



DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Recognized Student Organization Handbook

The purpose of the RSO Handbook is to provide guidance on university expectations, policies and procedures for student organizations officially recognized by and student programs sponsored by the institution.

The Department of Student Involvement, Traditions, Spirit, and Family Relations (located in the Tarleton Student Center Suite 105) oversees RSO recognition, provides RSO officer and advisor training, and support.

What is a Recognized Student Organization (RSO)?

A RSO is a group of Tarleton State University students organized with a common purpose who have sought and completed formal recognition status from the university. Tarleton RSOs are classified in one of the following:

Types of Recognized Student Organizations

- Registered Organizations
 - Primarily present events that are limited to their membership
 - Involve a lower level of complexity due to their limited scope
 - Capable of functioning with minimal support or interaction with the university
- Affiliated Organizations
 - Presents events for their members and invited guests
 - Are often housed within or connected to larger sponsored organizations
 - Involve a moderate level of complexity and/or risk because of their scope and perceived association with the university
- Sponsored Organizations
 - Are Critical to the mission and culture of the university because of their role in representing Tarleton State University
 - Routinely present events for the campus and broader community
 - Typically have a close relationship with a university department or office
 - Involve a higher level of complexity and/or risk because of their scope and perceived association with the university
 - Advisor is an assigned university employee



Recognized Student Organization Benefits

- Use of university facilities, equipment and technology
 - All equipment needed for activities held in university buildings is free, any activities that require work orders from SSC may incur additional costs for your organization.
- Use of university logos/branding
 - As a recognized Student Organization you will have access to university branding and logos, information on this can be found at www.tarleton.edu/marketing. All organization logos using Tarleton State University or its likeness for print material must use a [licensed vendor](#).
- Available University funding
 - Funds may be requested in the form of reimbursements up to \$500 twice a year from the [Student Government Association](#).
- Student Affairs resources
 - Professional advising and event planning assistance
 - Educational Programs
 - Leadership Development Programs
 - Service Opportunities
 - TexanSync organization page
 - Participation in campus wide organization fairs
 - Additional equipment/supplies (Contact the Department of Student Involvement, Traditions, Spirit, and Family Relations for more details.)

Requirements to be a Recognized Student Organization (RSO)

Any student organization who wishes to be recognized by the university must meet the following requirements for official recognition.

1. Organization name and clearly defined purpose.
 - A new RSO cannot duplicate an existing RSO. Please reviewing active RSOs in TexanSync prior to submitting organization request.
2. RSO Advisor - University employee must agree to serve as an advisor
 - a. Advisor must be a full-time employee of Tarleton.
 - b. Advisor Agreement submitted annually.
 - c. Attend Annual Advisor meeting hosted by Student Affairs.



3. Membership

- Minimum of 3 members, required officers include
 - chief student officer (ex. President)
 - chief financial officer (ex. Treasurer)
 - risk management officer

4. Constitution and bylaws including requirements listed below:

- a. Organization description and purpose
- b. Officer descriptions and removal process
- c. Officers must maintain a minimum GPA requirement of 2.0 and 12 credit hours (undergraduate) or 9 credit hours (graduate) per semester (Exceptions can be made for students graduating within one semester.)
- d. General membership requirements
- e. If membership requires a pledge period, it must be completed **within** 8 weeks or less.
- f. All pledge plans must be filed with the Division of Student Affairs via TexanSync.
- g. Membership discipline and removal process
- h. **Nondiscrimination** clause:
 - *(Insert organization name) in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status.*
- i. **Anti-Hazing** clause:
 - *(Insert organization name) will not participate in any act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property; and/or assisting, directing, or in any way causing others to participate in degrading behavior and/or behavior that causes ridicule, humiliation, or embarrassment; and/or engaging in conduct which tends to bring the reputation of the organization, group, or University into disrepute for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization; or as part of any activity of a recognized student organization, student group, and university program.*

5. Leadership Development and Advisor Meeting - The president, risk management officer, and advisor must complete annual RSO leadership training. Sessions will be offered at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters and during the summer.

6. **(Optional)** If the organization plans to request funds from the Student Government Association or participate in university organized fundraisers, it must register for an EIN, this information can be found at www.IRS.gov.



RSOs on Texansync

All information pertaining to becoming or maintaining your RSO status is managed on Tarleton's online platform called Texansync. To register or access your organization, you must go to the Tarleton homepage and click on the "Login" icon in the upper right hand corner, then click "TexanSync" OR click [here](#). You will be prompted to login and will use your Tarleton user ID and password. Once logged in, you will have access to create/maintain an organization, submit event recognition forms, and more.

Starting a New Organization

Students wanting to start a new student organization must complete a New Student Organization Request on TexanSync. The criteria for becoming a new organization is the following:

- a. Proposed organization name should align with the mission and purpose of the organization.
- b. Clearly articulated organization purpose and objectives.
- c. Officer names (outlined above)
- d. Draft constitution and bylaws
- e. (Optional) Apply for EIN & Submit W-9

Department of Student Involvement will review request packet to ensure alignment with RSO recognition expectations. Once approved, the organization will be expected to complete the annual recognition requirements prior to activation.

Annual RSO Recognition Process

RSOs must update organization information each academic year and attend annual leadership and advisor meeting to remain in good standing with the university. This process will take place in April of each year, organizations will be notified within their portals to submit their updated information.

If an organization has turn over at any time throughout the year, it is required that they update their TexanSync portal to reflect their updated membership roster and leadership roles.

Updates required on TexanSync

- University employee as advisor
- Update officer contact for chief student officer (ex. President), chief financial officer (ex. Treasurer), and risk management officer
- Submit updated constitution and bylaws including requirements listed in **section above**.

General requirements

- The president, risk management officer, and advisor must complete annual RSO leadership training by published deadline.
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Expectations of Recognized Student Organizations

- Operate in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the university and the governing documents of the organization
 - Adhere to all municipal, state, and federal laws, & Tarleton State University rules
 - Keep the Department of Student Involvement, Tradition, Spirit, & Family Relations informed of changes to governing documents and organizational leadership and advisor(s) in a timely fashion
 - Demonstrate respect for the university community and other student organizations
 - Consult with the appropriate university departments, offices, or representatives when planning large, unusual, or potentially complex events
 - Train newly selected leaders and maintain good records and transition materials
 - Be open in membership unless otherwise permitted under applicable state or federal law.
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RSO Policies

Events

Prior to hosting events, individuals must develop an [event plan](#) and review it with the organization's advisor. An organization hosting an event that meets one or more of the following criteria must schedule a meeting with a professional staff member from the Department of Student Involvement no less than 5 business days prior to the event. The purpose of the review is to make sure students have addressed inherent risks associated with the event.

Event Review Criteria

- Require a contract
 - Alcohol be served (If yes, also see the [Social Host Policy](#) event check list.)
 - Risk involved
 - Additional insurance required
 - Fundraiser that will potentially generate \$1,000+
 - Open to the public
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Alcohol

Promotion, consumption, possession, manufacturing, distributing, selling or serving alcoholic beverages (except as expressly authorized by University), is prohibited on Tarleton State University premises and University sponsored events regardless of age.

Recognized Student Organization Social Host Alcohol Policy

It is expected that all recognized student organizations (RSOs) will have their activities (sponsored, authorized, sanctioned, and/or financed) reviewed by the group's faculty/staff advisor. The student organization is responsible for assuring that alcohol consumption does not detrimentally affect the health and well-being of those attending the event.

Recognized student organizations may hold events involving alcoholic beverages under the following conditions:

1. The possession, sale, use or consumption of alcoholic beverages, in public areas of the campus is prohibited.
2. Any activity sponsored, authorized, sanctioned, endorsed, and/or financed by a recognized student organization must be in compliance with any and all applicable laws and rules of the state, county, city, and Tarleton State University, and must comply with third party vendor guidelines. In addition, the event or activity must be reviewed by the group's faculty/staff advisor.
3. Permission to serve alcoholic beverages at a social activity where students will or may be in attendance can only be obtained through the Department of Student Involvement, or designee. Before permission is given, the organization advisor must acknowledge that reasonable measures have been put into place ensuring that alcoholic beverages are served only to those persons who are of legal age. Such responsibility may be assumed only after completing the Social Host Responsibility session coordinated through the Department of Student Involvement. This session will be offered periodically throughout the year. Please contact the Department of Student Involvement for details at x.9040.



4. Per 100 people estimated to be in attendance, two members must be sober monitors and must complete the Social Host Responsibility session offered through the Department of Student Involvement.
5. Third Party Vendors must meet the following guidelines:
 - a. Must have all necessary licenses to serve alcohol.
 - b. Must provide an area that is private or semi-private. Privacy is determined by the ability to control access to the area of the social activity and limit attendance to invited guests only.
 - c. Must have Insurance that is up to date and meets the requirements of the Texas A & M University System (System) and Tarleton State University.
6. No alcoholic beverage may be purchased through a recognized student organization's funds, nor may the purchase of alcohol for members or guests be undertaken or coordinated by any member in the name of, or on behalf of, the recognized student organization. The purchase or use of bulk quantity or common sources of such alcoholic beverage (i.e. kegs or cases) is prohibited.
7. Open events, meaning those with unrestricted access to non-members of the recognized student organization, without specific invitation, where alcohol is present, are prohibited. (University tailgates are an exception.)
8. No members, collectively or individually shall purchase for, serve to, or sell alcoholic beverages to any minor (i.e. those under legal drinking age).
9. No recognized student organization may enter into an agreement to co-sponsor an event with an alcohol distributor, charitable organization or tavern (tavern defined as an establishment generating more than half of the annual gross sales from alcohol) where alcohol is given away, sold, or otherwise provided to those present.
10. No recognized student organization may co-sponsor or co-finance a function where alcohol is purchased by any of the host organizations or groups.
11. All membership recruitment activities associated with any student organization shall be alcohol free.
12. No alcohol shall be present at any new member activity of any recognized student organization.



13. The recognized student organization or organizations must establish active precautionary measures to ensure that alcoholic beverages are not served to persons under the legal drinking age or to persons who appear to be intoxicated.
14. No event shall include any form of "drinking contest" or encourage the rapid consumption of alcohol in the activity or its promotion.
15. Non-alcoholic beverages and non-salty food must be available at the same place as the alcoholic beverages. Food and non-alcoholic beverages must be featured as prominently as the alcoholic beverages.
16. University Advertisement Rules Regarding Student Organization-Sponsored Events with Alcoholic Beverages, advertising of University events where alcoholic beverages will be consumed must be consistent with the educational philosophy of Tarleton and follow the Publicity and Solicitation Policy:
 - a. Any promotion must not advertise or promote the use of alcohol, tobacco, firearms, or illegal substances. (This includes images, drink specials, liquor/beer logos, etc.)
 - b. Advertisement for such events may not be publicly posted outside of the university community.
 - c. The messages conveyed in the promotion of any event must not encourage any form of misuse of alcohol.
 - d. The message may not promote discriminatory, subversive, or unlawful behavior.
 - e. Publicity must not convey that consumption of alcohol is the purpose or reason for the event.
 - f. Promotion must not refer to the amount/quantity of alcohol.
 - g. Advertisements for events must not portray drinking as a solution to personal or academic problems nor as necessary to social, sexual or academic success.
 - h. Alcoholic beverages must not be provided as awards, door prizes, or giveaways to individuals or campus organizations.
 - i. Publicity must include the individual or organization name, date of event, and contact information
 - j. Promotion must be reviewed and approved by Student Affairs Marketing & Communications prior to display or distribution. Additional approval may be required depending on the type or location.

Student Travel

Students participating in an activity or event that is located more than 25 miles from the University are required to follow travel safety guidelines and register their travel with the University when the trip meets one or more of the following criteria:

- funded by the University and students use a vehicle owned or leased by the University; or
- required by a student organization recognized at the University; or
- undertaken under the scope, direction, or election of a college, department, class, university office, learning community, study abroad program, recognized student organization, or their representatives.

Further details and instructions regarding additional safety requirements can be found at www.tarleton.edu/studenttravel.

Discrimination

Tarleton State University in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Hazing

Tarleton State University has a zero tolerance policy on [hazing](#). "Hazing" means any intentional or reckless act occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are students at an educational institution.



RSO Conduct Review Process

Recognized student organizations have a responsibility to abide by all conditions of these rules and the university's Student Conduct Code. Actions of all recognized student organizations are subject to review by the Dean of Students or his/her designate. Failure to comply with the rules and/or University Student Conduct Code may lead to the revocation of recognition privileges, probation, suspension, expulsion or any lesser sanction.

Contact Information

For more information, call the Department of Student Involvement, Spirit, Traditions, and Family Relations at 254-968-9490.