

Missouri
State

OFFICE of
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Student Organization Handbook

OFFICE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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Starting a New Organization

Missouri State University offers students a wide variety of ways to get involved on campus. Student Organizations are a great way to make connections and find individuals who have similar ideas and goals. Not only can you learn from each other, but you'll also have the opportunity to develop meaningful friendships and lasting networks. If you have an idea for an organization that is not currently developed, we'd love to help you get started.

Please be aware that this process is extensive and requires a substantial commitment from you. From start to finish, it could take several weeks or even months to get a new group officially recognized.

Students interested in starting a new organization should contact any member of the Co-Curricular Involvement team in the Office of Student Engagement. Please review the "Starting a New Organization" flowchart for a step-by-step guide to the process.

Minimum Standards for Recognition

Each student organization must have the following to be considered for recognition:

- A minimum of five members that are currently enrolled students at Missouri State, and the majority of members must be MSU students
- The executive office of President must be filled (all other offices are optional and left up to the individual organization's discretion)
 - *All officers must have and maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA.*
 - *All executive positions must be held by Missouri State University students.*
- A full-time faculty/staff member is required to fulfill the position of advisor
 - *Graduate Assistants and/or Teaching Assistants do not meet this requirement unless specified in their job description.*
- Each organization must develop a constitution document, which must be approved by the Office of Student Engagement and Student Government Association.
- Each organization must comply with University policies and regulations pertaining to student organizations.

To maintain recognition, the following must be completed annually by the President:

- The President must attend a Student Organization Orientation meeting each Fall semester
- Complete and submit an Annual Advisor Agreement form to the OSE

New Student Organization Process

If you are interested in starting a new organization on-campus, please follow the steps below. Please contact the Office of Student Engagement with questions.

Step 1: Meet with a member of the CCI Team

Contact the Co-Curricular Involvement (CCI) team in the Office of Student Engagement, (StudentOrganizations@missouristate.edu) to set up a meeting in which the registration process will be discussed.

Step 2: Select an Advisor and members for student organization

Student organizations must have one MSU full-time staff or faculty member serve as an advisor to the organization. Each organization must have a minimum of 5 MSU students as members.

Together you will develop a purpose for your organization.

Step 3: Create and submit a Constitution document

Students must create a Constitution using the template provided. Completed constitutions should be emailed to the CCI GA (StudentOrganizations@missouristate.edu) for review.

Once approved by our team, student organization constitutions will be presented to the Missouri State University's Student Government Association (SGA) for final review and approval. SGA will look to ensure that a prospective organization does not heavily overlap with other organizations, there isn't a large amount of risk associated with the organization, and the group's proposed constitution meets University standards. SGA will then approve the student organization for recognition by Missouri State University.

Step 4: Schedule/Attend a BearLink Training

When approved by SGA, you will be contacted by a member of the Co-Curricular Involvement team for information to set up a BearLink page for your student organization. BearLink is the online platform for all registered student organizations on campus.

Only after the approval of the Constitution AND the completed BearLink Training is the new organization officially recognized by the University. After completion of this process, student organizations are considered 'official'.

Step 5: Complete and submit registration paperwork

At your final BearLink Training, you will receive a copy of the Annual Advisor Agreement, to be completed and submitted back to the OSE.



1

Meet with CCI Team

2

Find an Advisor

3

Submit Constitution

4

Attend BearLink Training

5

Complete paperwork



Annual Registration

ALL student organizations are required to register annually with the Office of Student Engagement. The Annual Registration process allows organizations to update contact information with the OSE and on BearLink for students to utilize for recruitment purposes.

Student organization presidents must complete the Annual Registration process each Fall semester to maintain recognition for their organization for the current academic school year.

The following steps must be completed by the Annual Registration deadline noted above in order for the organization remain an active organization on campus:

1. Attend a mandatory Student Organization Re-Registration session (typically held in late August and September)
 - a. The president of the organization is required to attend this training session. In this training, you will learn about the policies/procedures which apply to student organizations, information on room reservations, and programs/services available to all registered student organizations.
 - b. This training will introduce BearLink, the student organization management system for Missouri State University, which allows organizations the opportunity to maintain their organization records and participate in an electronic community that all students are encouraged to utilize to find out about events and organizations on campus. This training will walk you through the many capabilities of BearLink to best support your organization.
2. Submit all required paperwork obtained at Student Organization Training.
 - a. Presidents will receive information regarding registration documents at the Student Organization Training. The documents completed include the Advisor Agreement Form, among other more specific forms, depending on your organization.

Failure to complete requirements will result in the organization being frozen, meaning that they will lose all of their privileges of registered organizations for the year. The organization will have the opportunity to un-freeze themselves the following re-registration period. For example, if your organization misses the Annual Re-Registration period, they will need to wait until the following year's re-registration period to re-establish their recognition.

Student Organization Constitution

Review Process

Organizations are encouraged to review their constitution and/or bylaws annually. With each update to the organization's constitution, **it must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Student Engagement and the Student Government Association**. Please follow the outlined steps below for ensuring a smooth review of your organization's constitution and/or bylaws:

1. Review organization's governing documents annually as directed in the most current document within your organization.
2. When making edits, submit your constitution and/or bylaws to the Office of Student Engagement via email to the Co-Curricular Involvement team.
3. The team will review the documents, ensuring their contents meet all requirements for the OSE.
 - a. Note: This process may occur multiple times until *all requirements are met* within the organization's constitution and the OSE has approved the final document. Do not get discouraged and please try to respond quickly when you hear from a member of the CCI team. This will ensure the process moves as quickly and seamlessly as possible.
 - b. Once the constitution is approved by the OSE, a team member will forward it to the Student Government Association's Internal Affairs Committee.
4. Once SGA's Internal Affairs Committee has approved the constitution, they will submit a resolution for establishment to the Senate of the Student Government Association. At a weekly meeting, the Senate will vote on the resolution. If the resolution passes, our staff will receive notification and will be in contact with the organization with further instructions.

Creating a Student Organization Constitution

You will find the Missouri State Student Organization Constitution template and example constitution on our [website](#). Please include each Article in your constitution. If you have any questions in regards to the constitution process, please contact the Co-Curricular staff (StudentOrganizations@missouristate.edu).

1. Text that is in RED must be included in the organization's constitution exactly as it appears in the template. The final constitution should not contain any red text.
2. Text that is underlined must be filled in with the appropriate information per the organization.
3. **Articles IV through VII must be completed thoroughly by the organization.**

Organization Status

Pending Organization

Students may start a new organization with the Office of Student Engagement. The new organizations will be considered in “Pending” status until all requirements are met to become an active registered student organization. To learn what is required to become a registered student organization, read below.

Registered Student Organization

For a student organization to be considered a registered organization, the following information must be made available to the Office of Student Engagement:

1. A constitution- submit to OSE for approval
2. Register with BearLink - be completed annually starting each August
3. Have a full-time Missouri State faculty or staff member to serve as the advisor
4. Annual attendance by the president at a Student Organization Orientation Meeting
5. Have a minimum of five Missouri State University student members
6. Privileges may include:
 - Use of open bulletin board space
 - Listing in University publications and /or web pages
 - Use of resources and official support from the Office of Student Engagement
 - Opportunity to request funding from SOFAC
 - Opportunity to reserve space through Event & Meeting Services
 - Opportunity to function formally as an MSU student organization, including but not limited to: holding meetings, holding events, participation in university events, etc.

If the Office of Student Engagement learns that a registered student organization does not have the minimum number of Missouri State student members, the organization will be considered frozen. Upon meeting the minimum requirement of five Missouri State student members, the student organization’s status will be restored to “registered” student organization. If the student organization does not meet the minimum requirement within one semester, they will maintain their frozen status until such time that they can meet the minimum requirements of a “registered” student organization.

Frozen Student Organization

Frozen student organizations are those that have met one or more of these conditions:

- Membership is less than five members
- Failure to attend a re-registration session for one year

All student organizations who wish to remain registered with the Office of Student Engagement must meet the minimum standards for recognition and complete the Annual Registration process each Fall. Failure of a student organization to maintain the standards or register the organization in the Fall semester will become frozen.

Inactive Student Organization

Student organizations who remain in a frozen status for 2 or more years will become inactive. Once a student organization becomes inactive, it must complete the new student organization process including approval of the constitution by the Office of Student Engagement and Student Government Association.

Leadership Development Opportunities

The Office of Student Engagement provides multiple training and workshop opportunities for the members, officers, and advisors of Registered Student Organizations. The following is a description of the programs available and suggested for student organizations to attend.

Student Organization Leadership Summit

ALL student organization executive board members are invited to this annual leadership development retreat. This two-day event will dive deeper into what it means to be a student organization leader—we'll discuss soft skills like effective communication, time management, conflict resolution, and more; as well as training you on harder skills like budgeting, fundraising, member recruitment & retention, and social media management.

Join us for this annual event to receive a special graduation cord for participants, in addition to a deeper understanding of your role as a student leader and the opportunity to network with other student leaders. For more information, reach out to the Office of Student Engagement.

MOState LEAD's *'Building Leaders for Tomorrow'* Series

Each spring semester, MOState LEAD (the OSE's leadership development program) hosts several topical leadership sessions to

Advisor Trainings

Advisors of student organizations are worth more than their weight in gold. An advisor can provide continuity, support student organizations, guide students through tough times, and enhance the good times. This opportunity provides current Missouri State University advisors with the support and information needed to find success and satisfaction in the position. It also gives potential advisors a taste of what advising entails.

The Office of Student Engagement will conduct an Advisor Training to inform and assist staff/faculty that advise student organizations on campus. Check the Office of Student Engagement website for the upcoming training and stay up to date on everything student organization related.

Leadership Opportunities

Student Activities Council

[Student Activities Council \(SAC\)](#) is the student programming board on campus. We are responsible for planning social, cultural and diverse events open to the entire student body. Our activities are funded through the student involvement fee, so we program for everyone and most of our events are free. SAC consists of an All Council, executive board, and committees, so there are many levels to become involved with and a lot of leadership opportunities. The executive board members are the people who run SAC. These 13 students are the “go to” people when it comes to SAC. They do it all, from running meetings and planning events to gaining experience with budgeting and growing as student leaders. They work closely with an advisor and really take charge to make events happen and SAC a great organization. If you are interested in SAC, come to our meetings in PSU 313 on Tuesdays at 4:00, stop by our office in PSU 115, or email us at sac@missouristate.edu

Student Government Association

[Student Government Association](#) serves as the official voice of the student body and offers numerous ways for students to get involved in bringing positive changes to Missouri State. Students interested in joining Senate can serve as one of two allotted representatives for any student organization or as a “senator at large” from their respective class or the student body. As a senator, students can become involved in a wide range of projects, serving on one of nine committees, ranging anywhere from health & wellness to academic affairs. SGA also offers students the opportunity to serve on one of six commissions (Sustainability, Elections, Wyrick, Interpersonal Violence Prevention, Communications, Senior Class Gift), each of which has a large impact on the campus community each year. A final opportunity offered to students through SGA is the chance to serve as one of seven members of the Campus Judicial Board, which is the highest acting judicial board for students.

STAR Awards

In 1996, Missouri State University hosted the first ever Student Talent and Recognition (STAR) Awards Ceremony. Each year the STAR Awards ceremony honors twenty-five outstanding student leaders and student organizations which are nominated by various organizations, students, faculty, and staff. Since its beginning, STAR Awards has recognized roughly 350 students, organizations, and advisors at Missouri State. The Application/Nomination packet becomes available at the beginning of the spring semester.

This occasion is best described as a business formal/cocktail event which provides an appetizer buffet and surrounds its guests with elegant décor.

For more information check out the [STAR Awards](#) page on the Office of Student Engagement website.

Student Organization Resources

The Office of Student Engagement recognizes there are a lot of important pieces to leading a student organization successfully. In hopes of making that job a little easier, we have compiled the following resources for your reference. Whether it be leading a meeting, maintaining a budget, or further information about BearLink, the following resources will hopefully make the job of leading your organization a much easier and effective experience.

Additional Forms - Planning a trip for your organization? Need an email address specifically for your organization? Want to apply for an office/locker space in the PSU? Find all the [Forms](#) you need right here.

Annual Registration Training - Want to look back at the PowerPoint slides from the Student Organization Orientation or SOFAC Training? Check the Office of Student Engagement website or email an Involvement Ambassador at OSEIA@missouristate.edu.

Budgeting - Do you have a budget for your organization? Check out the budgeting section on our [resources](#) page for a general budget that can be edited to fit the needs of your organization. This can also be helpful when creating your General Proposal for SOFAC funding!

Constitution - Need help writing your organization's [Constitution](#)? Check out this helpful guide and sample.

Mailing Labels - Get [mailing labels](#) for MSU students for approved mailings.

Missouri State Logo Usage - Apply for a [royalty fee waiver](#) for MSU logo usage. To access the document, reach out to the Director of the Office of Student Engagement, tbenson@missouristate.edu.

Parliamentary Procedure - Does your organization use [Robert's Rules of Order](#)? Check out this helpful tool with all of the information needed to facilitate discussion and make group decisions at your meetings. [Information adapted from University of Louisiana- Monroe, Staff Senate]

Room Reservations - Would you like to reserve a room on campus for an organization meeting? Planning an event? Check out the [Event and Meeting Services](#) website for more information.

Starting a New Organization - Are you interested in starting a Student Organization? Contact the Graduate Assistant for Co-Curricular Involvement in the Office of Student Engagement, studentorganizations@missouristate.edu with any questions.

Student Organization Email - Get a [Missouri State email address](#) specifically for your organization

Third Party Vendor Checklist- If your organization is planning a closed, alcoholic event that takes place in a bar or tavern where bartenders provided by the venue are responsible for serving alcohol, the [Event Registration Form](#) must be completed and approved 10 business days prior to the event.

Trip Registration - Is your student organization going on a trip 60 miles outside of Springfield or overnight? Complete the [Event Registration Form](#) and [Organization Trip & Activity Release Form](#) on BearLink under *Forms*.

Transitioning- Is your organization transitioning leadership? Do you have everything in order for a smooth transition? Check out this [PowerPoint](#) for tips on a smooth transition.

Organization Finances

Finances play a major role in the life of a student organization. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to know the basics about finances in a student organization. The following sections will cover student organization banking, tax exempt status, funding resources, organization budgeting, and fundraising.

Organization Banking

Each organization has the opportunity to receive a university budget number in order to charge university expenses to their account. For example, if an organization orders food from catering services, it can be billed to the organization account. In order to receive a budget number, the organization advisor must contact the Accounts Receivable Office at 836-5635.

Tax Exempt Status

While student organizations at Missouri State University are not automatically considered for tax exempt status, since they operate with a social, recreational, charitable or educational purpose, your organization may be eligible for tax-exempt status as a 501 (c)(3) organization with the government. There are various exemption requirements based on your category of organization. You need to determine the appropriate requirements for exemption based on your own organization. All tax-exempt/nonprofit status processes are carried out through the state and federal government. Missouri State University and the Office of Student Engagement are not involved with this process.

Organization Checking Account

Student organizations are **STRONGLY** discouraged to open a checking account using an individual's social security number. The financial burden of that account then rests with that individual and they become responsible for claiming any interest on the account on their own taxes. They also become responsible if there is a problem with the account, such as extra fees or unpaid bills. With such consequences in mind, the following process is a viable alternative without the personal financial burden.

Opening a checking account for your organization requires a two-step process:

Once you have received your organization's EIN, you will then need to do the following:

1. Acquire an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This is a nine-digit number that the Internal Revenue Service uses to identify those required to file various business tax returns. EINs are used by a wide variety of employers, sole proprietors and corporations, as well as non-profit organizations, which is what your organization at Missouri State University may be considered. For more information on acquiring an EIN, see [Establishing a Federal Identification Number for Bank Accounts](#) or email the Involvement Ambassadors at OSEIA@missouristate.edu

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2. Contact your desired financial institution to begin an account. Neither Missouri State University of the Office of Student Engagement are involved in the creation or maintenance of your organizations account.

Funding Resources

There are a variety of funding resources at Missouri State University. Student organizations may consider partnering with organizations on campus such as Student Activities Council (SAC), Traditions Council (TC), and Residence Hall Association (RHA). Student organizations may also apply annually for SOFAC funding as well as the Multicultural Engagement Fund on campus.

Student Activities Council Co-Programming Opportunities

The Student Activities Council's (SAC) purpose is to bring educational, entertaining, cultural, and leisure opportunities via programs and events for the students of Missouri State University. Part of that purpose includes the ability for SAC to work with other student organizations to provide quality programs. A portion of each year's budget is allotted for co-programs, which means that SAC may be able to help student organizations present programs via programmatic and monetary assistance. SAC co-programs are designed to be a working partnership between SAC and other student organizations, offices and departments.

Any registered student organization is eligible to apply to co-program. Co-programming proposals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. When evaluating proposals, SAC will strongly consider the degree to which the organization's event purpose meets the mission, goals, and objectives of SAC. Other factors SAC may consider in determining support: the organization's participation in University events, the organization's overall contribution to the University, and the organization's demonstrated willingness and ability to assist in the funding and implementation of its proposed program.

Funding for the approved event may be in any amount deemed reasonable by SAC, up to \$2000 (the maximum allowance per academic year per organization). Organizations are not eligible to receive funding from SOFAC and SAC for the same event. Furthermore, an organization may not receive funding from SAC if the organization previously violated SOFAC and/or SAC co-programming guidelines. SAC will not be the sole funding source for an organization's event. Outside funding can include organization funds or fundraising, outside contributions, departmental contributions and local business contributions. For more information contact SACPresident@MissouriState.edu.

Residence Hall Association

If an organization focuses a program on residence hall students, then the Residence Hall Association may be able to help with funding. Their main focus is to develop and sponsor programming for on-campus students. For more information call 836-6880.

Student Organization Funding Allocation Council (SOFAC)

The Student Organization Funding Allocation Council was established, as part of the Memorandum of Agreement, to receive proposals and allocate funding to registered student organizations at Missouri State University. SOFAC is authorized to distribute a portion of the Student Involvement Fee, as indicated

in the Memorandum of Agreement. The intent of SOFAC is to spread the available funds throughout the academic year to ensure that contingency funds are available and are best used by a variety of organizations. For more information contact SOFAC@MissouriState.edu

Multicultural Engagement Fund

Created in the 2016-2017 academic year, the Multicultural Engagement Fund is an initiative of the Division of Student Affairs that is coordinated through the department of Multicultural Services. The fund was created specifically to encourage and promote programming, travel, collaborations, and community work seeking to promote the 3 pillars of the Public Affairs mission at Missouri State University including Ethical Leadership, Cultural Competence, and Community Engagement.

Interested students must attend an information session for the fund before applying. After the session, students or student organizations interested in receiving funds should email a funding request, including description and a budget outline.

Examples of funding include:

- Registration and travel costs for student organizations
- Food for special student organization events
- Supplies and reservations for events
- Guest speaker honorarium

Please email the Multicultural Engagement Fund (MEFund@MissouriState.edu) with any questions.

Student Organization Officer Roles & Responsibilities

Each student organization should outline the roles of each organization office in its constitution. These roles may vary from organization to organization, but the most standard officer roles are, President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Many organizations will choose to have a greater number of executive board members or utilize a committee and chair structure for specific tasks. While it does not matter who is responsible for each duty, it is important that someone be assigned the task.

Although a student organization's constitution lists some specific positions' responsibilities, each officer should have the freedom to personalize his/her office. Further, traditional titles, such as “president” or “vice president” are not required; be creative – if you have a film club, perhaps you’d like for your leadership titles to reflect your interest (i.e. Director, Producer, Editor). Another example would be a BBQ club (i.e. Grill Master in lieu of President).

Individual interest areas and skills often dictate the amount of time an officer spends on a particular responsibility. However, a good officer never forgets what the basic responsibilities are.

Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Select highlights from the Policy Library

- EMS ABCs
- Travel
- Social Event Reg
- Solicitation/Marketing
- Expressive Activity