

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION – DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
POLICY NUMBER – SA 3.09
POLICY TITLE – REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
SCOPE OF POLICY – USC UPSTATE
DATE OF REVISION – FEBRUARY 24, 2026
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER – VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

PURPOSE

This policy outlines privileges, responsibilities, and procedures to become a registered student organization on the USC Upstate campus

DEFINITIONS

Constitution: contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of a student organization.

Inactive Student Organization: a student organization that lost its active status and all designated privileges.

Prospective Student Organization: a group of students that express their intent to register as a student organization to the Leadership and Service Center.

Reactivation: the process an inactive student organization completes as they seek to regain active status as a student organization.

Annual Registration: the annual process that all active student organizations complete to maintain active status as a student organization. This includes the collection and recording of specific information required of student organizations.

Student Leader: any student appointed or elected to a leadership role within their student organization (i.e. officer, committee chair, etc.).

Student Organization: a student group that maintains active status on the University of South Carolina campus, has fulfilled all responsibilities of a student organization and represents a group of students who desire to come together to support a particular view, explore common interests or accomplish identified tasks. Student organizations must be student-initiated and student-led. Two types of student organizations exist at USC Upstate:

Registered Student Organization (RSO): student organizations that are independent legal entities from the University, have no delegated authority from the University, and do not perform functions on behalf of the university. These groups are not required to maintain a University Advisor. The University views RSOs as private affiliations and does not endorse the mission, goals, or purpose of the organization.

Fraternity and Sorority Life Organization: A Registered Student Organization and Title IX exempt social Greek-letter fraternity or sorority chapter (as defined under the provisions of Section 1681 of the U.S. Education Act of 1972) which meets membership requirements of the Interfraternity Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, or the National Panhellenic Council. A student organization meeting these criteria will be automatically assigned as a Fraternity and Sorority Life Organization and must comply with additional requirements mandated by the Associate Director for Fraternity & Sorority Life.

Advisor: a faculty or administrative staff member acting in an advisory capacity, as opposed to a directive relationship, to a Registered Student Organization. USC Upstate recognizes two types of Advisors:

Appointed/Assigned Advisors

University sponsored organizations (i.e. Student Media organizations, Campus Activities Board, IMPACT, departmentally sponsored clubs, etc.) typically have professional staff members who advise them as part of their job responsibilities. This also includes organizations that must be advised by individuals who are members of the organization (i.e. Greek fraternities & sororities, some professional associations, etc.).

Selected Advisors

Student organizations that are not sponsored by the University (i.e. special interest groups, some academic clubs, etc.) may receive University funding through the annual allocation process or from SGA Special Projects funding, but these groups are not considered University sponsored and may select their own advisor(s).

POLICY STATEMENT

Since USC Upstate recognizes that co-curricular activities form an important part of the overall educational experience of students, the university promotes and regulates the activities of student organizations. The University provides the use of its name and physical facilities, contributes faculty time for advice and counsel and encourages the development of student government and organizations. The registration of student organizations is coordinated through the Office of Student Involvement, located in the Campus Life Center, suite 224. Additional guidance is available in the USC Upstate Student Organization Handbook.

PROCEDURES

A. Registration Process for Existing Student Organizations

1. To function as a part of the university rather than as an outside organization of citizens, a student organization must be registered with the Office of Student Involvement. Only registered student organizations are permitted to use the name and facilities of USC Upstate. When an organization does this, it accepts regulation by the University. Registration as a student organization may be withdrawn for violation of university regulations.

2. Each chartered organization wishing to maintain its registration status must register annually every fall semester with the Office of Student Involvement
3. Registration updates should also be submitted if officers, advisors, organizational or contact information changes during the year. An up-to-date copy of the constitution and bylaws of each registered organization will be kept on file with the Office of Student Involvement. It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that changes are submitted to the Office of Student Involvement in a timely manner.
4. Chapters of inter/national fraternities and sororities are also required to register as student organizations with the Office of Student Involvement.

B. Registration/Chartering Process for New Student Organizations

Students wishing to form a new campus organization should observe the following procedures:

1. Schedule a meeting with the office of Student Involvement to review the documentation necessary to charter a new student organization at USC Upstate.
2. Complete the Organization Registration profile in the Agora/Involve Platform.
3. Identify at least five (5) USC Upstate students who are interested in joining the student organization and create a roster of those proposed members.
4. Develop a constitution for the proposed organization. This document should state the purpose, structure, functions and rules of the proposed organization.
5. Identify or elect officers for the proposed organization.
6. Identify a faculty or staff advisor for the organization and have them complete the "Advisor Statement of Support," available on the Agora/Involve Platform.
7. Once these steps have been completed, an activation meeting should be scheduled with the Office of Student Involvement to review your organization's application status.
8. New organizations may be permitted to meet on campus, pending approval, only to organize and set up the organization. Organizations may not hold open meetings, bring in speakers, have public events or participate in fundraising efforts until the group has completed all necessary steps to become a registered student organization

C. Leadership Positions

1. To be an officer of a student organization, a student must have earned at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA and completed a minimum of 12 hours at USC Upstate.
2. Officers of all organizations must be in good academic and behavioral standing with the University.

D. Advisors

To encourage positive interaction between university faculty, staff and students, all registered student organizations are required to have an Advisor registered with the Office of Student Involvement

1. Advisors must be selected from full-time faculty or administrative staff members at USC Upstate. Students (including Graduate level) are ineligible to serve as primary advisors to registered student organizations.
2. Fraternities, sororities (Greek organizations) and faith, spirituality, and belief-based student organizations are exempt from this rule and may select off-campus advisors in

accordance with related inter/national organization policies. Additionally, special accommodations to this requirement may be made for intramural/athletic student organizations that may require advisors with related credentials.

3. Additional guidance is available in the Advisor for Student Organizations Policy (SA 3.01)

E. Annual Funding and SGA Special Projects Funding Requests

All registered student organizations whose membership is open to USC Upstate students may apply for Annual Funding. Organizations that restrict membership on the basis of partisan political affiliation or protected class (i.e. race, color, religion, sex, etc.) are ineligible to request annual funding. These organizations may be eligible to receive Special Projects funding from SGA.

1. Registered student organizations that meet all the following criteria may be eligible for annual funding contingent upon:
 - a. Have completed all necessary paperwork to be in registered status with the Office of Student Involvement
 - b. Have been active for 1 academic year (12 months)
 - c. Are not a university sponsored organization
 - d. Submit the necessary paperwork by the established deadline to be considered for annual funding
 - e. Annual funding allocations will be awarded once a year during an established timeline set by the Office of Student Involvement. Organizations must submit an annual funding application to the Office of Student Involvement to be eligible to be considered for allocations.
 - f. An organization that changes its mission/purpose statement will be considered a new student organization and must be active for 1 academic year (12 months) under the new mission/purpose statement before becoming eligible for annual funding. Organizational name changes are exempt from this portion of the policy.
2. Registered student organizations in need of money for travel or special events may also request Special Projects Funding from the Student Government Association. These applications are reviewed on a bi-weekly basis during the academic year while the senate is in session until funds are depleted. The following criteria are used by SGA when evaluating budget requests:
 - a. Relation to University mission
 - b. Number of students who will benefit
 - c. Degree of benefit to students
 - d. Number of organizations involved in the project
 - e. Quality of application
 - f. Availability of funds
 - g. State and University policies regarding funding allocations
 - h. An appeal of an allocation decision shall be handled in the following manner: The organization may appeal to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or their designee.

3. Special Projects Funding will not be allocated to organizations that restrict membership on the basis of partisan political affiliation or protected class except where such funds are requested and used for a specific activity of benefit to the student body as a whole.
4. Funds may be allocated for travel where members of the organization will:
 - a. Represent the University and thereby enhance the prestige of the University and the organization
 - b. Gain knowledge or expertise of benefit to the student body and the individual organization.
 - c. Students must be in good behavioral standing with the University and have a 2.0 cumulative GPA to travel or represent the university or a registered university organization.
 - d. Advisor(s) are required to travel with student organizations that are using university funds to travel. Advisor travel is coordinated separately through the Office of Student Involvement.
5. The funding of national dues shall be evaluated on the basis of the purpose and benefits given by the national organization to the local organization. This data must be attached to the funding request.
6. Restrictions for Use of Student Activity Allocations (Annual & Special Projects)
 - a. Funds cannot be used as direct contributions to charitable organizations. Contributions may be made as a result of fundraising events where net profits may be donated to said charity.
 - b. No funds may be used for any political purposes or the support of political candidates, partisan efforts, whether federal, state, local, or university level.
 - c. All equipment purchased with allocated monies is the property of the University and must display a university inventory sticker. Equipment shall be audited as part of the audit process. Each organization will maintain an up to- date inventory coordinated with the university's inventory. The organizations will provide the committee a list of equipment on hand at the time of the budget hearings.

F. Management of Finances

1. Student organizations that receive funding from the University (either through Annual Funding or Student Government Association Special Funding) must have a University account through the Office of Student Involvement. The use of off-campus accounts (i.e. banks, credit unions, etc.) is not allowed for groups that receive university funding.
2. Requests to make purchases using funds from a student organization' university account can be made by submitting an Expenditure Request" to the Office of Student Involvement. Requests should be made in a timely manner to allow time for processing.
3. All dues and other monies collected by a funded organization shall be reported as income and deposited in the organization's university account.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLICIES

USC Upstate Code of Student Conduct

Advertising & Posting Policy for Student Organizations (SA 3.11)

Fundraising by Student Organizations (SA 3.22)

Late Night Event Policy (SA 3.03)
Hazing (SA 3.05)
Advisors for Student Organizations (SA 3.01)
Special Events Policies & Procedures

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

August 2012 - New policy approval

October 2024 - Policy revised in adaptation to USC Columbia Campus Policy – STAF 3.10 (definitions) and to reflect current practices. Office name and location updated. Links updated. Format updated

February 2026 - Document format reviewed/revised for accessibility