



# **PITT GREENSBURG STUDENT ORGANIZATION CERTIFICATION PACKET**

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This packet is designed to assist organizations in the construction of their organization and aid the certification process for the organization at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.

If you have questions, please contact the Senate president, Speaker of the House, or the Director of Student Involvement.

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# GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATION CERTIFICATION

## **PURPOSE**

The University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg herein establishes a student organization certification system to ensure the rights of students to freely form associations, to maintain the right to choose which student organizations it recognizes, and to define the relationship between the University and student organizations. It also ensures that certification requirements, privileges, policies, and procedures are administered in a non-discriminatory manner.

## **INTENT**

The University expressly permits only certified student organizations to operate on campus. Although organizations are permitted to have external affiliations and may be part of an incorporated external group or individually incorporated, certification only sanctions the existence and operation of an organization on campus. Off campus activities of certified student organizations, unless expressly approved and/or sponsored in advance by the University, are the sole responsibility of the organization, its officers, and members.

Certified student organizations are private student groups and are not official components of the University. Certification does not permit a student organization to act on behalf of the University, engage in any contractual obligation in the name of the University, nor represent itself as being officially part of the University.

Certification requirements apply to all student organizations. The University provides for two levels of certification--**Registration** and **Recognition**.

## **REGISTRATION**

A student organization is accorded **Registered** status if it meets the standard requirements for certification.

## **RECOGNITION**

Certification as a **Recognized** student organization is accorded to registered student organizations that have established a working relationship with a University Department. The nature and extent of the working relationship are determined only by the department administrator. The activities and programs of recognized student organizations are not considered official programs of the University unless expressly approved and/or sponsored by the chief administrator of that department.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION**

1. Submit required information to the Sutable & the Office of Student Involvement.
2. Accurately disclose and operate in accordance with the organization's stated purpose.
3. Submit a constitution and bylaws according to prescribed standards.
4. Submit a membership list.
5. Agree to and comply with the regulations and limitations of certification.
6. Agree to and comply with the nature and acceptance of the Assumption of Risk.

7. Agree to and comply with the Publications Code for student organizations.
8. Limit voting membership to registered Pitt Greensburg students.
9. Sustain an active membership of at least five (5) Pitt Greensburg students.
10. Maintain a membership comprised of at least seventy-five percent (75%) Pitt Greensburg students.
11. Maintain at least four (4) student officers in good academic and social standing.
12. Retain a Pitt Greensburg faculty or staff member as an advisor.
13. Appoint a member of the organization to serve in the Student Government Association (SGA) House of Representatives
14. Provide the constitution and bylaws of any external affiliations(s); and certify that all conditions for affiliation meet University standards.
15. Within two (2) weeks, submit all constitution, bylaw, officer, and advisor changes.
16. Submit a re-certification information annually.
17. Adhere to University policies, procedures, and local, state, and federal laws.
18. Complete and participate in all required organizational training courses.
19. Adhere to all policies and procedures as outlined in any required organization trainings.
20. Refrain from advocating, inciting, or participating in any material interference or physical disruption of the University.
21. Refrain from the use of deceptive recruitment practices and the use of coercion, manipulation, and proselytism techniques as a means of recruitment.
22. Refrain from participation in any hazing activities.
23. Refrain from any illegal discrimination.
24. Comply with the Pitt Greensburg Alcohol Policy.
25. Conduct all activities in a manner consistent with the educational mission of the University.
26. Conduct all activities in a manner that contributes to the intellectual, ethical, psychological, and personal growth of the organization's members.
27. Refrain from using the organization for the financial enrichment of any officer, member, or affiliate.
28. Refrain from directly or indirectly using University resources for the express benefit of external affiliates.
29. Use dues and other fundraisers for the express benefit of the organization and in fulfillment of its purpose.

30. Maintain an SGA account as required and refrain from maintaining outside bank accounts.
31. Refrain from entering or attempting to enter contractual obligations for the University without prior authorization from the Office of Student Life & Success.
32. Refrain from directly or indirectly using University resources in support of any candidate for public office, except as permitted by University policy.
33. Refrain from soliciting funds outside the University without the express approval from the Office of Student Life & Success.
34. The group will not represent itself as part of or as officially recognized by the University.
35. Student Organizations must adhere to the decisions of the SGA.

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION**

1. The registered student organization must have established a working relationship with a University department. The departmental administrator must submit standard documentation approving recognition and acknowledging the existence of the working relationship.
2. The purpose and activities of the group must be compatible with the mission of the operating unit.
3. For groups collaborating with academic units, recognition status must be approved by the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and for all other groups, must be approved by the Dean of Student Life & Success or his/her designee. The department may establish additional policies and procedures to guide and define the working relationship.

#### **PRIVILEGES OF CERTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION**

All REGISTERED student organizations shall be:

1. Eligible to use University facilities, equipment, and services according to prescribed policies and procedures.
2. Eligible to apply for funding under the policies and procedures set forth in the Student Government Association constitution and bylaws.
3. Eligible to receive professional advising and other services from the Office of Student Life & Success.
4. Eligible to collect dues, sponsor fund-raising events, and solicit funds according to University policy.
5. Eligible to receive awards and honors presented to college organizations and members.
6. Eligible to be listed in University and student publications.
7. Eligible to participate in University and student activities.
8. Eligible to sponsor program activities consistent with the purpose of the organization.
9. Eligible to distribute literature and organizational materials according to established University policies and procedures.

10. Eligible to apply for an SGA account and to use the University business office. If a student organization is not a registered group for two or more years, the SGA account will be closed and the funds in the account will be placed into the general SGA account for reallocation.

11. Eligible to request assistance from the SGA Public Relations Chairperson to promote organizational activities.

12. Eligible to apply for student organization space.

#### **ADDITIONAL PRIVILEGES OF RECOGNITION**

1. The organization may use the name of the University on campus for the sole purpose of distinguishing its status as a recognized student organization.
2. The student organization is granted exclusivity of purpose and function. The department may provide additional certification privileges.

#### **REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION**

Failure to submit the annual recertification application or any changes in the constitution and bylaws, affiliations, advisor, and/or officers according to established time frames may result in suspension of certification.

Failure of the House Representative to attend SGA House Meetings or of members to adhere to University or SGA Policies may also lead to revocation of certification.

Violation of certification requirements may result in revocation of certification. The Dean of Student Life & Success or his/her designee decides all violations. The decision of the Dean may be appealed to the President whose decision is final.

Recognition status may be rescinded at the discretion of the sponsoring department with which the group has established a working relationship, or by the applicable Dean or Director. **Revocation of Recognition changes the certification status of the group to Registered.**

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

The Certification Program is administered by the Office of Student Life & Success, 219 Chambers Hall.

## **ASSUMPTION OF RISK**

It is understood and agreed that participation in all activities of certified student organizations is voluntary and that all risk of personal injury, property damage or other loss which occur incidental to membership or participation in activities are assumed solely by the student organization and/or individual member(s) or participant(s).

Accordingly, the University, its officers and agents shall not be responsible nor liable for any claims or causes of action for damage or loss of property or personal injury of any kind or nature which may arise out of or are incidental to the conduct of any organization's activities or that of any individual's participation in any group-related activity.

It is further understood and agreed that it is the responsibility of the administrative officers of the organization to ensure that all the organization's members and non-member participants in all activities sponsored by the organization or group are fully informed and advised of this Assumption of Risk, and in the event any individual member or participant should express or indicate non-acceptance, the organization's the organization's officers shall forbid participation and/or membership of such individual.

Regarding organization/ participant assumption of risk, the University recommends that organization and/ or participants make every effort to arrange for the acquisition of liability insurance sufficient to protect all participants against those risks being assumed. Similarly, for sport-related organizations the University recommends that everyone have insurance sufficient to allow for any risks by participation, accident or by deficiencies in physical health.

## **PUBLICATION CODE**

It is agreed that the publications of the organization will:

1. Comply with current copyright laws.
2. Be distributed according to University policies and procedures.
3. Refrain from expressions that are considered obscene or libelous according to current statute, advocate or incite the material interference or physical disruption of the educational process or the peace, order, and decorum of the campus, or that advocate or incite imminent lawless action or the violent overthrow of the government.
4. Identify the organization as publisher and specify that the group is a certified student organization at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.
5. Organizations are strongly required to include the following disclaimer in all advertisements related to a speaker event: *"The University of Pittsburgh embraces its role to foster a diverse educational experience for all students through the free expression and exchange of ideas. The use of a University facility for this event does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by the University of any speaker, presentation, content or expressed viewpoint."*
  - Hosting organizations also may consider issuing a written or verbal statement that the scheduled event may contain material that does not align with beliefs and perspectives of those who attend.

## GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATION CONSTITUTIONS

A student organization constitution must be specific and detailed enough to guide the organization in a consistent manner from year to year. The constitution should be the organization's primary operational guide and not simply a document that is filed away and forgotten. Also, the constitution must be specific enough to demonstrate that the conditions of registration have been met. Therefore, your constitution should be developed according to the following guidelines.

**ORGANIZATION NAME:** Specify the official name and any abbreviated names. Do not include the name of the University in any way.

**PREAMBLE:** State the organization's mission, goals, and specific purposes. Be clear, precise, and definitive. This statement will be used to describe your organization in published materials.

**OFFICERS:** Four students currently enrolled and in good academic and social standing at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg are required. Each organization should designate at least a president, vice-president, and business manager. Specify the number and title of your officers. Detail each officer's responsibilities and duties to distribute the work and the authority necessary to perform the role.

**OFFICER ELECTION:** Officer elections should occur annually at a specified time and through a defined process. We suggest that elections take place at the close of the fall term. Also, specify: (1) the nomination procedure, (2) the eligibility requirements for each office, (3) the election process including when, where and how the votes are to be cast, counted, and announced, (4) the eligibility requirements for voting, (5) the vote required to elect an officer, e.g. a simple majority of votes cast versus a simple majority of eligible members, (6) whether or not an officer can hold more than one position, and (7) whether or not absentee or proxy ballots can be cast.

**TERM OF OFFICE:** Specify the dates of the term of each office.

**REMOVAL OF OFFICERS:** There is no need to specify when an officer can be removed, but it is essential to define the process by which officers are removed and the vote required to approve removal.

**VOTING POWERS OF OFFICERS:** Officers retain voting rights. However, the President often votes only in case of a tie.

**VACANCIES:** When an officer resigns or is removed, the vacancy should be filled. Define the process by which vacancies are filled and how the decision is made to fill the vacancy. Specify the term of the replacement officer, which is the remainder of the current term of office.

**MEMBERSHIP:** No illegal discriminatory criteria may be used as a basis for membership. All groups, except those exempt by law, must allow male and female membership. Sport clubs involving contact or competitive selection may limit participation in competition to one sex but must permit membership to both sexes. All forms of hazing are expressly prohibited. Include a statement like the following:

"Membership is open to all currently enrolled students, and the faculty and staff of the University of Pittsburgh. Student membership will always comprise at least 75% of the membership. No hazing or illegal discrimination will be used as a condition of membership in the organization."

Active voting membership must be limited to Pitt students, faculty, and staff. University alumni and members of the community may be affiliated members but may not vote or hold office. The privileges afforded faculty and staff may likewise be limited. The organization may choose whether to permit faculty and staff membership, but at no time shall student membership fall below seventy-five percent.

Organizations may limit membership by selective criteria that are not discriminatory. For example, the Italian Club cannot limit membership to Italians but can limit membership to students enrolled as language majors. Similarly, membership may be limited by department, Q.P.A., etc.

The membership section should also include: (1) when the recruitment takes place or when membership is open, (2) the application procedure, (3) the method of selection or approval, (4) the duties of members to maintain active status, (5) the privileges of membership, (6) how membership is revoked, (7) the financial obligations for members specifying how they are determined, when they are due and the penalty for non-payment, and (8) the definition of inactive status, the criteria for determining inactive status, the consequences and reinstatement procedures.

**COMMITTEES:** Identify the name, function, composition, and specific duties. Specify who chairs the committee, how the chairperson is selected, and its powers and duties. Also, specify how standing and ad hoc committees are established and terminated.

**MEETINGS:** Specify a regular meeting schedule and who may attend the meetings. Specify quorum requirements to officially conduct and approve organization business. State how and by whom special meetings can be called and what kind of notice is required. Specify who chairs the meetings, define their powers, and adopt Robert's Rules of Order.

**FINANCES:** Define budget policies and procedures and who has the authority to spend the organization funds. Specify any limitations on how the funds can be spent.

**ADVISOR:** All organizations must have a faculty or staff advisor. Define the advisor's role, responsibilities, duties, and authority.

**EXTERNAL AFFILIATIONS:** Identify any external affiliations. Specify how the organization relates to external affiliates and the requirements of the relationship.

**PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:** Specify how organization programs and services are selected and approved by the membership.

**PUBLICATIONS:** All organization publications must comply with the Publication Code. As a result, all publications should be formally approved by the group. Any requirements should be specified.

**AMENDMENTS:** Define the process to approve amendments. Detail the procedures and vote required for amending the constitution.

**OTHER:** Include any other statements that are intended to provide guidance for the operation of the group in a consistent manner.