

# HARVARD COLLEGE



## **HARVARD COLLEGE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION PROCESS**

Harvard College seeks to build a community where every student can thrive, and it does so on the foundation of a set of shared values including belonging, inclusion, and non-discrimination. [The College's February 2017 Final Report of the Implementation Committee for the policy on membership in Unrecognized Single Gender Social Organizations](#) and the [September 2017 Final Report of the Faculty Committee on Unrecognized Single-Gender Social Organizations](#) provided recommendations for the definitions, characteristics and expectations of inclusive social organizations who are interested in positively contributing to the social life of the campus community. The recognition process submitted below draws upon these recommendations. In partnership with faculty, staff, and students, the College has adopted this process for recognizing social organizations that are seeking formal recognition from the College.

### **RECOGNIZED SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The category of Recognized Social Organization (RSO) is designed to support organizations comprised primarily of Harvard College undergraduates, whose purpose is primarily social and which do not discriminate on the basis of gender. Becoming an RSO is an important milestone marking a group's commitment to becoming an inclusive community aligned with the educational mission and values of Harvard College. Through recognition the College is verifying a social organization's gender-inclusivity and therefore ensuring students (of the Class of 2021 and later) who belong to RSOs have full access to leadership positions and fellowship opportunities at the College.

### **RSO RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COLLEGE**

RSOs are independent and distinct from Harvard University, as our Independent Student Organizations (ISOs) are. In recognizing an RSO, Harvard College is not adopting its goals, activities, or points of view. Provided that an RSO meets certain requirements, however, the College will verify that an RSO is not an Unrecognized Single Gender Social Organization for purposes of the May 2016 social organization policy. In addition, RSOs will be eligible for certain privileges to support their function as positive and inclusive social spaces at Harvard College. The provision of such privileges does not mean a RSO is a unit of the University, or controlled by the University. These privileges are contingent on a RSO's compliance with all policies outlined for all recognized student organizations. Certain of these policies include that the University is not responsible for a RSO's contracts or other acts or omissions. RSOs, especially those who own or rent space, are therefore encouraged to carry appropriate insurance. RSOs do not qualify for the use of the University's taxpayer identification number or tax-exempt status in connection with purchases and sales, gifts to the RSO, or any other activity. A full

discussion of the applicable policies is set forth in the *Recognized Student Organization Resource and Policy Guide*.

## **PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE FOR 2018-2019 ACADEMIC YEAR**

In order to become an RSO, a group will need to first submit documentation to the Dean of Students Office (DSO). Prior to doing so, we encourage interested student-leaders to carefully note the documentation below which outlines the responsibilities the DSO asks RSOs to take on, and the privileges granted to RSOs in exchange. During the 2018-2019 academic year, this process includes two steps. **The first is an initial submission of materials by August 15, 2018, with an in-person meeting at the beginning of the fall term with administrators of the DSO.** This initial submission of materials will be through a dedicated portal on [theHub](#) (the College's student organization portal) through which an organization will indicate interest, as well as provide some information. RSOs can submit their online submissions starting June 15, 2018. Upon submission of materials, the DSO will determine whether a group is eligible to be an RSO for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The next important deadline for RSOs will be to submit re-registration materials in the spring semester, aligned with our current process for ISOs. Re-registration is an important mechanism through which the leaders of an RSO can participate in a formal review of their first year, as well as a chance to discuss how the DSO can best support their contribution to an open and inclusive campus life. This review will be timed in accordance with the existing process for ISOs in the spring semester, 2019. As part of re-registration leaders will submit updated versions of the information called for below and will also have the opportunity for a qualitative discussion of how the College can effectively partner with them to advance student life in future years, if warranted. The DSO will develop a rubric in consultation with the Leadership Council (below) and provide it to RSOs ahead of the re-registration deadline to help shape these conversations.

Movement among the following categories will be in consultation with the DSO during the annual re-registration period. Any changes to these privileges and responsibilities shall be made ahead of the spring end-of-year re-registration but not take effect until after re-registration occurs.

### **1. INTERIM RECOGNITION**

**This category of recognition is basic, and the minimum standard of recognition for RSOs. Interim Recognition is intended to provide groups with support during their early stages of becoming gender-inclusive, not to provide a standard to which they should aspire long-term. Therefore, this status is open to all RSOs for one academic year. During the re-registration process an additional year at this status may be granted as part of a holistic plan to advance a RSOs work towards gender inclusivity and alignment with RSO community standards, but may require concrete action steps agreed upon between the RSO and DSO.**

- Information on the gender breakdown of current members (this need not include personally identifiable information on each member)

- Documents that publicly affirm a commitment to gender-inclusive membership and recruitment policies (these can be governing documents, or information on an organization's website)
- The appointment of a designated official(s) (can be a student, an alumnus/a of the College, or Harvard faculty/staff) to serve as a liaison(s) between the RSO and the College
- Local autonomy and governance, namely that the RSO must make all policy decisions without obligation to any parent organization, national chapter, or charter, and without direction, interference or pressure from any such entity
- Required designated trainings including, for board members/officers of an RSO, anti-hazing, sexual assault prevention and alcohol harm-reduction training coordinated by the DSO. This training will be provided by appropriate staff and offices at Harvard University

### **Privileges**

- The DSO will verify that the RSO is in compliance with the social organization policy and that members of the class of 2021 and after who join have full access to leadership positions and fellowship opportunities at the College

## **2. FULL RECOGNITION**

**Groups which meet these standards, as well as the policies outlined in the *Recognized Student Organization Resource and Policy Guide* will be formally recognized as social organizations by Harvard College. They will also be eligible for select funding opportunities from the DSO.**

- Information on the gender breakdown of current members (this need not include personally identifiable information on each member)
- Governing documents that demonstrate non-discriminatory membership requirements **as affirmed by FAS**. E.g. that the group's recruitment practices do not discriminate on the basis of "race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, age, veteran status, disability, genetic information, military service, or any other protected status"
- The appointment of a designated official(s) (can be a student, an alumnus/a of the College, or Harvard faculty/staff) to serve as a liaison(s) between the RSO and the College
- Local governance and autonomy namely that the RSO must make all policy decisions without obligation to any parent organization, national chapter, or charter, and without direction, interference or pressure from any such entity
- A recruitment schedule to be provided to the DSO. This will allow us to partner across RSOs as we develop a pathway to recognition which takes into account current recruitment timelines

- Partnership with College offices to offer all members of the group yearly programming in:
  - Anti-hazing awareness, sexual assault prevention, and harm-reduction strategies around drugs and alcohol as well as safe and responsible hosting practices. The DSO will coordinate the provision of this training with appropriate staff and offices at the University

**Privileges:**

- The DSO will verify that the RSO is in compliance with the social organization policy and that members of the class of 2021 and after who join have full access to leadership positions and fellowship opportunities at the College
- Priority Access to space controlled by the DSO including the Cambridge Queen’s Head Pub and the SOCH
- Access to on-campus spaces for events and for meetings; office space (if available, in accordance with existing processes)
- DSO support of recruitment amongst RSOs to ensure access to space, and resources for RSOs as they undergo recruitment. This shall also include publication by the DSO of recruitment information, if an RSO so chooses (e.g. through inclusion in the “You’re Invited” e-mail digest)
- Eligible for leadership development programs, including an annual student-leader retreat
- The DSO will also provide the following to RSOs in good standing:
  - Event Advising and Planning
  - On-Campus Recruitment Opportunities and Support
  - Services and Support Access
  - Finances and Fundraising Management

**3. RECOGNITION WITH DISTINCTION**

**Groups which meet these standards, as well as those outlined in the *Recognized Student Organization Resource and Policy Guide*, in addition to being formally recognized by the College, will be noted on the DSO website as having achieved a standard of excellence. They will also be eligible for awards of distinction from the DSO, and for additional grants to support their inclusive programming efforts.**

- Information on the gender breakdown of current members (this need not include personally identifiable information on each member)
- Governing documents that demonstrate non-discriminatory membership requirements **as affirmed by FAS**. E.g. that the group’s recruitment practices do not discriminate on the basis of “race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, age, veteran status, disability, genetic information, military service, or any other protected status”
- Designated non-student adviser(s) to act as a liaison(s) between the RSO and the College (can be alumnus/a, or staff/faculty at the University)

- Local governance and autonomy namely that the RSO must make all policy decisions without obligation to any parent organization, national chapter, or charter, and without direction, interference or pressure from any such entity
- A recruitment schedule to be provided to the DSO for the purposes of openly sharing recruitment opportunities with all students who may be interested in participating in social organization recruitment events
- Development of recruitment processes which are both open to all students and designed to promote diversity (including gender diversity) in the group's membership and governance
- A program that reduces financial barriers to participation and makes such information readily available to prospective members
- Partnership with College offices to offer all members of the group yearly programming which *substantially advances* the group's understanding and behavior in the areas of sexual assault prevention, harm reduction strategies around alcohol and other drugs, and responsible hosting practices

### **Privileges:**

- The DSO will verify that the RSO is in compliance with the social organization policy and that members of the class of 2021 and after who join have full access to leadership positions and fellowship opportunities at the College
- Priority access to space controlled by the DSO including the Cambridge Queen's Head and the SOCH
- Access to on-campus spaces for events and for meetings
- Coordination by the DSO of recruitment amongst RSOs to ensure access to space and resources for recruitment efforts
- The DSO will also provide the following to RSOs in good standing:
  - Event Advising and Planning
  - On-Campus Recruitment Opportunities and Support
  - Services and Support Access
  - Finances and Fundraising Management
- Eligible for additional financial awards to support select events.
- Will be recognized by the DSO with an award of distinction during the student leadership awards held every spring

### **SOCIAL ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

In addition, the DSO will partner with current student-leaders of RSOs, will facilitate a leadership council to support and inform the development of RSOs as part of the Harvard College community. This council will be drawn from leadership of current RSOs (on a voluntary basis) and will provide an important venue for student leaders of RSOs to partner closely with the College with the goal of mutually supporting the growth of student social life in alignment with the values of Harvard College. The leadership council in partnership with the Committee on Student Life (CSL) and the staff in the DSO to assess the impact of this recognition process during the 2018-2019 academic year. It will also act as a forum through which student-leaders of

different RSOs can develop RSO community values, and share best practices for inclusive recruitment practices, risk management policies and practices, organizational governance, and leadership development.