

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION</b> Student Affairs and Academic Support	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> STAF 3.05
<b>POLICY TITLE</b> Hazing	
<b>SCOPE OF POLICY</b> Columbia Campus	<b>DATE OF REVISION</b> June 20, 2025
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b> Vice President for Student Affairs	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE</b> Student Life

## **PURPOSE**

This policy outlines campus policies pertaining to hazing, including what activities may constitute hazing and procedures to report hazing at the University of South Carolina Columbia campus.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Hazing:** Any act, occurring on or off university property, by one person or acting with others, directed against an individual when both of the following apply:

- The person knew or should have known that the act in question would endanger the physical health or safety of the other person or a reasonable person would appreciate that the act in question would cause immediate or future mental distress for the impacted individual; and
- The act was associated with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, participating in, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any student group.

**Student group:** A number of persons associated with each other who either maintain status as a student organization in accordance with STAF 3.10 or a number of persons who do not maintain status as a student organization (e.g. athletic teams, musical or theatrical ensembles, etc.).

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The University of South Carolina is committed to providing a safe educational environment for everyone, cultivating a community that fosters respect for the dignity and rights of all persons. The University is committed to the eradication of hazing and has implemented research-informed, campus wide prevention programs designed to reach all members of the institution including students, faculty, and staff. Disciplinary action will be taken against any group or individual affiliated with the University found in violation of this policy.

A. Activities that would constitute hazing include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Submission of members or prospective members to situations that a reasonable person would understand to be potentially dangerous or hazardous.
2. Activities which have a foreseeable potential for resulting in personal injury.

3. An activity that would have a potential to cause:
  - a. Mental anxiety or distress – any activity that would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as: verbal abuse, sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, excessive cleaning and errand-running
  - b. Public embarrassment - an action that causes embarrassment, humiliation, or ridicule, regardless of a person's willingness to participate
  - c. Panic
  - d. Unreasonable interference with a student's academic progress or academic performance
  - e. Experience or observance of forced or coerced sexual acts, whether real or simulated
4. Acts of physical violence which include beating, branding, paddling, whipping, and the link as well as exposure to the elements (activities that include having individuals participate in physical acts of exertion in extreme heat, having members hold ice or other frozen objects, sleeping outside, etc.).
5. Tests of Endurance:
  - a. Calisthenics
  - b. Forced runs
  - c. Forced workouts
  - d. Line ups – Acts where individuals are forced, coerced, or encouraged to line up in any formation and be questioned on information either through physical or verbal threats.
6. Unwanted Ingestion of any substance including, but not limited to:
  - a. Alcohol
  - b. Condiments
  - c. Drugs
  - d. Food
  - e. Tobacco

- f. Animals, alive or dead
- 7. Forced Personal Servitude Activities that interfere with one's ability to enjoy time outside of organization activities or unduly interferes with one's ability to succeed academically; this can include, but is not limited to the following:
  - a. Cleaning
  - b. Driving
  - c. Running errands
  - d. Being on call for members
- 8. Unusual Attire – wearing apparel which is conspicuous, embarrassing, and not normally in good taste, and/or inappropriate for the time of year.
- 9. Aiding in any form of academic misconduct.

#### B. Student Group Initiation Ceremonies and Activities

Student groups shall be permitted certain initiation ceremonies and activities, which when examined by the ordinary University student, would seem reasonable under the circumstances and justified in view of the purpose for which they are conducted.

#### C. Adjudication of Hazing

- 1. Adjudication of hazing is governed by the Student Code of Conduct ([STAF 6.26](#)). An individual or group is responsible for hazing if they personally take part or contribute to the actions described in this section or if they know hazing will occur or is occurring and does nothing to stop and report it to the appropriate university and legal authorities.
- 2. It shall not constitute a defense to the charge of hazing that the participants:
  - a. Took part voluntarily
  - b. Gave consent to the conduct
  - c. Voluntarily assumed the risks or hardship of the activity
  - d. That the conduct was not part of an official student group event or sanctioned or approved by the student group
  - e. That the conduct was not done as a condition of membership in the student group

- f. That no injury in fact was suffered

3. A person commits the offense of hazing and is subject to discipline if the person:

- a. Took part voluntarily
- b. Engages in hazing
- c. Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing
- d. Recklessly permits hazing to occur
- e. Has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident
- f. Has firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report that knowledge to the appropriate official of the institution

4. An organization commits a hazing offense and is subject to discipline, if the organization:

- a. Took part voluntarily
- b. Condones, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid in hazing - if an officer, authorized representative, or any combination of members, prospective members, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing

5. Retaliation against any individual who reports a hazing violation or suspected hazing violations to the university or law enforcement official would be considered a violation as defined by policy [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#).

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- A. If there is an immediate threat to a student's health and safety, please call the University of South Carolina Police Department at (803-777-4215).
- B. To initiate a complaint for alleged hazing, submit an Incident Report through the Office of Student Conduct: <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofSouthCarolina>
- C. Individuals may also call the Hazing Hotline (803-777-5800) or The [Rave Guardian](#) App to report alleged hazing.
- D. All supervisors, administrators, employees, and university officials are responsible for promptly reporting incidents of hazing that come to their attention to the Dean of Students.

## **PROCESS FOR INVESTIGATION**

The Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity is committed to providing a reasonably prompt, fair, impartial, and equitable resolution of all reports and allegations of hazing. Upon receipt of a report, a trained staff member in the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity or another trained designee will facilitate an investigation and provide written communication to a representative of the organization.

A single group representative will attend the initial administrative conference and be notified of the conference date and time through their university email. During this initial conference, the appointed investigator will discuss the process going forward, whether it be a Partnership Process in which the organization does an internal investigation and reports back or an Office of Student Conduct investigation in which the Conduct Administrator leads the information-gathering process. Advisors are welcome to be present to support the group.

## **PREVENTION & AWARENESS**

The University of South Carolina is committed to the prevention of prohibited conduct and takes a comprehensive approach to hazing prevention that combines education, clear policies, and accessible reporting resources. Education and training is provided and available to all students, faculty, and staff. Education may include bystander intervention, ethical leadership, the promotion of strategies for building positive group cohesion without hazing, and how to report hazing to the university. These programs aim to:

- Increase awareness of how the institution defines hazing and investigates related incidents;
- Promote active bystander intervention and ethical leadership;
- Encourage inclusive and healthy teambuilding practices;
- Provide clear guidance on how to report suspected hazing; and
- Foster understanding of institutional policies and applicable state and federal laws.

Prevention and education programs are coordinated by the appropriate university offices, including but not limited to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Leadership and Service Centers, Athletics, Residence Life, and Student Conduct. The specific content and format of these programs vary annually based on campus assessment data, stakeholder input, and evolving research-informed best practices. Program components may include:

- Online and in-person educational modules;
- Leadership development workshops;
- Anti-hazing pledge and awareness campaigns
- Collaborative initiatives across university departments and division

## **RELATED UNIVERSITY AND STATE POLICIES**

[S.C Code of Laws section 16-3-510 and 16-3-520](#)

[S.C. Code of Laws section 59-63-275](#)

[S.C. Code of Laws section 59-101-200](#)

[Public Law No.: 118-173P](#)

[S.C. Code of Laws section 59-101-210 \(a report of actual findings of violations related to formally affiliated student organization shall be provided online for the public\)](#)

[STAF 3.10 Student Organizations](#)

[STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Tucker Hipps Transparency Act](#)

#### **HISTORY OF REVISIONS**

<b>DATE OF REVISION</b>	<b>REASON FOR REVISION</b>
June 1, 1992	New policy approval
July 21, 2020	Content reviewed. Links updated. Language updated for comprehension.
June 23, 2025	Content reviewed. Links added. Updated with new information for compliance.