

Preventing and Reporting Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, Stalking, and Hazing: A Guide for Student Orgs

Purpose and Limitations

This guide aims to support student organizations in building safer communities and promoting a shared commitment to preventing violence and supporting members of our campus community. It also highlights the resources and assistance available from campus resources to help student organizations navigate these issues effectively.

Building Safer Communities

Student organizations play an important role in creating a sense of community at Carolina. As a leader or member, you have the power to help your group create a safer space for everyone. Here are some ways your organization can support violence prevention and be there for others.

Know What Your Organization Stands For

Take time to reflect on your organization's values. Once you have figured that out, make sure those values show up in everything you do – whether it's recruitment, events, leadership decisions, or other communications.

If you want support in reflecting on and establishing values for your organization, Student Life & Leadership has resources to guide your group, inform your process, and update your governing documents if needed.

Consider Community Belonging

Your community is made up of people with many different backgrounds and experiences. Everyone brings their own perspectives, values, and beliefs that shape how they navigate the world. Avoid making assumptions about your community and create a space where all members feel seen, heard, and respected.

Set Clear Membership Expectations

Make sure everyone knows what it means to be a respectful and engaged member. That includes things like practicing consent, respecting boundaries, and speaking up if something feels off. Address harmful jokes and comments – especially ones that are demeaning or discriminatory. When it comes to conversations about sex or relationships, leave shame and judgement out of it.

Everyone should feel free to make their own choices without pressure.

Make sure these same expectations align with your organizational values and are reflected in your communication with members.

Lead by Example

If you're in a leadership role, your actions set the tone. Practice and model consent in your daily interactions and respect others' boundaries, communicate clearly, and speak up if members or other leadership acts inappropriately. Take care of yourself, too, and ask for support when you need it.

Learn and Educate

Creating and maintaining an informed community is a critical part of violence prevention. The more you know, the better your organization can show up for each other. Encourage both your leadership and members to attend training or events by [Violence Prevention and Advocacy Services](#) to learn about bystander intervention, supporting others, consent and healthy relationships, hazing prevention, and creating safer communities. Members can attend on their own or you can [request a program](#) for your group.

Taking Accountability Seriously

Discussing topics related to violence, harassment, and hazing can be difficult, particularly in a social setting or network such as a student organization. Limit spreading rumors, gossiping, or sharing personal information about members in formal or informal settings. Instead, focus on creating a space that helps prevent further harm and offers real support.

As a student organization, you can provide information about resources to others as a way of support. See below for tips about supporting individuals in your organization and how to respond if a member is accused of violence, harassment, or hazing.

Supporting Impacted Individuals

Every person impacted by violence, harassment, or hazing will have unique needs and interests regarding safety and support. If someone shares their experience with you, ask what support looks like for them. Here are some ways to help:

- Listen without judgement, validate their emotion(s) or response, and mirror the language they use to describe their experience
- Check in about their safety and comfort
- Offer to connect them with resources
 - [Safe at UNC](#) is a helpful, comprehensive website for information about campus and community resources
- Respect their decisions
- Maintain privacy

Reminder: It is not your organization's role to investigate or ask for details – be supportive and let them decide how much information they want to share.

Understanding University Policy

Organizations may learn that a member has been accused of violence, harassment, or hazing. These situations can be complex and difficult to navigate and it's important to respond thoughtfully and responsibly. Remember that all individuals are entitled to due process, and there are limits to the actions organizations can take.

Utilize University Resources

Carolina has many resources to help you navigate these issues and support your members, leadership, and organization. Please visit [Safe at UNC](#) for more information about resources, supporting others, and learning more about violence prevention.

Q&A for Registered Student Organizations at Carolina

This document addresses reports of sex or gender-based misconduct. However, the expectations set out apply to reports of any misconduct covered by [University Compliance Office \(UCO\)](#) (formerly the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office/EOC) policies. Specifically, this includes discrimination or harassment based on protected status; stalking; interpersonal (relationship) violence; retaliation; and complicity.

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What rights and responsibilities do student organizations have related to sex or gender-based misconduct?

Student organizations have the same rights and responsibilities as individual students: they have the right to report sex and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence to the [University Compliance Office \(UCO\)](#). They also have a responsibility to help maintain a safe and respectful campus by complying with all University policies, including the [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#) and the [Policy on Prohibited Sexual Harassment Under Title IX](#). Student organizations are not permitted to sanction or discipline students in response to allegations of sex and gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence. Instead, student organizations must defer to the UCO's process to address allegations of these forms of misconduct.

Why can't we just remove a person from our organization if we learn that they've been accused of sex or gender-based misconduct?

Federal law and University policy set out specific procedures that must be followed before a student can be disciplined or deprived of part of the student's Carolina experience for sexual misconduct or other behaviors covered by [University Compliance Office \(UCO\)](#) policies. This includes taking away someone's opportunity to participate in a student organization. These procedures are carried out by the UCO and cannot be carried out by Student Organizations.

In addition, University policies prohibit retaliation. Removing someone from a Student Organization without following UCO's procedures could lead to a report of retaliation.

Can a student ever be removed or barred from a Registered Student Organization based on allegations of sex or gender-based misconduct?

A student cannot be barred from participating in student organizations based solely on allegations. However, a student can be barred from participation if (1) the University Compliance Office (UCO) process results in the student being found responsible for the misconduct and sanctions are issued, such as suspension or disciplinary probation, that would prohibit the student from participating in certain University activities or (2) a safety and risk analysis conducted by the Emergency Evaluation and Action Committee (EEAC), in consultation with appropriate campus officials, identifies an immediate threat to someone's physical health or safety and determines that emergency removal of a student from University programs or activities is warranted. The sanctions or removal actions are then enforced by the Office of Student Conduct, not student organizations.

What if we have concerns about the safety of our members or disruptive behavior (e.g., retaliation or harassment) from someone who has been accused or who has made accusations against someone?

You can report any incidents of discrimination and harassment based on any protected status, sexual assault or sexual violence, sexual exploitation, interpersonal (relationship) violence, stalking, and complicity for knowingly aiding in acts of prohibited conduct to the University Compliance Office (UCO) at uco@unc.edu or 919.966.3576. The UCO can assist the involved individuals in navigating future interactions.

For support, Victim Services Specialists in Violence Prevention and Advocacy Services provide confidential support and services for any student or employee impacted by harassment, sexual assault or violence, sexual exploitation, interpersonal violence, or stalking. They can assist impacted individuals with safety planning, referrals to campus and community resources, and understanding reporting options available.

You should also encourage anyone in need of assistance to seek help from one or more of the available resources, on or off-campus, for support, counseling, medical care, and/or reporting. These resources can be found on the Safe at UNC website.

If you believe there is an imminent safety threat, you should contact campus or local law enforcement by calling 911.

What if we have concerns about hazing?

If you experience or witness hazing, it is important to report it immediately to protect yourself and others. If hazing involves serious harm or illegal activity, contacting local law enforcement is an option.

You can report any hazing misconduct by a student to the Office of Student Conduct.

In specific circumstances, Student Conduct may grant hazing immunity to students who voluntarily report incidents of hazing, encouraging a culture of accountability and safety within the University community. More information about immunity can be found at the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The University also prohibits hazing of students by employees, contractors, visitors, or other third parties within the University's control. You can learn more in the University's [Workplace Violence Policy](#).

You can report any hazing misconduct by an employee, contractor, visitor, or third party, to the [University Compliance Office \(UCO\)](#).

Additional Support

If you have concerns about how an allegation or incident may affect your organization or members, you should consult with your advisor and/or Student Life & Leadership (SLL) before making any organizational decisions. SLL can also engage with other campus partners, like [Violence Prevention and Advocacy Services](#), the [University Ombuds](#), or the [University Compliance Office](#) to help address situations and support the group moving forward.

This document has been adapted from William & Mary's "Preparing Your Organization Before a Problem Arises: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Howard University's "Title IX Q&A: Student Organizations."