

The purpose of this policy is to assist fraternities and sororities at the University of Houston in the execution of their Membership Intake Programs. This document is meant to educate UH fraternity and sorority members, their advisors, and potential new members about the Membership Intake expectations, policies, and procedures of the University of Houston's Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life. It is our goal to create a positive experience for all involved through collaboration between the office, chapter members, graduate chapter/alumni Advisors, and (inter) national headquarters/boards.

Privacy Statement

To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of all chapters conducting Membership Intake, the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life ensures that all documents submitted regarding Membership Intake will be kept confidential from students, student employees, or student leaders, including council officers. Any Membership Intake information will only be shared with Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life staff, corresponding graduate chapter/alumni advisors, corresponding chapter president and Membership Intake Coordinator(s), and (inter) national headquarters/regional staff/representative as needed. Membership Intake files will be stored by the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life for a minimum of twenty-four (24) months.

Note: No chapter will be required or asked to submit any ritualistic information. Only the dates of rituals should be submitted.

Prohibition of Hazing

University's Policy on Hazing states:

The University of Houston prohibits hazing by any student, student organization or employee. No student, organization, or employee of the University Houston (UH) shall engage in, encourage, aid, or assist any other person in what is commonly known and recognized as hazing. Any and all individuals who have knowledge of conduct that might constitute hazing must report the conduct to the Dean of Students Office.

Hazing is defined as any action taken or situation created which, regardless of intent or consent of the participants:

- (A) Produces or is reasonably likely to produce, bodily harm or danger, mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, fright, humiliation or ridicule, or otherwise compromises the dignity of an individual;
- (B) Compels an individual to participate in any activity which is unlawful and/or contrary to the rules, policies and regulations of the University;
- (C) Will, unreasonably or unusually, impair an individual's academic efforts, and/or
- (D) Occurs on or off campus.

In addition to the university's policy "Hazing" as defined in the Texas Education Code means any intentional, knowing, 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 a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization. The term includes:

- (A) any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
- (B) any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- (C) any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- (D) any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subdivision; and
- (E) any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal Code.

In recognition of FIPG and (inter) national organizational standards, the activities listed below are also considered hazing by the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life:

- requiring active members to be called a particular title other than those prescribed by the (inter) national organization (if any)
- throwing harmful substances at members
- any activity requiring members to march around particular locations
- treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, quests and abandonment

- wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste
- line-ups
- quizzing or testing on meaningless information or while under duress

The above definition applies to any act conducted on or off the UH campus.

Expectations of Organizations Conducting Intake

- The academic mission of the institution will be upheld and promoted to aspirants
- Membership intake activities will not interfere with academic endeavors or class schedules, it will not occur between the hours of 12 a.m. and 8 a.m., and will not include the presence or consumption of alcohol.
- Chapters will not engage in pre or post hazing activities. Hazing is not tolerated in any form—as part of the new member program or as acts of individual members of the chapter.
- The selection of aspirants will be free of any form of mental and/or physical abuse and hazing.
- Members will be selected on the criteria set forth by the (inter) national organization.
- Chapters will be in good standing with their (inter) national organization, their respective council, the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life and the University of Houston.
- Chapters will complete all required paperwork thoroughly, in a timely fashion, and will not willingly omit any information.
- Aspirants will be thoroughly educated on the University of Houston Hazing Policy by the chapter.
- Chapters are not to engage in any Membership Intake activities outside of the parameters outlined by their (inter) national headquarters/organizations.
- All membership intake activities (including New Member Presentations and any alternatives) are to conclude prior to the first day of finals.
- The practice of surprising aspirants with the date/and or time of initiation is not acceptable.
- Aspirants should never be subject to sleep deprivation, servitude and/or moral degradation or humiliation.
- Aspirants should never be forced to stay or live anywhere against their will.

Aspirants' Rights

The Membership Intake process should be conducted in a manner that respects the dignity of aspirants and protects their mental and physical well-being. Examples of acceptable behavior include activities that are not classified as hazing, but promote scholarship, promote service, develop leadership and/or social skills, assist career goals, involve students with alumni/ae, improve relations with others, build awareness of fraternity or sorority history, instill a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood, foster chapter solidarity or otherwise promote the institutional mission of the University.

Membership Intake Procedures

A. Prior to any Membership Intake activities being planned:

1. The organization will ensure that the official Membership Intake education policy set forth by the (inter) national organization will be on file with the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life (including any rules pertaining to New Member Presentations or its alternatives (presents, formal, salute), and parties related to celebrating aspirants).
2. Each chapter will receive a letter from CFSL certifying the chapter is in good standing for the semester and eligible for intake activities within **five (5) business days** after the organization is approved as a registered student organization.
3. The organization must provide official verification from their respective council that all dates have been approved.
4. Following receipt of this letter, all chapters must fill out the Membership Intake Intent Form to specify whether they intend to complete Membership Intake that semester or not. This form must be returned to the CFSL within **fifteen (15) business days** of the start of the semester (but before any Informational and before Membership Intake activities begin). Failure to submit this form will result in an organization being placed on probation with the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life.
5. The Membership Intake Coordinator (MIC) and Chapter President must schedule a meeting with the Council Advisor at least ten **(10) business days** prior to the start of the Membership Intake Process. At the meeting, the MIC and Chapter President will provide the following:
 - (a) Any (inter) national and/or regional documents that are to be completed by CFSL (including any letters that need to be written to specific organization representatives with deadlines, exact wording needed, name of representative, and the mailing address, phone number(s), and email for such representative)
 - (b) Completed Notice of Membership Intake
 - (c) Signed copy of the Anti-Hazing Agreement
 - (d) Completed Membership Intake Coordinator Agreement
 - (e) Outline of the Membership Intake Process which should include (but is not limited to):
 - i. All educational sessions

- ii. Study dates
- iii. Initiation date
- iv. Community service projects
- v. Leadership development programs
- vi. Big brother/sister activities
- vii. Activities in which members will have an opportunity to meet and be involved with alumni/ae

NOTE: Failure to bring any of these items entirely completed to this meeting will result in the meeting being rescheduled for a later date.

B. Following the meeting between the chapter representatives and the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life:

1. Within **five (5) business days**, the Chapter President and Membership Intake Coordinator will receive a letter from CFSL certifying whether the Membership Intake process has been approved or not approved based on pending details. **If an organization has been approved**, they may begin the Membership Intake process. In the event the Membership Intake process **has not been approved**, the organization will need to submit additional information. It is important to understand that **without prior approval from CFSL to begin the Membership Intake process, the process will not be officially or formally recognized by CFSL.**
2. **Five (5) business days** following the chapter's Interest Meeting, the MIC will submit the attendance sheet(s) for each Interest Meeting conducted.
3. **Five (5) business days before** the beginning of all Membership Intake activities, the MIC will submit a letter from a (inter) national or regional official stating the chapter is eligible to conduct Membership Intake activities.
4. **Five (5) business days after the start** of the Membership Intake process (based on the timeline listed on the Notice of Membership Intake), the Verification of Aspirants and Grade Consent Form must be turned in. The Verification Form must include the names of all individuals approved by your organization submitted to your regional and/or (inter) national representatives as aspirants for membership. Additionally, at this time any **changes to the Notice of Membership Intake form must be submitted.**

C. Following Initiation:

1. Chapter Presidents must submit the End of Intake Report to CFSL within **five (5) business days** of initiation.
2. New Member Presentation: If the organization intends to have a New Member Presentation or its alternate (presents, formals, salute), the *New Member Presentation Agreement* must be submitted to CFSL at least **fifteen (15) business days** prior to the date of the show.
3. If the organization does not intend to have a New Member Presentation, written notice of any alternative activities (including date, time, location, and description of the activity) must be submitted to CFSL within **ten (10) business days** of the activity taking place. **This activity must be approved by CFSL for it to take place.**

Forms

All forms submitted must include original signatures. Without the submission of the proper paperwork, Membership Intake activities will not be approved. Should Membership Intake activities begin without adherence to the above mentioned policies and procedures, Membership Intake activities will cease immediately and the organization will be referred for judicial proceedings.

Organizational Qualifications for Membership Intake

All organizations participating in Membership Intake must be in good standing with CFSL, their respective council, and (inter) national organization. To be considered in good standing, organizations must be fiscally and judicially sound with their respective council, the CFSL, the university and the (inter) national organization. In the event the (inter) national organization requires the chapter to be certified in order to conduct Membership Intake activities, proof of such certification will be required for the Intake processes to be approved. If an organization has a question regarding their status, they are to contact the Council Advisor, Chapter Coach, and/or their (inter) national organization.

Aspirants' Qualifications for Membership Intake

All aspirants must meet the (inter) national organization's minimum academic (grades and credit hour) requirements in order to take part in Membership Intake. The criteria designated by the (inter) national organization should be the only criteria used for qualifying members for Membership Intake. Any additional criteria designated by the (inter) national organization must also be met by aspirants'.

Timeline of Membership Intake Activities

All Membership Intake activities shall be conducted only in the fall or spring semester of each academic year. Special permission for any summer Membership Intake activities must be attained from the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life. All Membership Intake processes required during the regular school year are also required during the summer.

The Membership Intake process will not last any longer than what the (inter) national headquarters/ (inter) national body for each organization has approved. If an organization is not able to comply with these steps (due to requirements from its (inter) national headquarters/ (inter) national body), **minor** alterations are acceptable as long as **changes and reason for the changes are submitted in writing by the Chapter Advisor, the Regional Director and/or (inter) national headquarters at least five (5) business days prior to the change.** These changes must be approved by CFSL for

them to be considered valid. Failure to submit these changes and gain approval from CFSL will result in a violation of the Membership Intake Policy.

Interest Meeting

The Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life (CFSL) defines an Interest Meeting as *a meeting held by an organization for aspirants who are seeking general information about the organization and/or a formal meeting held by an organization for potential members that details the application process, rules of the organization, and allows them to show interest in being considered for membership.* Based on these definitions, all Membership Intake paperwork should be filled out according to these descriptions. The Interest Meeting Attendance Sheet must be filled out and submitted to CFSL within **five (5) business days** of the Interest Meeting.

Interest Meeting without Conducting Intake

The nature of an Interest Meeting is to provide aspirants with general information about the organization. An organization can host an Interest Meeting without conducting Membership Intake the same semester. In order to do this, organizations must fill out the Membership Intake Intent Form within the specified deadline and indicate in the form that they will host an Interest Meeting. Dates, times, and locations need to also be submitted to CFSL. The Interest Meeting Attendance Sheet must be filled out and submitted to CFSL within **five (5) business days** of the Interest Meeting.

Following the Interest Meeting, organizations are not to engage in any pre-pledging activities not part of the (inter) national Membership Intake process with these members.

Flyers for Interest Meetings

The chapter will turn in to CFSL a copy of the flyer promoting Interest Meetings at least ten (10) business days prior to the event.

Interest Groups

The Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life (CFSL) understands that each (inter) national organization conducts their Intake Processes in different steps or styles. With this in mind, any organization that has a formalized interest group process on a (inter) national level must get approval for such process from CFSL. In order to gain approval, each semester organizations must submit supporting documents from the (inter) national organization documenting the interest group process, requirements, and timeline and meet with the office coordinator for new membership. Following this meeting, organizations will receive a letter certifying whether their interest group process has been approved. Once the interest group process has been approved, organizations will be allowed to select interest group members and/or start their interest group activities. Within five (5) business days of any Interest Group activity, organizations must submit the Interest Group Activity Report form. Membership in Interest Groups cannot be longer than the requirements the national organization allows.

New Member Presentations

A copy of the organization's (inter) national policy on New Member Presentations must be on file with the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life before planning for this type of event takes place.

- A. Space must be reserved through the Reservations Office for any type of presentation.
- B. Prior approval from the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life must be obtained for any type of new member presentation activities (and the proper paperwork must be submitted by the appropriate deadlines).
- C. Presentation of aspirants must take place no more than 30 business days after the members have been initiated into the organization.
- D. Presentations should not take place during finals.
- E. Presentations should not take place during University holidays/closure or on weekends.

Alternatives to New Member Presentations

Organizations that do not conclude Membership Intake with a New Member Presentation but would like to have another method of introducing aspirants to the community must have the approval of the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life as well as their Regional Director. Approval is gained after submitting written notice of any alternative activities (including date, time, location, and description of the activity) to the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life fifteen (15) business days prior to the activity taking place and receiving written notification that the activity has been approved from the Council Advisor and respective council. All rules pertaining to New Member Presentations apply to alternate presentations and should not resemble a New Member Presentation in any way and should therefore not include any of the following: choreographed and/or coordinated steps or movement, unveiling/unmasking of any members, activities beyond the reasonable introduction of a member and/or disruptions of normal University affairs.

After Parties

If the organization intends to host a party following the New Member Presentation, the organization must have the event approved through the council constitution. The organization should go through the proper reservations process and comply with all policies and deadlines regarding social events.

Violations

A judicial process to determine violations of the Membership Intake policy and/or the anti-hazing policy by organizations and its members will be handled through the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life and the Dean of Students Office under *falsification of information*. Violations of the intake policy may include (but are not limited to): intentional submission of improper paperwork (falsifying signatures, changing dates without approval, incomplete forms), holding Membership Intake without adherence to the policies and procedures set forth by the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life, and not adhering to the policies of the (inter) national organization, the University of Houston, as well as municipal, state, and federal laws. Penalties for violations may include (but are not limited to): fines in specified amounts; probation for specified academic terms, with or without specified restrictions; loss of privilege of using University space and facilities; and revocation of the privilege of being a registered student organization. The (inter) national office of any student organization violating the anti-hazing policy and Membership Intake policies will be notified of any violations and all penalties.

If you have any questions regarding paperwork that needs to be submitted or about the process for Membership Intake, please contact the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life at (832) 842-4955.