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# Hazing

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## Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University of Vermont that no member of the University community may participate or be involved in hazing activities.

Hazing means any act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a member of the University community in connection with joining, pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or gaining or maintaining membership in any group or organization that is recognized by the University, including varsity athletics teams, and that is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, socially or physically isolating, humiliating, intimidating, or demeaning the individual(s) or otherwise endangering their mental or physical health. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in such acts, and occurs regardless of the consent or willingness of a person to participate in the activity.

Hazing does not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extracurricular, or military training program goals, provided that (1) the goals are approved by the appropriate University official, such as a student organization's advisor or a team's head coach (for students), provided the official is an employee of the University, or the Office of the Provost (for employees); and (2) the activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the University, and typical and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

Information that any member of the University community or University recognized group or organization has allegedly violated this policy will be referred to the appropriate process for investigation and resolution:

- Individual students will be referred through the student conduct process for an alleged violation of this policy.
- Student Organizations, including varsity athletics teams, will be referred through the procedures outlined in the Student Organization Misconduct Operating Procedure.
- Faculty and staff will be referred to the appropriate review process in compliance with University policy or applicable collective bargaining agreement for any alleged violation of this policy.

- Faculty and staff recognized groups and organizations will be referred to the Office of the Provost for an alleged violation of this policy.

This policy is intended to be consistent with State law; it will be reviewed periodically and revised in light of legal developments.

## **Reason for the Policy**

The University of Vermont is first and foremost an educational institution. The University's hazing policy, prevention efforts, and response procedures for hazing incidents, must grow from, and embody, this educational mission.

Membership in University recognized groups and organizations can increase leadership and service potential; provide athletic, recreational, intellectual, and spiritual opportunities; and otherwise contribute positively to personal and social development. When membership is linked with involvement in hazing activities, the educational purpose of the endeavor is compromised and can endanger the health and safety of students or other university community members. Hazing is therefore strictly prohibited at the University of Vermont.

## **Applicability of the Policy**

This policy applies to all members of the University community and their guests, regardless of whether the behavior occurs on or off campus, as well as to all University recognized groups and organizations, and varsity athletic teams.

## **Policy Elaboration**

### **Understanding the Scope of Hazing Activities**

Members of University recognized groups and organizations and varsity athletic teams engage in a wide array of activities that positively nurture individual relationships, camaraderie, and team building; develop unity, connectedness, and a sense of belonging; and promote the development of self-esteem. However, because it is not always clear to individuals which activities are unacceptable and constitute hazing, leaders and members of groups are strongly encouraged to consult with the groups' advisers, coaches, or other University officials responsible for the program or activity in advance of any planned event.

A broad range of behaviors may be considered hazing. The range of activities cross a continuum from minor to more severe forms of conduct. Severity of the hazing can be measured both by the level of pressure to engage in the conduct (expecting, encouraging, urging, requiring, coercing, forcing, etc.) and the type of the behavior involved (behavior that is very unlikely to cause physical or psychological harm to behavior that is very risky and almost always will result in some degree of harm). Creating an expectation to participate in activities as a condition of joining, affiliating with, or maintaining membership in a group where harm *could* result is likely to be considered hazing.

Upon completion of a thorough investigation, determinations as to whether hazing occurred are made by the appropriate University official, hearing officer, or hearing body with due consideration of the relevant facts and circumstances.

For further information, the University has developed a Hazing Prevention and Education Resource [link forthcoming] to aid the campus community in identifying behaviors that may constitute hazing, or may lead to hazing.

## Definitions

*Hazing*: see Policy Statement above.

*Recognized Group or Organization*: As defined in the University's Group and Organization Recognition Policy.

*University Official*: any person employed by the University and/or acting on behalf of the University.

## Procedures

### Reporting Incidents of Hazing

University officials are required to report possible hazing incidents in a prompt and effective manner to University Police Services, as detailed in the contact information section of this Policy. Students and all other members of the University community are strongly encouraged to report possible hazing incidents as soon as possible to University Police Services.

The Chief of Police Services, or designee, will promptly take steps to investigate and respond to hazing reports consistent with the exercise of reasonable professional discretion, including the convening of responsible University administrators and notification of the Student Organization Misconduct Committee, as appropriate. The Student Organization Misconduct Committee is tasked with investigating whether the provisions of University policy have been violated, separate and apart from any determination by law enforcement as to whether alleged conduct meets the legal standard for hazing.

### Benefits to Those Who Report

Individuals who are victims of hazing and who truthfully report such activities shall not be individually charged with a violation of this Policy. Similarly, individuals who have knowledge of a hazing incident, but who did not participate, and truthfully report the activities shall not be individually charged with a violation of this Policy in relation to that particular incident.

When reviewing a case, consideration will be given to whether an organization or group has self-reported a hazing behavior and identified individuals who are responsible for the hazing to an appropriate University Official or UVM Police Services.

### Administrative Response

The University's response to hazing allegations will occur through the processes outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Student Organization Misconduct Operating

Procedure, the Staff Handbook, the Officers' Manual, or the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Students may also be subject to review of the same conduct for (1) violation of professional standards related to an academic program; (2) conduct standards associated with Athletics; (3) conduct standards associated with recognized student organizations; (4) Housing and Meal Plan Contract Terms and Conditions; (5) eligibility to participate in other University sponsored programs. Similarly, for employees, since hazing may violate the policy(ies) of more than one institutional governing body, the same incident may be referred to more than one hearing body or go through more than one process.

Recognized Groups and Organizations and varsity athletics teams may also be subject to suspension or revocation of University recognition for policy violations or while an investigation is on-going and until such time that the case is resolved.

University Police Services may refer conduct that may constitute a violation of criminal law to appropriate law enforcement officials, subject to the requirements of governing law.

### **Sanctions**

Hearing officials or bodies responsible for imposing sanctions upon individuals and/or organizations for violation of this policy may consider factors such as the following:

Nature of the offense, including whether aggravated conduct occurred and whether it is shown that the conduct was premeditated

- Severity of the harm or damage resulting from the offense
- Disciplinary history of the Respondent(s)/organization
- Whether the Respondent(s)/organization cooperated during the proceedings, responded honestly to questions, and promptly accepted responsibility for one's actions
- Whether the Respondent(s)/organization sought to threaten or purposefully intimidate a complainant, witnesses, or others involved in the University's disciplinary process
- Whether there was an active attempt to conceal or hide the violation(s)
- Any leadership role or seniority of the Respondent(s) in the organization relative to which hazing occurred, and/or at what level of the organization the hazing behavior was encouraged, endorsed, or otherwise sponsored
- Whether any offense involved behavior directed at a person's actual or perceived membership in a legally protected category as defined in UVM Policy V.7.4.9, Equal Opportunity in Educational Programs and Activities and Non-Harassment (<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/equaledu.pdf>).
- Sanctions imposed by other University reviews or hearings
- Whether a risk of continued harm, or threat of harm, to the campus community or individual members exists
- Whether there is convincing evidence that a Respondent was provoked or pressured into the situation, even though the Respondent made a conscious choice to participate
- Whether the organization and/or Respondent(s) have individually or collectively expressed a clear understanding of the severity of the offense, including resulting damage, injury or harm

- Whether the organization and/or Respondent(s) have individually or collectively taken steps to positively address their behavior, or otherwise take responsibility for their actions

Hearing officials or bodies responsible for imposing sanctions will do so exercising reasonable discretion in light of factors such as those just described above.

Examples of sanctions that may be imposed upon individuals are:

- Disciplinary suspension or dismissal, or suspension or termination of employment;
- Attendance at or creation of educational programs or other trainings;
- Appropriate reflection activities;
- Monetary Fines;
- Restitution; and/or
- Participation in alcohol, drug, or other counseling services

Examples of sanctions that may be imposed upon organizations that knowingly permit, authorize, or condone hazing are:

- Probation;
- Revocation or suspension of the organization’s existence or recognition;
- Attendance at or creation of educational programs or other trainings;
- Appropriate reflection activities;
- Restitution;
- Cancellation of some or all the organization’s activities or events (such as intercollegiate or intramural sports contests); and/or
- Decrease in, or restriction of, the organization’s privileges

## Forms

None

## Contacts

**To Report an Incident of Hazing, Contact UVM Police Services:**

Emergency Reporting:	911
Non-Emergency Reporting:	656-3473
Anonymous Reporting:	<a href="#">Report a Crime</a>
Anonymous Tip Line:	<a href="#">Tip411</a> -or- 656-TIPS

**If you are concerned about the health or welfare of a student and would like to connect them with support, please fill out a [Concerning and/or Risky Event \(CARE\) Form](#) or contact:**

Dean of Students Office: 656-3380; [DeanofStudents@uvm.edu](mailto:DeanofStudents@uvm.edu); Nicholson House

**To seek confidential support if you have been the subject of hazing, please contact:**

Center for Health and Wellbeing (24/7):  
 - Counseling and Psychiatry Services (CAPS): 656-3340

- Student Health Services: 656-3350

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): [Invest EAP](#) – (802) 864-EAPØ (3270)

*Please note:* Counseling and Psychiatry Services, Student Health Services, and the Employee Assistance Program are designed to be confidential resources for individuals who report hazing incidents. Under current Federal law, CAPS and EAP are exempted from reporting these incidents to law enforcement. Medical clinicians in Student Health Services *are* required to report hazing incidents, although they may do so without providing identifying information about the reporter. Communications outside of the Center for Health and Wellbeing and EAP are not guaranteed to be confidential.

For more information about identifying behaviors that may constitute hazing, or may lead to hazing, please see the UVM Hazing Prevention and Education Resource [link forthcoming].

The University official responsible for oversight of the policy when a student or student organization commits a violation is the Vice Provost for Student Affairs. The University official responsible for oversight of the policy when a staff or faculty member, or staff or faculty organization, commits a violation is the Provost.

## Related Documents / Policies

Alcohol, Cannabis and Other Drug Use – Students Policy

<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/drugandalco.pdf>

Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) and Responsible Employees under Federal Law (“UVM Reporters”) – Designation of and Reporting By Procedure

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/riskmgm/campussecuruity.pdf>

Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf>

Discrimination and Harassment Policy

<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentharas.pdf>

Group and Organization Recognition Policy

[http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general\\_html/grouprecognition.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general_html/grouprecognition.pdf)

Hazing Prevention and Education Resource

[link forthcoming]

Minors; Reporting Abuse or Neglect of and Crimes Procedure

[http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general\\_html/abuse\\_minors.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/abuse_minors.pdf)

Sexual Harassment & Misconduct Policy

[http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general\\_html/sexharass.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/sexharass.pdf)

State of Vermont Hazing Law

<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/009/00570>

Student Organization Misconduct Investigation and Resolution Procedure

[http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general\\_html/studentorg.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/studentorg.pdf)

## Effective Date

As amended August 25, 2017

Approved by the President on May 31, 2017

Approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees on May 20, 2017