

RSO ADVISOR MANUAL

Adapted from ACPA's Commission for Student Involvement's Advisor Manual (2006), this guide hopes to serve Registered Student Organization advisors at the University of Washington who are not affiliated with the Student Activities Office. In this manual you will find many tools modified from ACPA, as well as UW specific policies, guidelines, and resources to guide your advising.

Adapted from:

Warkentine-Meyer, Shana, et al. "Advisor Manual." ACPA Advisor Manual, Commission for Student Involvement, 2006,

ACPA

www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/acpaadvisormanual.pdf.pdf.

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About the Student Activities Office

The Student Activities Office (SAO) is home to six advisors who work with more than 1000 Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) on campus, as well as both the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) and the Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS).

All of our RSOs are automatically assigned to an SAO advisor to serve as a main point of contact for questions, funding support, and resources. RSO's have the option of having an additional UW advisor to support the RSO.

Some of the regular responsibilities of SAO advisors include:

- Provide advice and guidance on event and program planning
- Funding resources
- Fundraising support & guidelines
- Organizational growth and development of RSOs
- Help students navigate SAO, University policies & procedures
- Help with membership recruitment and retention
- Meet our team of advisors: <https://hub.washington.edu/sao/sao-advisors/>

Advising

Advisor Roles

As RSO advisors, we all wear many hats. Outlined below are some of the most frequent ways we support our students.

Mentor

Many students will come to see their advisor as a mentor. The success of these relationships can last many years and be rewarding for both the student and the advisor. If the student is seeking an education and a career in your field, you may be asked to assist in his/her professional development. Other times, students will seek out someone to assist with their personal development.

Team Builder

When new officers are elected or new members join the organization, you may need to take the initiative of turning the students from individuals with separate goals and expectations into a team. Positive relationships help the organization succeed and work through conflicts and difficult times. Training students in effective techniques for team building will keep students invested in the organization and give them the opportunity to learn what it takes to build a team.

Conflict Mediator

When working with students who have come into conflict, it may be necessary to meet with them and have them discuss their issues with each other. In many cases, it may be necessary to remind them that they both want what is in the best interest of the organization. Ask them how they think they can work together, point out the organization's mission, and ask how their conduct is helping the group achieve its mission.

Reflective Agent

One of the most essential components to learning in "out of classroom" activities is providing time for students to reflect on how and what they are doing. As an advisor, you will want your officers to talk to you about how they think they are performing, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Give them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on their performance. Then, be honest with them.

Educator

As an advisor, your position as educator will often come through the role modelling of behavior, guiding the student in reflection of their actions, and being there to answer questions. One of the most difficult actions to take as an advisor is to do nothing, but sometimes this can be the most important action of all. Allow the students to make their decisions even if they do not agree with your ideas.

Motivator

You may have to motivate students to excel and to carry out their plans and achieve their goals as their advisor. You can motivate students through the recognition of their efforts, appealing to their desire to create change, and to connecting their experiences here at the University to the experiences they will have in the community.

Policy Interpreter

Student organizations operate under policies, procedures, and rules. At times, students may not be aware of these policies, and they will do things in an inappropriate manner. The more you know about these policies the better advising you can give to the students on their plans.

Reference: <https://www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/acpaadvisormanual.pdf.pdf>

Advising Best Practices

As many of us know, there are many different ways to advise students and student organizations. These are some of the best practices selected by SAO advisors that you can use with your RSO.

- Be knowledgeable of the organization's purpose and constitution and help the general membership adhere to them.
- Be knowledgeable about, and comply with federal, state and local laws and ordinances, as well as campus policies.
- Allow the group to succeed and allow the group to fail. Learn when to speak when not to speak. Remember to let the students make the decisions while you provide guidance and advice.
- Reach out to other advisors or departments (i.e. Student Activities Office) for assistance.

- In the beginning, develop clear expectations about the role of the advisor and your relationship to the organization. This includes when you will be available and not available to the organization.
- Develop a strong working relationship with all of the officers. Help them set goals.
- Orient new officers and members to the history and purpose of the group and help them to build upon it.
- Help to resolve intragroup conflict. Refer to the group's constitution for guidance on how to resolve disputes.
- Enjoy the impact you can have on the students' development. Help to develop the leadership potential within the group.
- Know your group's limits. Help students find a balance between activities and their academic and other responsibilities.
- Serve as a resource for the organization and connect them with other resources.
- Encourage feedback and the evaluation process.

Reference: <https://www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/acpaadvisormanual.pdf.pdf>

Questions to ask your organization

An important part of advising an RSO is knowing which questions to ask to support students in decision making. Below are some questions that will help guide you in your advising.

- What are the preferred methods of communication? What is the best way to reach RSO officers if there is an important question or message and the advisor needs to get a hold of officers in a timely manner?
- What are your expectations of advisor involvement?
- What are the goals of the organization this year? Do you plan to have any events or activities? Ask for a documented calendar of events and goals so you can reference it throughout the year.
- What do RSO members bring to the table? What are their backgrounds and experiences? Which skills can support the organization?
- What are some of the problem areas that your organization specifically needs advisory assistance in dealing with? Ask for past examples.
- What are some of the ways the Advisor can be more helpful to the group?

- What are the expectations for handling conflict if it arises? How familiar are the members with the RSO constitution and SAO policies?
- What are the members looking to get out of their experiences in the RSO? Are there skills they would like to build or projects they would like to work on?
- What is the transition process for the officers? How can the advisor be looped in to support that process?

Reference: <https://www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/acpaadvisormannual.pdf.pdf>

RSO Registration & Status

RSO Status

As indicated by the Board of Regents of the University of Washington, RSOs are INDEPENDENT of the university and are third party organizations. They are not agents of the university and must be treated as such. This includes:

- Registering annually with the Student Activities Office to utilize UW benefits and resources.
- Each RSO has its own constitution, bylaws, and operating procedures. Some exceptions may be approved by the SAO office for organizations that are part of a regional or national organizations.
- Managing their own finances - advisors should not be managing RSO finances.
- Non-SAO advisers are selected at the discretion of each group
- Independently facilitate on and off campus events – RSO's run their own events
- Take on all risk and be held liable in case of injury, property damage or other incident.

If your office or department is providing funding, resources, staff time or website space for any RSO it is recommended that you document the process for RSO's to access those resources. Many departments have an affiliation process for RSO's or a separate funding application. It is important to document these processes so that any RSO can see how to access those resources and no single RSO is receiving preferential treatment.

Requirements for Registered Status

The following requirements must be met in order for student organizations to register at the University of Washington through the Student Activities Office:

- The stated purpose of the student organization must be consistent with the mission of the University and the organization must primarily serve the needs and interests of the students at the UW Seattle.
- The organization must be initiated and controlled/led by UW Seattle students. This includes decisions on budgets, voting, and policy.
- The active (voting) membership and officers or recognized representatives of the organization must be students who are regularly enrolled at the UW Seattle.

- Between quarters, membership is construed to mean the membership of the previous quarter. Summer Quarter is considered a regular quarter. University of Washington Extension and Branch Campus students are not considered currently enrolled UW students and are not eligible to be active (voting) members.
- The number of UW Seattle student members shall always exceed the number of non-student members at meetings and programs not open to the general public.
- Naming a Student Organization: As registered student organizations are not part of the University of Washington, organizations may not use the University of Washington at the beginning of their organization name or "...of the University of Washington" at the end of their organization name. You may use "at the University of Washington" or "UW Chapter" at the end of your organization's name if your organization is affiliated with a national or regional organization.
 - Correct Examples: Sailing Club at the University of Washington; Chess Club, University of Washington Chapter.
 - Incorrect Examples: University of Washington Debate Society; Commuter Students of the University of Washington.
 - You may not use the term "University of Washington" at the beginning of your organization's name or "of the University of Washington," in your organization's advertising or other materials.
- A student organization which restricts membership on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, handicap, sexual orientation, or status as Disabled Veteran, or Vietnam era veteran, shall not be allowed registered student organization status. An exception is made for fraternities and sororities to be single sex organizations per the implementing regulations of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
- In accordance with Use of University Facilities policy (WAC 478.136.101), university facilities may not be used for private or commercial purposes such as sales, advertising, or promotional activities unless they serve an educational purpose. Therefore, student groups may not register with the SAO if they intend to sell, distribute, market or advertise goods or services on behalf of any off-campus commercial entity or affiliate.

Reference: <https://hub.washington.edu/get-involved/sao/rso-registration/>

Good Standing

RSOs must maintain good standing with SAO in order to continue to be officially recognized by the university.

A student organization will be considered in good standing if, for the past 12 months, the organization has complied with all SAO & University policies and procedures. Policy and procedure violations, registered status, unpaid debts, probation status and adjudicated complaints against an organization will be considered in determining good standing.

RSO Resources

Funding

The Student Activities Office, ASUW and GPSS provide funding opportunities for RSOs. Students will follow application directions on our webpage and submit to our office to be reviewed by advisors. Please review the SAO funding policies for more information about how RSO's apply, receive and spend funding from the above groups.

While not all events qualify for our funding sources, we encourage students to fundraise, apply for department funding, or seek corporate sponsorship.

Banking and Tax IDs

An Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, is issued by the Internal Revenue Service and is used to identify a business entity or organization. RSOs will be asked to provide an EIN most commonly when opening a bank account.

The Student Activities Office strongly encourages all RSOs with an EIN to save any documentation from the Internal Revenue Service regarding their EIN and to share that information accordingly among their officers, especially when officers transition.

Off-Campus Banking

Each bank has varying requirements for opening or updating bank account information. SAO can provide a letter of verification for your organization that confirms that your organization is currently registered and identifies officers who registered your organization. This letter can be used to open an account or update signature authorization on an existing account. Contact the SAO front desk to request a letter on behalf of your RSO.

Non-Profit Status

Non-profit or Not-for-Profit status requires being registered with the State of Washington. Additionally, Non-Profits in WA state may also be required to register separately with the Charities Programs if they fundraise from the public. Donations made to an RSO are NOT tax-deductible for the donor under non-profit status.

Tax-Exempt Status

RSOs are legally independent and autonomous from the University and therefore do not have access to the University's tax-exempt status.

RSO Benefits

RSO's who are in good standing with the SAO office have access to a variety of campus benefits including free room space for meetings, free advertising, an ASUW Senate Seat, email services and use of the HUB Resource Center.

For more information on these benefits visit: <https://hub.washington.edu/get-involved/sao/rso-benefits-training-policies/rso-benefits-resources/>

Event Planning

One of the most common activities for RSO's is to hold an event. SAO guidelines require that if RSO's are using UW resources or funding that the event must be on campus.

Each RSO event is unique so please review our event planning guide for more information. Here are some useful questions to ask RSO's during the event planning process:

- When will the event take place? Are there any other major events happening that day that might impact your event? (W Day, Football game, 3-day weekend, etc.)
- How will the event be funded?
 - What does a scaled back version of the event look like if you can't get all the resources you need?
- Is the event accessible? Some considerations to make your event accessible:
 - Easily accessible bathrooms and gender neutral bathrooms
 - Handicap accessible pathways to the event
 - Parking instructions
 - Water
- How will you promote your event?
 - Do you have enough time to promote it? (1 week minimum)
- Who will be the point of contact for the event?
 - If there is an incident who is in charge?
 - Is that person familiar with emergency procedures and contacts in case of an incident?
- Do you have enough support for the event? Considerations include:
 - Set up
 - Greeters
 - Clean up
- Event Assessment: How will you measure the success of the event?
 - Number of people attending?
 - Quality of experience at the event?

Common Forms

There are many forms students need to fill out for events but here are the most common:

- UUF (Use of University Facilities) - For events open to the public, off-campus individuals are invited, and various outdoor events
- ASR (Alcohol Service Request) If alcohol is being served
 - Alcohol events may require: WA state banquet permit, caterer's license, or special occasions license
- Fundraising Forms
 - For selling items or food, when donating money to a charity, when holding a raffle or give away
- Food permit - EHS has new guidelines around food at events. Please ensure you are following all EHS guidelines and filling out food permits when necessary.

Risk and Liability

Some RSO events/activities, both on and off-campus, may involve potential for risk. A review of current case law suggests that, in addition to the student organization as a group, individual members and officers may incur some liability in the event of a claim.

RSOs, particularly those involved in potentially hazardous activities, are encouraged to investigate the purchase of liability insurance for their club's activities.

Activities taking place on campus will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and RSOs may be required to purchase liability insurance if it is determined that a campus event involves some degree of risk or liability.

There are multiple outlets to purchase special events coverage. A quick Google search will bring several up. These policies may be purchased online and applications are super quick to complete. Some common places people have purchased are:

K & K insurance

Event Insurance Now

Additional information: The Board of Regents of the University of Washington must be named as an additional insured. We should be requiring \$1M per occurrence and \$2M in the aggregate liability coverage which can be obtained via the special events coverage. If liquor will be served coverage must apply to liquor service, as well.

Role of an Advisor Assessment

Thank you for reviewing the RSO Advisor handbook. Please take a moment to review the assessment below.

While there are no correct answers for this assessment, it is recommended that the advisor and RSO officers should review the following items, then meet to compare answers and discuss any differences.

For each statement, respond according to the following scale:

1=Essential for the advisor, 2=Helpful for the advisor to do, 3=Nice, but they don't have to, 4=Would prefer not to do, 5=Absolutely not an advisor's role

1. Know the mission and constitution of the RSO_____
2. Attend all general meetings _____
3. Be a mentor to the officers of the RSO_____
4. Manage the finances of the RSO____
5. Attend all executive committee meetings _____
6. Keep official files in their office _____
7. Attend all RSO Events _____
8. Inform the RSO when they are not following the bylaws, codes and standing rules

9. Inform the RSO of university policy when relevant to the discussion _____
10. Keep the RSO aware of its stated objectives when planning events _____
11. Prepare the agenda before each RSO meeting _____
12. Assist with mediating interpersonal conflicts that arise as needed _____
13. Plan a leadership skills workshop _____
14. State expectations of their role as advisor at the beginning of the year _____

15. Let the RSO work out its problems, including making mistakes _____
16. Assist with paperwork and filling out RSO forms _____
17. Insist on an evaluation of each activity _____
18. Attend RSO advisor workshops offered by the University _____
19. Take the initiative in creating teamwork and cooperation among officers _____
20. Let the RSO thrive or decline on its merits; do not interfere unless requested to do so _____
21. Take an active part in formulation of the creation of the RSO's goals _____
22. Represent the RSO in any conflicts with members of the University staff _____
23. Be familiar with University facilities, services, and procedures for RSO activities _____
24. Recommend programs and speakers _____
25. Plan and run events for the RSO _____
26. Support in the orderly transition of responsibilities between old and new officers _____
27. Cancel any RSO event if the advisor believes it has been inadequately planned _____
28. Receive copies of official correspondence _____
29. Send out communications on behalf of the RSO _____
30. Serve as a resource for the RSO _____

Contact Us

Questions? Comments? Contact us!

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