President for Student Affairs through the Director of Student Activities. In order to be recognized and to retain official recognition, student organizations must meet certain requirements. Student organizations complying with the following conditions shall enjoy the privileges associated with the status of being officially recognized by the university including use of University name, University facilities for meetings, University logo and trademarks, and University property for concessions."

More detailed information about these recognition and membership policies can be found at http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule41

Student Rule 41 Conditions

Some conditions of recognition are briefly described below:

- Have an approved faculty or staff advisor for the organization.
- Complete the annual recognition process through the Department of Student Activities.
- Deposit and withdraw all funds through the SOFC and follow all SOFC policies and procedures.
- Avoid duplication of mission or purpose with other organizations.
- Be open in membership unless otherwise permitted under federal law.
- Appoint officers who are in good standing with the university and maintain the minimum eligibility and GPR requirements to be leaders of student organizations (2.00 for undergraduates, 2.5 for first professional students, and 3.00 for graduate students).

Activities of Recognized Student Organizations

Student Rule 42 states that, "The university is a forum for ideas and their exchange. Such exchange can only occur on a scholarly plane if good order is maintained and standards of decorum and good behavior are recognized by all. The university recognizes that some activities will have audiences of a single class, seminar or organization, and that others will be addressing themselves to a wider spectrum of the university community." There are several student rules specific to the activities of student organizations, including:

- All student organizations must have their events reviewed by their advisor.
- If a student organization enters into a contract for a program, performance, speaker, etc. for an all-university audience (one advertised outside the membership of the organization), that contract must be reviewed by the organization advisor, Department of Student Activities, and university-wide Contract Administration.
- The university prohibits the use of any of its symbols, insignias or other identifying marks in any political endorsements, campaigns, or elections.
- The university reserves the right to cancel any event it deems likely to cause an interruption in the university's orderly activities.
- No organization may use the institution's name without the express authorization of the institution, except to identify the organization's affiliation.
- Student organizations must seek advance approval to use university marks on commercial products or service promotions through the Office of Collegiate Licensing.

For more detailed information about these rules, please visit http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule42
Freedom of Expression

Student Rule Appendix XI states that, "Texas A&M University is committed to providing an educational and work climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual. In fulfilling its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, it encourages the free exchange of ideas. The university will protect the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution. Texas A&M University maintains its right to regulate reasonable time, place and manner restrictions concerning acts of expression and dissent."

Ideas or expressions put forth in expressive activities are not necessarily the views of Texas A&M University, its officers, administrators, or leaders, unless otherwise noted.

Forums and Reservable Space

The properties of the university are designated as traditional public forums, designated public forums, limited public forums, or non-public forums. Student organizations can access all of those areas except non-public forums for their expressive activity. (Examples of non-public forums include classrooms, residence hall rooms, faculty and staff offices, academic buildings, administration buildings, medical treatment facilities, libraries, and research and computer laboratories.) Availability of space for student organization use may also be limited by distance requirements, crowd placement restrictions, and security concerns. For a more detailed explanation of the difference between these types of forums, please see http://student-rules.tamu.edu/append11.

Rudder Fountain Area, Lawrence Sullivan Ross Statue Area, and the West Mall Area are "reservable free speech areas" and can be reserved at the request of students and non-students for expressive activity. The act of confirming a reservation will ensure the availability of space. Please note that sound equipment is prohibited at the Lawrence Sullivan Ross Statue Area or West Mall Area, and the volume of any sound equipment used at the Rudder Fountain Area must be kept at a level that would not interfere with any academic or other program taking place in nearby buildings.

Disruptive Activity

According to Student Rule Appendix I, disruptive activity is defined as any of the following:

- Obstruction or restraining the passage of persons in an exit, entrance or hallway of any building.
- Seizing control of any building or portion of a building for the purpose of interfering with any university-authorized activity.
- Preventing or attempting to prevent by force or violence or the threat of force or violence, any lawful assembly authorized by the university.
- Disrupting by force or violence or the threat of force or violence, a lawful assembly in progress.
- Obstructing or restraining the passage of any person at an exit or entrance to the university or property or attempting to prevent by force or violence or the threat of force or violence the ingress or egress of any persons to or from said property.

Student organizations are prohibited from conducting disruptive activity as defined above on the Texas A&M University campus.

For more information about disruptive activity violations, please see http://student-rules.tamu.edu/append1
The guidelines for expressive activity of student organizations are listed below:

- **Disruptive Activity:** Obstruction, disruption or interference with classes, research, administrative functions or other university activities is not permitted. Likewise, infringement on the rights of others is prohibited.

- **Reasonable Access:** It is important to provide reasonable access to, and exit from, any office, classroom, laboratory or building. Likewise, vehicular and pedestrian traffic should not be obstructed.

- **Picketing:** Picketing in an orderly manner outside of university buildings may be permitted. Such activities should not become disruptive nor should they impede access. Picketing is not permitted inside campus buildings.

- **Literature:** Literature may be distributed in traditional and designated free speech areas. Such activities should not become disruptive nor should they impede access.

- **Symbolic Protest:** Displaying a sign, gesturing, wearing symbolic clothing or otherwise protesting silently is permissible unless it is a disruptive activity or impedes access. In addition, such acts should not block the audience's view or prevent the audience from being able to pay attention.

- **Noise:** Making sustained or repeated noise in a manner that substantially interferes with a speaker's ability to communicate his/her message is not permitted. Noise levels should not interfere with classes, meetings or activities in progress or the privacy of residence hall students.

- **Force or Violence:** Any attempt to prevent a university activity or other lawful assembly by the threat or use of force or violence is not permissible.

- **Presenting Identification:** In accordance with the Texas Education Code, it is unlawful for any person on any property either owned or controlled by the university to refuse to identify him/herself to a university official in response to a request. For the purpose of these rules a person identifies him/herself by presenting student or faculty/staff ID card or state issued ID card.

- **Damage to Property:** Any damage to university or personal property in the course of, or as a result of, an expressive activity is prohibited. Care should be taken to ensure that university and personal property is not damaged or destroyed. This includes the campus lawns, shrubs and trees.

- **Guiding Boundaries:** All individuals participating in expressive activities are expected to comply with state and federal law, municipal ordinances, *Texas A&M University Student Rules* and the above guidelines. Failure to do so may result in immediate removal from the campus and any other appropriate action by university officials and/or University Police.
What is Hazing?

According to Student Rule Appendix VI, "hazing" is defined as any intentional, knowing or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include students at an educational institution or university rules.

Examples of hazing may include:

- Any type of physical brutality.
- Any type of activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of mental or physical harm.
- Any activity involving forced consumption of a food, liquid, alcohol beverage, drug, or other substance subjecting the student to risk of harm.
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, subjects the student to extreme mental stress or humiliation, or adversely affects the mental health of the student.
- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to violate local, state, or federal laws or university rules.

Hazing:
Consequences and Alternatives

Both individuals and organizations are subjected to harsh legal and university penalties for engaging in hazing, soliciting or encouraging hazing practices, or knowingly or recklessly permitting hazing to occur. Please note that hazing may have occurred regardless of whether or not the intent was to harm an individual, and regardless of whether or not the student agrees to the activity. Detailed information about hazing offenses, penalties, and legal issues can be found at http://student-rules.tamu.edu/append6

A student organization can suffer great consequences for hazing, but the Department of Student Activities recognizes and appreciates the value of formal and informal initiation processes for new members of student organizations. There are numerous creative ways to orient new members in challenging and positive manners, without engaging in hazing practices. To envision alternative practices for your organization, consider the ultimate goals of your orientation or initiation activity. Here are some examples of goals and relevant activities:

- Unity: Have the members of your organization work together on a community service project, or engage in team-building activities like visiting a ropes course. Focus on achieving group cohesiveness and communication.
- Problem-Solving Skills: Have new members and old members collaborative brainstorm areas of improvement for the organization and plan solutions or objectives for the upcoming year.
- Mentorship: Develop a peer mentor program within your organization.
- Friendship: Plan special events for the entire organization to gather and get to know each other. Have a "membership circle" where old and new members can express what membership in the organization means to them.
- Organizational History: Invite an older member to speak about the foundation, special traditions, and prominent former members of the organization.
- Knowledge: Have leaders of affiliated organizations (e.g. speakers from national Greek systems) speak about the governance, expectations, and goals of the overall system.

Hazing is sometimes defended as a way to teach respect, develop discipline, and strengthen bonds between members. Consider that respect must be EARNED - not taught. Victims of hazing offenses rarely report having respect for those that caused them harm. Even if "nothing goes wrong", hazing is a form of victimization that will breed mistrust, apathy, and alienation instead of discipline or friendship. Instead, you should focus on developing orientation or initiation processes that are welcoming, goal-oriented, safe, and affirming to new members!

Student Organizations found in violation of hazing are recorded and published each semester in The Battalion and on our website.
Title IX

Texas A&M University strives to maintain a work and educational environment free from discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and State laws. Individuals are encouraged to report all unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Please do not wait to report conduct of concern until it becomes sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent harassment. University officials can take proactive steps to address conduct, perhaps prevent conduct from continuing or escalating, and/or to protect or otherwise assist the recipient of the conduct.

A student who witnesses, is subjected to, or is informed about incidents of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment (including sexual violence), and/or related retaliation has the option to file a Title IX complaint to the designated official who handles alleged violations perpetrated by students, faculty, staff, or unrelated third parties.

More Information on Title IX

For more information regarding the filing and processing of a sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct report, please visit:
- [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule47](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule47)
- [https://urc.tamu.edu/compliance/SitePages/Title%20IX.aspx/](https://urc.tamu.edu/compliance/SitePages/Title%20IX.aspx/)
Tailgating

Tailgating events take place on campus for various purposes, including fellowship, fundraising, and sharing the Aggie Spirit. When your organization is planning a tailgate there are several key resources to consider and utilize:

- [tailgating.tamu.edu](http://tailgating.tamu.edu)
- Texas A&M Student Rules on Alcohol
- Alcohol at Events Guidelines
- Event Form on Maroon Link

While tailgates can be fun and successful without it, should your organization decide to have alcohol at your tailgate, you will want to review and be familiar with the student rule on alcohol (linked above), particularly the section on recognized student organization events. This rule outlines several requirements of events involving alcohol, including but not limited to having a closed event, and the use of either BYOB or Third Party Vendor guidelines (more information can be found in the rule and in our alcohol at events guidelines, both linked above). It is also important to always remember that organization money can never be used to purchase alcohol.

It is important to note that some components of the student rule cannot be fully satisfied due to certain tailgating regulations (found in tailgating website linked above). For example, a tailgate may not be a fully closed event, in that you cannot rope off or fully control entrance into your tailgating area. However, you are expected to maintain reasonable control over access and egress to and from your tailgate. In situations such as this, you will want to consider the spirit or purpose of the rule, or component thereof. The reasoning for requiring a closed event is to have control over who is present with the alcohol and who is consuming the alcohol. The navigation of these regulations may seem difficult, but the utilization of an Event Form on Maroon Link is an excellent resource to aid in your tailgate planning process.

The submission and completion of an Event Form on Maroon Link and process is required of any event involving alcohol. These forms are due at least two weeks prior to your event. Given the high-risk nature of a tailgate involving alcohol, the earlier you are able to fully complete and submit your form, the better of your tailgate will be. This Event Form on Maroon Link review process will allow you to work with a professional in the department of Student Activities to effectively comply with university rules and mitigate serious risks inherent in any tailgate.
Eligibility for Concessions

To be eligible to conduct concessions, you must either be a recognized student organization or a TAMU department. Recognized student organizations seeking concessions permits must have an up-to-date signature card on file with the SOFC and must not have exceeded five (5) days of concessions per calendar month. It is possible to request an extension to this guideline by contacting the Concessions Administrator at (979) 458-4371.

A concessions permit is NOT required for the following types of activities:

- Items are advertised "for sale" or "wanted" in traditional, designated or temporary public forums.
- Distribution of flyers or other promotional materials in traditional, designated or temporary public forums.
- A recognized student organization (including residence halls) sells items to only its members:
  - T-Shirts, apparel, jewelry, or other items which bear the name or insignia identifying the student organization.
  - Soft drinks and other party refreshments sold to members only (not the university at large), so long as the concessions are distributed in a manner that does not conflict with local, state, or federal laws.
  - Admission tickets to events for members only.
- A university contract that reflects the inclusion of concessions with the contract and the proposed concession falls within the scope of the contract. It is important to note that this applies to University departments only.
- Performances that are linked to a University department whose primary focus is to further the development of entertainment and performing arts.
- Career/job interviews linked to the Texas A&M University Career Center or a specific college's career fair/event.
- Conferences and other closed events on campus in which concessions occur within the confines of the conference or event that is neither open to the university at large nor occurring in a public area of campus.

Please note that all of the above exceptions are still limited to the day and location of the event.

Concessions requests must comply with the Texas A&M University advertising guidelines as outlined in the Student Organization Manual and the Student Rules. Also, any concessions permit request involving Texas A&M University Residence Halls is subject to the guidelines contained in the Texas A&M Residence Hall Lounge Use and Solicitation Guidelines. Approval from the Athletic Department is required for a permit to be granted for solicitation in an area controlled by the Athletic Department during athletic events.
**Review of Concessions Requests**

When reviewing your form, the Department of Student Activities will check to ensure that your request meets all of the following conditions:

- Any sales activity conducted by a recognized student organization on Texas A&M University property must further the mission and purpose of the organization.
- Any items offered for sale or distribution that carry a licensed mark for Texas A&M University must have the approval of Licensing & Trademarks in the Office of Business Development. Sample of artwork must be attached to the concession form.
- Any items offered for sale or distribution by a recognized student organization must be acquired at wholesale by the organization and sold at retail or distributed from a current student organization or university department inventory. Merchandise may be purchased on contract with return privileges or received on consignment. For student organizations, records of these transactions must be on file in the Student Organization Finance Center (SOFC).

Your student organization may contract with non-university commercial vendors to conduct concessions activities only when the following conditions are met:

- The recognized student organization is represented at the table/sales for the duration of the activity.
- All funds collected during the sales activity are deposited in the organization’s SOFC account or other University account as stated in Student Rule 41.1.3.
- There is a benefit to the recognized student organization.

Sales by non-profit, non-student organizations authorized to use Texas A&M University licensed marks (Aggie Moms’ Clubs, A&M Clubs, The Association of Former Students, The 12th Man Foundation, special interest former student clubs, etc.) whose resources are pledged to a Texas A&M University department or a recognized student organization in their 501c3 application or University approved charters shall be allowed if the merchandise or items for distribution are the property of the organization and are not in conflict with those provided by TAMU-contracted vendors.

**Concession forms turned in less than two full business days prior to the start of the concession will not be accepted. Emergency requests for a concessions permit may be conditionally approved, but only at the discretion of the Concessions Administrator.**

Your organization is responsible for printing a copy of the emailed permit to keep with you at all times during your concession activity.
Conducting Approved Concessions

A permit shall be valid only for the merchandise, date(s), time(s), and the location(s) specified therein. You must retain a copy of your concessions permit at all times during the activity, and a sign indicating the student organization sponsoring the concession must be posted at the location. Student members of the organizations must staff the table at all times. All concessions activities must take place from behind the designated and scheduled table. The use of sound (TV’s, stereos, sound system, etc.) may be restricted and prior permission must be obtained. By conducting an approved concessions activity, your organization agrees to be respectful of and not intrude upon the rights of others during the course of sales or other transactions.

Guidelines for sales on campus are as follows:

- All sales transactions must be documented by a receipt. The organization must issue a receipt to each customer and also keep a copy of each receipt for organizational records.
- All sales should be conducted as cash or check transactions. Student organization concessions may not be conducted using credit card transactions unless prior approval has been obtained through the SOFC.
- If your organization is selling items displaying the Texas A&M University licensed marks and did not working with a TAMU-licensed vendor, you must fill out a License Waiver form for Collegiate Licensing and supply a sample.
- The sale or distribution of a food item must comply with Food Distribution requirements provided by the Texas A&M Environmental Health & Safety Department.
- If your organization is raising funds for an external organization, proof of authorization from that charity (“beneficiary letter”) must be attached to the Concessions Permit Request Form.

All money that is collected each day must be deposited into the organization’s SOFC account by the end of the business day on which the concession was held. The student organization must retain a copy of the deposit slip for record keeping purposes. A night lock box at the SOFC will allow safe keeping of money over the weekend or holiday periods. Failure to deposit all money in a timely manner may result in a suspension of your SOFC and Concessions privileges.

Failure to comply with any of the above guidelines will result in the immediate cancellation of the concessions permit and the student organization may forfeit further concessions privileges. In addition to the revoking of a permit, the University Concessions Committee may take other actions when the concessionaire does not abide by the guidelines, such as:

- Not permit the recognized student organization to conduct any future sales or solicitation on campus for a specified time.
- Recommend to the Director of Student Activities that the student organization be called before the Student Organization Hearing Board for a disciplinary hearing.
- Recommend to the Director of Student Activities that the student(s) involved in a Concessions Guidelines infraction be charged with a violation of University Rules and therefore subject to disciplinary action.

Rejection/ Revocation

Requests for a permit may be rejected or a permit may be revoked by the Department of Student Activities for justifiable reasons, including but not limited to:

- Failure to comply with the basic requirements as outlined.
- Faulty merchandise.
- Sales violate any existing University contracts.
- Sales are conducted outside the area(s) authorized.
- Unsanitary conditions or procedures.
- Misrepresentation of the article or service offered for sale.
- Falsification of information on the application of the permit.
- The activity interferes with the educational mission of the University.
- The activity promotes the use and/or abuse of any alcoholic beverage or violates university rules concerning alcohol.
- The activity impedes normal traffic flow and use, or the ingress or egress from the building(s) and/or area(s).
- Concession forms turned in less than two full business days prior to the start of the event.

Appeals of the decisions of the Concessions Administrator must be submitted in writing within three (3) days of notice of the denial and may be directed to the chairperson of the University Concessions Committee.