STU-005 Prohibition on Hazing

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Contact Office Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer (Office of the)

Oversight Executive
Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer

Applies To Academic Division.

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Reason for Policy

The University is committed to maintaining an educational environment that promotes the health and safety of its students and complies with federal and state law.

Definition of Terms

Hazing

Description

Any reckless, knowing, or intentional act committed by a person against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such person or persons to participate that:

- Occurs on or off University Property.
- Is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization including club and varsity sports or a student group with a new member process.
- Causes or creates a risk of physical or psychological injury, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the University or organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team). Examples of physical or psychological injury include, but are not limited to, mental or physical harassment, humiliation, fatigue, degradation, ridicule, shock, or abuse.

Examples of specific acts that may constitute hazing include, but are not limited to, the following*:

- Paddling, whipping, beating, striking, or similar physical abuse.
- Kidnapping;
- All forms of physical activity which are used to harass, punish, or harm an individual, including pushups, calisthenics, running, or similar physical exercise.
- Forced excursions or road trips.
- Confinement.
- Spraying, painting, or pelting with any substance.
- Burying in any substance.
- Nudity with the intent to cause embarrassment.
- Acting as a personal servant.
- Exposure to uncomfortable elements, including putting irritating substances on body parts and sensory deprivation.
- Verbal abuse.
- Wearing of apparel that is conspicuous and/or indecent.
- Coerced consumption of alcohol or any other substance, legal or illegal.
- Being forced or coerced to engage in any kind of sexual activity, including but not limited to forced nudity, simulated sex acts, and touching of intimate body parts.
- Depriving students of basic hygiene or sufficient sleep (six consecutive hours per day is normally considered to be a minimum).
- Coerced burning, branding, or tattooing any part of the body.
- Psychological hazing, defined as any act which is likely to:
    - Compromise an individual's dignity.
    - Cause an individual embarrassment or shame.
    - Cause an individual to be the object of malicious amusement or ridicule.
    - Cause an individual emotional distress.
- Interrogating an individual in an intimidating or threatening manner.
- Misleading prospective members in an effort to convince them that they will not become members unless they engage in hazing activities.
- Misleading prospective members into believing that they will be hurt during induction or initiation.
- Any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct.
- Carrying any items (shields, paddles, bricks, hammers, etc.) that serve no constructive purpose or that are designed to punish or embarrass the carrier.
- Blindfolding and parading individuals in public areas for amusement or embarrassment, blindfolding and transporting in a motor vehicle, or privately conducting blindfolding activities that serve no constructive purpose.
- Binding or restricting an individual in any way that would prohibit them from moving on their own.
- Requiring or suggesting that an individual obtain or possess an item(s) or complete an activity in an unlawful manner (e.g., stealing signs for a scavenger hunt).
- Obligating prospective members to clean up an organization house or similar facility beyond the normal and reasonable expectations for, and participation of, current members of the organization.
- Prohibiting an individual from social contact or from associating with other individuals or groups.
- Other actions that are likely to negatively impact academic performance or mental health.
- Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts.

Note: *Examples included in the list have been adapted from the Commonwealth of Virginia's model hazing prevention policy as developed by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Examples are also adapted from Section 485(f)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)).

Retaliation

Description

Adverse action, including but not limited to reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination, intimidation, or harassment.

Student Organization

Description

A general term that refers to all Contracted Independent Organizations (CIOs), Fraternal Organizations (FOs), Special Status Organizations, and Agency groups, and department-sponsored organizations and classes.

University Property

Description

Land or buildings that the University owns or leases and that is under the control of the Board of Visitors. University property also includes premises the University uses for activities of its offices, departments, personnel, or students.

Policy Statement

Hazing is a crime in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is prohibited in accordance with this policy and the University's Standards of Conduct. The University does not condone hazing in any form. In addition to students and student organizations or groups, this Policy applies to employees with involvement in student organizations or groups, including those acting in an official capacity as an advisor, academic instructor, or coach.

1. **Retaliation:**
   The University prohibits retaliation directed against a person for making a good faith complaint under this policy or who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation or adjudication process. Retaliation is prohibited even when the underlying complaint is without merit or not substantiated.

2. **Support for Reporting Allegations of Hazing and Retaliation:**
   The University community encourages the reporting of hazing behavior or retaliation. Parties or witnesses may be hesitant to report this behavior or participate in an investigation because they fear that they themselves may be in violation of certain policies, such as underage drinking or illicit drug use at the time of the incident. To encourage reporting under this policy and participation in the investigation process, the University will not pursue disciplinary action against complainants, respondents, or witnesses for disclosure of minor policy violations — such as illegal personal consumption of drugs or alcohol — where such disclosures are made in connection with a good faith report or investigation of hazing or retaliation. This provision does not apply to more serious allegations such as physical abuse of another or illicit drug or alcohol distribution that contributed to the commission of a policy violation.

   Consistent with Virginia Code § 23.1-821, the University shall provide information about available resources qualified to provide the appropriate ongoing mental and behavioral health support to any student who reports to the University an act of hazing or an act of bullying experienced as the result of a report of an act of hazing for such student.

3. **Investigations of Allegations of Hazing and Retaliation:**
   State and/or local law enforcement agencies investigate allegations of hazing under Virginia law. The Division of Student Affairs investigates allegations of hazing under University policy. (For more information regarding the investigation process, see *Procedures for Reports of Hazing*.)
4. **Duty to Report:**
   Consistent with University Policy HRM-028: Preventing and Addressing Threats or Acts of Violence, faculty, staff, and students should report hazing behavior as defined above to Student Affairs at 434-924-7984 or through *UVA Just Report It*. Confidential employees are not required to report hazing behavior. Anyone with general concerns about hazing and/or the well-being of any student is also encouraged to contact Student Affairs. Anonymous reports are accepted; however, the University's ability to investigate anonymous reports may be limited. (For more information, see *Reporting Hazing*.)
5. **Prevention Training:**
   Consistent with Virginia Code Section § 23.1-820, the University will conduct hazing prevention training for all current, new, and potential new members of each student organization whose new members have a period of time between invitation for membership and initiation into membership. This interval between invitation and initiation is often referred to as a "pledge period" or "new member period," and individuals in this period are not considered full members of the organization. The training must include extensive, current, and in-person education about hazing, the dangers of hazing, including alcohol intoxication, and hazing laws and policies. The training must also explain that the University's disciplinary process is not to be considered a substitute for the criminal legal process. For any student organization that has an advisor of record, the advisor must also receive hazing prevention training. Information regarding the University's prevention programs is located on the University's *Hoos Against Hazing website*.

6. **Public Reporting:**
   The University will report hazing policy or law violations in the following manner, in compliance with Virginia Code Section § 23.1-822, which states:

   A. *Each institution shall maintain and publicly report actual findings of violations of the institution's code of conduct or of federal or state laws pertaining to hazing that are reported to campus authorities or local law enforcement. Investigations that do not result in findings of violations of codes of conduct or convictions in a court of law shall not be included in the report. The report shall include:*

      1. *The name of the student organization recognized by an institution of higher education or local organization, as such name of the local organization is known to the institution;*
      2. *When the student organization recognized by an institution of higher education or local organization was found responsible or convicted of misconduct pertaining to hazing;*
      3. *The date on which such hazing misconduct occurred and the dates that the investigation was initiated and concluded by the institution or local law enforcement; and*
      4. *Subject to the limitations in subsection B, a comprehensive description of the incident, including the findings, charges, and sanctions placed on the organization.*

   B. *Any reports made pursuant to subsection A shall not include any personally identifiable information of any students involved in the hazing misconduct and shall be subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.*

   C. *Each institution shall update the report described in subsection A at least 10 calendar days before the start of fall and spring academic semesters.*

   D. *Reports required pursuant to this section shall be available on each institution's homepage and Greek Life homepage, or its equivalent in a prominent location, and a hard copy notice of the*

nature and availability of the reports, including the website address where they can be found, shall be provided to all attendees at student orientations.

E. *Each institution shall publicly maintain reports for a minimum of 10 years from the date of the initial disclosure of a report.*
F. *Each institution shall annually update and report actual findings of violations of the institution's code of conduct or of federal or state laws pertaining to hazing made pursuant to this section to the Timothy J. Piazza Center for Fraternity and Sorority Research at The Pennsylvania State University to update each organization's national card and provide easily accessible documentation of all hazing incidents and provide additional awareness and easily accessible information on hazing.*

In accordance with Section 485(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(f) (the "Act"), the University will publish a "Campus Hazing Transparency Report." The Campus Hazing Transparency Report shall contain information as required by Virginia Code Section § 23.1-822 (noted above) which also meets the requirements of the Act, in addition to the following:

A. Whether any findings of hazing involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs.
B. The date(s) the University provided notice to the student organization that the incident resulted in a hazing violation.
C. A statement notifying the public of the annual availability of statistics on hazing in the University's Annual Fire Safety and Security Report and a link to such report.
D. Information about the University's policies relating to hazing and applicable state laws.

The Campus Hazing Transparency Report will be updated no less than twice a year, and always at least 10 calendar days before the start of fall and spring academic semesters as required by Virginia Code Section § 23.1-822.

7. **State Statute:**
The state statute on hazing, Section § 18.2-56 of the Virginia Code, states:

"It shall be unlawful to haze so as to cause bodily injury, any student at any school, college, or university.

Any person found guilty thereof shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Any person receiving bodily injury by hazing shall have a right to sue, civilly, the person or persons guilty thereof, whether adults or infants.

The president or other presiding official of any school, college or university receiving appropriations from the state treasury shall, upon satisfactory proof of the guilt of any student hazing another student, sanction and discipline such student in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. The institution's policies and procedures shall provide for expulsions or other appropriate discipline based on the facts and circumstances of each case and shall be consistent with the model policies established by the Department of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, as applicable. The president or other presiding official of any school, college or university receiving appropriations from the state treasury shall report hazing which causes bodily injury to the attorney for the Commonwealth of the county or city in which such school, college or university is, who shall take such action as he deems appropriate.

For the purposes of this section, "hazing" means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily injury on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity."

8. **Compliance with Policy:**
   Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination in accordance with relevant University policies and the University's Standards of Conduct. Additionally, such prohibited actions may also be in violation of state or federal law.

   Direct questions about this policy to the Office of the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer.

Procedures

Reporting Hazing:
Reports of hazing behavior may be made utilizing the following options. Please provide as much detail as possible.

1. If there is immediate concern for safety, please call 911 before taking any next steps.
2. Submit a report through *Just Report It*. The system requires University affiliation to access the system through Netbadge.
3. Call the Anonymous Hazing Hotline at 434-243-HAZE (4293).
4. If you have an urgent after-hours concern about health and safety, connect with CASS on Call.

Procedures for Reports of Hazing:
The Procedures for Reports of Hazing provides information regarding the process used to investigate incidents of hazing.

Related Information

Hoos Against Hazing
HRM-028: Preventing and Addressing Threats or Acts of Violence
HRM-041: Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence and Reporting Disclosures
Virginia Code Section § 18.2-56, § 23.1-820, and § 23.1-822

Major Category Students and Student Programs

Next Scheduled Review Monday, August 14, 2028

Revision History

Revised to comply with federal/state law 8/14/25; Added VA Code requirement to Section 2 11/22/24; Updated 7/10/23; Added Section 5. Prevention Training and Section 6. Public Reporting 8/2/22; Updated Dept in Section 4 6/23/22; Added Sections on Retaliation, Reporting; removed geographic boundaries 1/21/22.

Category Cross Reference

Safety, Security and Environmental Quality

Supercedes Policy Text
Hazing (Undergraduate Record).

Approved By Policy Review Committee

Approved Date Friday, October 12, 2018