

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 fellow students 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 "New/Registered Student Organization Process" below 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 maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA.*
 - *All executive positions must be held by currently-enrolled Missouri State University students.*
- A full-time faculty/staff member is required to fulfill the position of advisor
 - *Graduate 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 President must complete an Annual Registration process, detailed later in this Handbook.

New/Registered Student Organization Process

If you are interested in starting a new organization on-campus, or if you are re-submitting a student organization for official recognition, please follow the steps below. Please feel free to 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 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.

Student Organization Constitution

Review Process

Organizations are encouraged to review their constitution and/or bylaws annually. When changes or updates are made to the organization's constitution, an updated version of the documents must be reviewed by the Office of Student Engagement (OSE) and Student Government Association (SGA) before said changes go into effect. 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. When the organization and OSE have agreed on a final version of the constitution, a CCI 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 Student 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:

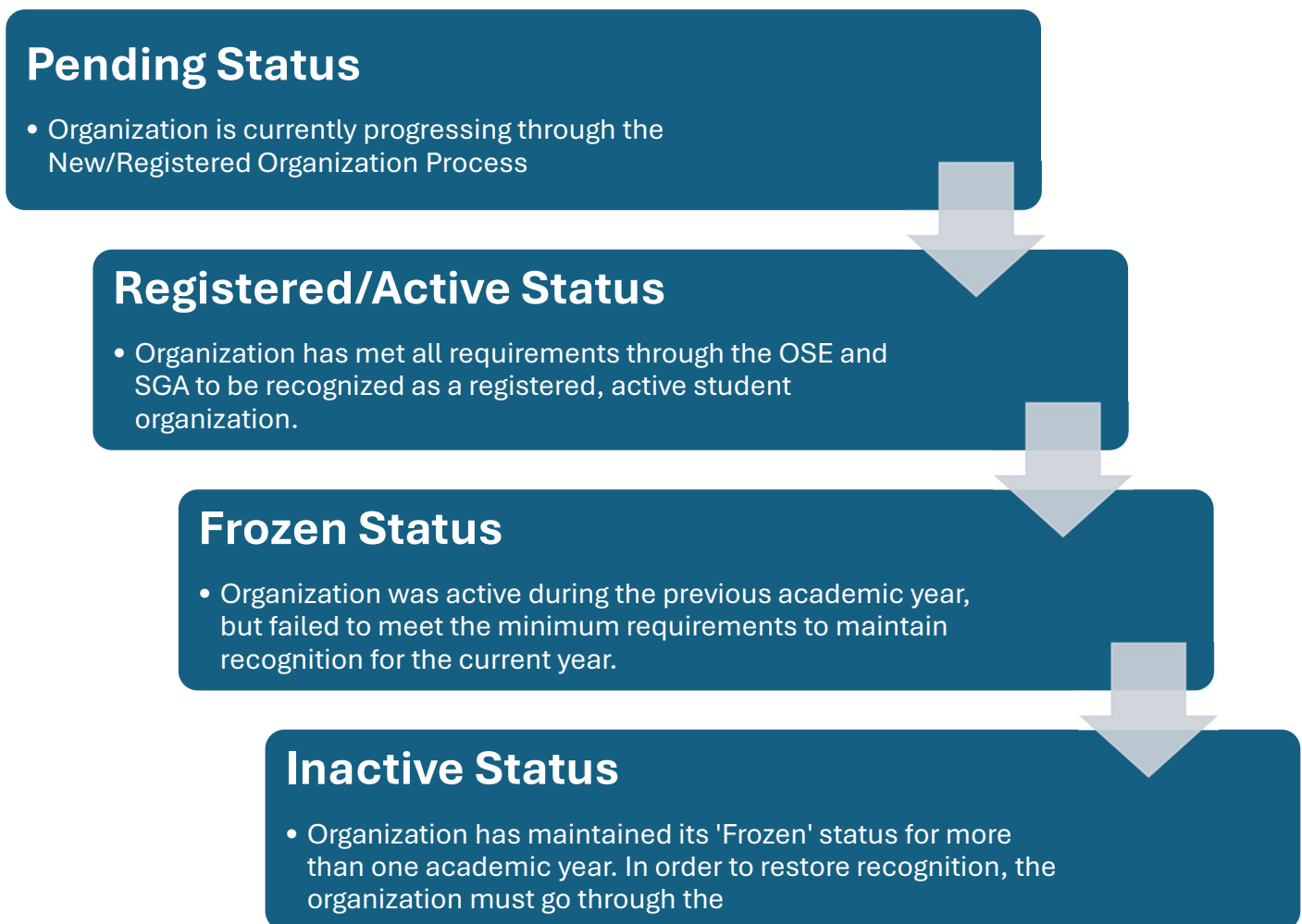
- Membership is less than five members
- Failure to attend a re-registration session for one year

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.

Student Organization Status Flowchart



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 (or another designated member of the executive board) 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 briefly cover the many capabilities of BearLink to best support your organization.
2. Submit all required paperwork obtained at Student Organization Training.
 - a. Each year, the student organization is required to submit an Annual Advisor Agreement to the OSE. This Agreement should be signed by the organization's advisor and their advisor's direct supervisor, and details the various duties of an advisor.
 - b. Organization presidents may be required to complete additional documentation pertaining to the organization and its membership; participate in training sessions; or attend additional coaching sessions provided by the CCI Team. These requirements will vary depending on the annual goals and assessment initiatives in the CCI and/or OSE.

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.

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.

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

Each spring semester, MOSState LEAD (the OSE's leadership development program) hosts several explorative sessions that dig deeper into current topics in leadership. Students can expect an engaging, interactive workshop, facilitated by faculty, staff, alumni, and current students from across the university. Previous topics include sustainability, mindfulness, cancel culture, and citizen leadership, in addition to the annual Women in Leadership panel.

Student Organization Advisor Resources

Student organization advisors are a critical, intentional, and helpful member of the student organization. In addition to their advising duties, it is important to remember that they are also a full-time employee at the University, working in other capacities.

To support our student organization advisor team, the OSE provides an Advisor Guidebook, a through resource on student advisement and the role of a student organization advisor. Additionally, the OSE will conduct annual Advisor Trainings to overview student organization policies/procedures; preview the OSE/CCI's calendar of events for the year; and review any other pertinent information for the advisor team. Advisors should check the Office of Student Engagement website, the BearLink homepage, and the monthly student organization newsletter for the current Advisor Guidebook and any upcoming training information, and to stay up-to-date with the most current information.

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 the outstanding student leaders, student organizations, and their accomplishments. Nominations are accepted by faculty, staff, and students at Missouri State. Since its beginning, STAR Awards has recognized roughly 350 students, organizations, and advisors at the University. The nomination form is available at the beginning of each 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.

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.

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

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 visit the Residence Hall Association BearLink page, or call 417-836-6880.

Student Organization Funding Allocation Council (SOFAC)

The Student Organization Funding Allocation Council was established to receive proposals and allocate funding (from a portion of the Student Involvement Fee) to registered student organizations at Missouri State University. 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 Student Support and Opportunity 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—the standard officer roles are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

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

Although a student organization's constitution lists some specific positions' responsibilities, each officer should have the freedom to personalize their 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).

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