



OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Effective: June 23, 2025

ANTI-HAZING POLICY

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Approval Authority	President
Responsible Administrator	Assistant Dean of Students
Responsible Office	Student Affairs
Policy Contact	Assistant Dean of Students

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Tennessee State University (TSU) prohibits all forms of hazing in connection with any student organization, as defined under federal and state law. Hazing endangers the physical and mental health of students and violates the values and expectations of TSU's academic and social community. This policy applies to all TSU students, student organizations, faculty, and staff and is deemed incorporated into the constitution of each TSU student organization.

2.0 IMPORTANCE AND REASON FOR THE POLICY

This policy is established in compliance with the federal Stop Campus Hazing Act and the Tennessee Anti-Hazing Law (T.C.A. § 49-7-123) and is intended to protect TSU students from the dangers of hazing. Hazing has no place in higher education and poses serious risks to student well-being, campus safety, and institutional integrity. This policy outlines clear definitions, reporting mechanisms, enforcement procedures, and mandatory training requirements. It reflects TSU's commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members of the university community.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- I. **"Hazing"** is defined in Section 485(f)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)) (HEA), as follows: any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with other persons, against a student regardless of that student's willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that (i) is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student

organization; and (ii) causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury including —

- A. whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;
- B. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;
- C. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
- D. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
- E. any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
- F. any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, state, tribal, or federal law; and
- G. any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, state, tribal, or federal law.

“Hazing” is further defined in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-7-123(a)(1), which provides that “hazing” means any intentional or reckless act in Tennessee on or off TSU property by one (1) student acting alone or with others that is directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student or that induces or coerces a student to endanger the student's mental or physical health or safety. "Hazing" does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization.

- II. **“Student Organization”** is defined as any group or entity at TSU in which two or more members are enrolled students, including but not limited to clubs, societies, athletic teams (varsity, junior varsity, or club), fraternities, sororities, bands, or student government—regardless of whether the organization is established or recognized by TSU.

4.0 POLICY

I. Prohibition and Reporting

Hazing of a student is strictly prohibited. This prohibition applies to any conduct—whether on or off campus—connected to membership, affiliation, or participation in a Student Organization.

Hazing is contextual in nature. It may include acts that are subtle, harassing, or even violent and create potential for psychological and/or physical harm. Examples of hazing may include, but are not limited to, deception; assignment of demerits; silence periods with implied threats for violation; social isolation; use of demeaning names; expecting abuse or mistreatment of animals; exploiting a power imbalance, such as between new members and the rest of the group; intimidation; expecting certain items to be in one's possession; controlling a student's time; verbal abuse; threats or implied threats; asking members to wear embarrassing attire; stunts or skits with degrading, crude, or humiliating acts; sleep deprivation; sexual simulations; personal servitude; physical or mental exhaustion; public nudity; assigning pranks such as stealing, painting, or harassing others; forced or coerced consumption of substances, such as alcohol or drugs; branding; threats or implied threats; abduction or kidnapping; sexual assault, and physical assault or abuse.

Hazing is a criminal offense under Tennessee law and a violation of TSU's Student Code of Conduct. Penalties for hazing can include criminal penalties, fines, civil lawsuits, and expulsion from school.

Any person who believes that another person is in serious physical danger should immediately call 911 to obtain immediate medical assistance. Incidents of hazing may be reported to TSU Police Department, residential assistants, or through the TSU Hazing Reporting Maxient Form, which allows for anonymous submissions.

II. Investigation and Disciplinary Action

All hazing reports will be promptly and thoroughly investigated by the Assistant Dean of Students, in coordination with the Executive Director Office of Institutional Compliance and Title IX, when applicable, as well as other relevant TSU administrators.

For students, being in the presence of a violation of hazing without reporting it could be considered a violation of applicable sections of the TSU Student Code of Conduct. If a violation is found, the university may impose disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, sanctions against individual students under the TSU Student Code of Conduct, suspension or revocation of a student organization's constitution or privileges, and, where appropriate, referral for criminal prosecution.

For employees, a failure to report hazing may violate applicable standards of conduct or other university policies and lead to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Retaliation against individuals who make good faith reports of hazing or participate in related investigations is prohibited.

III. Education and Organizational Compliance

Per T.C.A. § 49-7-123(b), the university's anti-hazing policy will be distributed to students annually and addressed during orientation, including its status as a criminal offense.

To support prevention and awareness efforts, TSU will conduct mandatory anti-hazing training programs twice a year. The training should include primary prevention strategies and components such as skill building for bystander intervention, information about ethical leadership, and/or the promotion of strategies for building group cohesion without hazing. All training will be based on evidence-based best practices in hazing prevention.

All Student Organizations that inform Student Affairs about students joining their groups will also have the Assistant Dean of Student Engagement and Leadership engage with the student leaders of the Student Organization. This will be followed by a check-in with the members of the Student Organization to ensure compliance with the process.

Additional training will be provided for student life personnel, campus security authorities, and faculty advisors.

5.0 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

- TSU Student Code of Conduct
- Tennessee Code Annotated §§ 49-7-123 and 49-2-120
- 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A) (Higher Education Act)
- Stop Campus Hazing Act

6.0 HISTORY

Policy Revised: N/A

Last Reviewed: June 2025