

# **Association of Student Activities Operating Guidelines**

Last amended by the Executive Board on March 29, 2015

# Article I: Student Groups

## Section 1. Definitions

An extracurricular activity is any organized, continuing activity which takes place primarily on the MIT campus and is not part of the academic curriculum.

A student activity is an extracurricular activity administered and run substantially and primarily by MIT students.

The active membership of an extracurricular activity is that portion of the activity's membership that regularly participates in the functioning of the activity.

The core membership of an extracurricular activity is that portion of the active membership most directly responsible for the continuing success of the activity. Usually this comprises the "leadership" or executive committee of the activity and includes the titled positions or the activity's management.

## Section 2. Activity Classifications

Student groups are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students and at least 50% MIT students, including standing and ad hoc committees of the MIT student governments. The activity's president and treasurer, or corresponding officers, must be registered MIT students.

Funded student groups are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students and at least 50% MIT students. The activity's president and treasurer, or corresponding officers, must be registered MIT students. These activities can be directly linked to an MIT program, existing student group, or an academic department. The sponsoring party of such a group is able to provide the basic support necessary to ensure success of the group. Non-sponsor-linked activities can be funded by student governments.

Club Sports groups are student activities with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students and at least 50% MIT students which have been granted recognition by the Club Sports Council and accepted by the ASA Executive Board.

FSILGs and Dorms are student living groups with an active membership of at least 5 MIT students which are members of the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, Dormitory Council, Living Group Council, or the Graduate Student Council General Council.

# Article II: Student Group Recognition and Derecognition

## Section 1. Recognition

Any eligible activity may be granted ASA recognition upon fulfillment of the ASA Recognition Procedures published by the ASA Executive Board. These procedures must require, but are not limited to:

1. A statement of purpose for the activity.
2. A constitution of the activity.
3. A signed acknowledgment of the Massachusetts Hazing Law.
4. A list of at least five MIT students who will be members of the group.

The ASA Recognition Procedures must be published in a prominent place. The procedures may be changed by a 2/3 vote of the Executive Board, but not more than once during each spring/summer term and each fall/IAP term. The procedures may always be reviewed by the ASA membership at a General Body meeting.

Funding eligibility shall be determined by the ASA Executive Board, the Undergraduate Association Finance Board, or the Graduate Student Council Funding Board.

### **Section 2. Grounds for Derecognition**

Any ASA recognized activity not meeting its responsibilities as set forth in this constitution and the policies of the ASA may be subject to derecognition.

The ASA Executive Board, acting in its judicial capacity as mediator between member activities, may restrict, in whole or in part, an activity from any privileges granted by the ASA to its members or derived through ASA membership.

### **Section 3. Procedures for Derecognition**

The ASA General Body may derecognize any member activity by a two-thirds vote at a General Body Meeting.

The ASA Executive Board may derecognize any activity not meeting its responsibilities as defined in Article III: by first providing one month notice via e-mail to the activity's officers mailing list as last provided to the ASA followed by a vote of the executive board.

## **Article III: Rights and Responsibilities of Student Groups**

### **Section 1. Group Responsibilities**

All members of the ASA have the following responsibilities:

1. Each activity shall notify the ASA Executive Board of changes of officers or contacts, constitutional changes, and other information as requested by the ASA Executive Board at least semi-annually.
2. Each activity shall comply with all rulings of the ASA and its Executive Board.
3. Each voting ASA member activity shall have a representative present at all ASA General Body meetings. Failure to attend at least one such meeting per semester may be considered sufficient grounds for derecognition.
4. Each ASA member activity shall comply with its constitution as submitted to and approved by the ASA.
5. All ASA-recognized activities must follow MIT's Non-Discrimination policy.
6. The majority of the voting membership of all ASA-recognized activities must be MIT students.
7. The activity's president and treasurer, or corresponding officers, must be distinct registered MIT students.

## **Section 2. Group Rights**

ASA recognized activities derive the following benefits from ASA recognition:

1. Use of MIT name
2. Scheduling of MIT classrooms through the Schedules Office, as prioritized by the ASA Executive Board. Funded student groups may additionally schedule time in CAC-administered spaces.
3. An financial account with the Student Activities Financial Office.
4. A locker and webspace.
5. Except in unusual circumstances, only non-sponsored, funded activities are eligible for ASA shared and private office space. All sponsored groups should receive office space from their sponsoring party.
6. The ASA's membership consists of all active recognized student activities in good standing. Thus, each ASA-recognized group is entitled to a vote at ASA General Body Meetings.

## **Section 3. Student Group Property**

The ASA recognizes the importance of student group property. As such, the board will not reallocate property from any active group. However, since all property purchased with student group funds or owned by a group is owned by MIT, the ASA executive board is responsible for distribution of property when a group is derecognized. Strong preference should be given to allowing either the UA or GSC funding boards to allocate the property to other groups that would benefit from the property. Groups with specific plans for their property should include those plans in their constitution.

# **Article IV: ASA Executive Board**

The members of the ASA Executive Board are defined in the GSC and UA Bylaws. The Executive Board shall be the administrative and judicial body of the ASA.

## **Section 1. Meetings**

Executive Board meetings shall be conducted at least biweekly during the regular school year, except when conflicting with MIT holidays. The Executive Board must meet at least once between General Body meetings.

## **Section 2. Responsibilities of the Executive Board**

The Executive Board, working with an official representative from the Student Activities Office, shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain and supervise the distribution of a list of all activities recognized by the ASA.
2. Review and, in conjunction with the Dean's office, assign space allocation to recognized activities.
3. Have the authority to arbitrate all inter-activity disputes at the request of a member activity.

4. Be responsible for the interpretation of these Operating Guidelines and the enactment of policies of the ASA, subject to review by the General Body.

### **Section 3. Duties of Specific Executive Board Members**

The president shall preside at all meetings of the ASA and of its Executive Board. The president shall also be the outside representative of the ASA in all matters. The president will call Executive Board and General Body meetings as necessary. In the event of a tie, may cast a vote at Executive Board meetings and General Body meetings.

The treasurer shall be responsible for the finances of the ASA and of its Executive Board. This officer shall become a voting member of the UA Finance Board and of the GSC Funding Board unless they do not meet qualifications set forth by the respective board. The treasurer shall also be the chair of the Large Event Funds (LEF) funding board and the Assisting Recurring Cultural And Diversity Events (ARCADE) funding board.

The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and handle all correspondence of the ASA and its Executive Board.

The two undergraduate members-at-large must be registered undergraduates at MIT. If the ASA treasurer is not able to serve on the UA Finance Board, one of these members shall be appointed by the ASA president to serve in the treasurer's place.

The two graduate members-at-large must be registered graduate students at MIT. One of these members shall be appointed by the ASA president to serve as a voting member of the GSC Funding Board.

The one student member-at-large must be a registered student at MIT.

### **Section 4. Vacancies in Offices**

In the event of a vacancy in the office of the president, the vacancy will be filled by the first available officer in the order of treasurer, secretary, and student member-at-large.

In the event of a vacancy in any other office, the president shall appoint a temporary replacement, subject to ratification by a majority vote of the Executive Board. The vacancy will be filled at the next General Body meeting.

### **Section 5. Removal of Officers**

Voting members of the ASA Executive Board who accumulate three or more unexcused absences for Executive Board meetings will be automatically removed and the vacancy filled as specified in Section 4. Further mechanisms of the removal of the ASA Executive Board are defined in the UA/GSC Bylaws.

### **Section 6. Election of Officers**

To be eligible for office, the candidate must be an MIT student and a member of an ASA recognized activity. Nominations may be accepted by electronic or paper submission beginning two weeks before the announced date for the General Body meeting. Nominations may also be accepted from the floor at the meeting itself.

To be elected to an office, the candidate must carry the majority vote of voting ASA members present. In the event that no candidate has a majority, the candidate with the least votes shall be stricken from the ballot and a new vote taken.

## **Section 7. Associate members**

In addition to its elected membership, the ASA Executive Board may appoint additional nonvoting associate members to assist in specific parts of the operations of the ASA, such as group recognition and website development. They may attend meetings of the Executive Board at the discretion of the Board, including portions of those meetings not open to the general public.

Associate members shall be appointed by a majority vote of the ASA Executive Board, for a term ending at any time before that of the current Board. In doing so, the Executive Board must specify their role (e.g. Associate Webmaster), privileges (e.g. given full access to the ASA Database), and responsibilities (e.g. supporting the development of the ASA Database). They may be removed by a majority vote of the Executive Board, or by any of the procedures to remove other Board members.

## **Article V. ASA Judicial Process**

The ASA Executive Board, as the judicial body of the ASA, shall rule on violations by activities of ASA, UA, GSC, or MIT policies, procedures, or rules. In addition, it shall mediate disputes between activities, and in collaboration with the MIT Committee on Discipline (COD), hear complaints by students against student activities.

### **Section 1. Process for Complaints**

1. The ASA Executive Board shall create and publicize a point of contact for reporting complaints against groups. This shall include the ASA President and the Director of the Student Activities Office (SAO), and may also include other members of the ASA Executive Board and representatives of the COD, Office of Student Citizenship (OSC), and SAO.
2. Upon receipt of a complaint, the ASA in conjunction with the COD, OSC, and SAO shall decide whether the complaint will be heard by the ASA or by the COD.
  1. Cases involving hazing, sexual misconduct, serious injury or death will in general be heard by the COD.
  2. Cases involving breaches of agreements between groups or violations of ASA policy will in general be heard by the ASA.
  3. The Chair of the COD shall have the ultimate authority in determining which body shall hear a complaint.
3. The body hearing the complaint will promptly notify the complainant of this decision and of the process by which the complaint will be heard.
4. If the complaint is heard by the ASA, the ASA President shall choose three members of the Executive Board to hear the complaint. If the complainant is an undergraduate student, or if any group in question contains a majority of undergraduate students, at least one of the board members chosen shall be an undergraduate student, and likewise for graduate students. Unless the ASA President has a conflict of interest or other extenuating circumstances, he or she shall also be chosen.
5. This three-member panel shall meet with the complainant, representatives of the groups in question, and other witnesses or parties as they see fit.

6. The panel shall then decide on the resolution of the complaint, generally within one week of meeting with all relevant parties. They shall then communicate this decision to the complainant, respondent, and to the remainder of the ASA Executive Board.

### **Section 2. Process for Policy Enforcement**

1. In cases where the ASA Executive Board rules on a policy or rule violation rather than a complaint or dispute by a particular person or group, it shall decide on the ruling at a normal meeting of the Board.
2. Such rulings must be communicated promptly to the group before they take effect, and within one week of the decision. They must also cite the specific policy, procedure, or rule violated, and specify the process for appeals.
3. Such rulings may be issued for multiple groups simultaneously if the violations are similar (e.g. failure to comply with the same ASA rule). If the ruling is appealed by multiple of the affected groups, each appeal must be considered separately by the Board.

### **Section 3. Guidelines for the Judicial Process**

1. Rulings of the ASA or its Executive Board shall not restrict purely internal functions of an activity beyond requiring a group implement its constitution.
2. All policies, procedures, and rules created by the ASA Executive Board must clearly indicate the maximum set of possible sanctions.
3. The ASA may enforce agreements between student groups, including financial agreements, when requested by one or more of the involved groups. The group making the request should provide a copy of the agreement agreed to by both groups. All such agreements must be limited to a term of two years or less. To ensure fair and unambiguous language, the ASA encourages groups to work with the ASA or SAO to draft such agreements.
4. ASA Executive Board members must recuse themselves from any judicial proceedings in which they have or appear to have a conflict of interest. Complaints against the ASA itself follow the judicial processes of the Undergraduate Association or Graduate Student Council, or may be referred to the Committee on Discipline.
5. The ASA may adopt further guidelines for its judicial process consistent with these Operating Guidelines. Such policies and any amendments thereto must be communicated to all groups and posted publicly on the ASA website before they take effect.

### **Section 4. Appeals**

1. Rulings of the ASA Executive Board or the three-member panel described in Section 1 may be appealed to the entire Executive Board within two weeks of the initial ruling.
2. Appeals may be filed on one or more of the following grounds:
  1. There is additional information relevant to the decision that was not available at the time of the decision.
  2. There was a substantial departure from these Operating Guidelines or other ASA policies about judicial processes that affected the outcome of the case.
  3. The sanction proposed is too severe in light of the facts provided in the hearing and the ASA policies in question.
  4. A material finding that formed a basis for the ASA's decision was substantially against the weight of the evidence that was before the ASA when it made the decision.
3. The ASA shall hold one or more hearings with the affected activities or individuals and then meet in executive session to decide the appeal.
4. The original ruling shall stand unless decided otherwise by a 2/3 vote of the board.

5. The UA and GSC Bylaws state the procedure for further appeals.
6. The COD Rules and the Rules of the Faculty state the procedure for appealing decisions of the COD or OSC.

## **Article VI: General Body Meetings**

### **Section 1. Regular Meetings**

1. There shall be no more than three regular General Body meetings per term.
2. Electronic or paper mail shall be sent to the last given contact address of all ASA member activities at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.
3. The quorum for regular business at a General Body meeting shall be thirty voting ASA member activities, or twenty percent of the ASA voting membership, whichever is less.
4. All such meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (Revised), except as specified herein.
5. All voting ASA recognized activities shall have one vote each in meetings of the ASA.
6. Each voting ASA member activity shall be represented by its president or designated representative. No voting individual at a General Body meeting may exercise more than one vote.
7. The ASA General Body may, by a majority vote of the voting members present, adopt standing policies consistent with these Operating Guidelines and the UA-GSC Bylaws regarding the ASA that shall be binding on its Executive Board and shall continue in effect until amended or repealed by the General Body. The text of proposed policies or changes to policies must be distributed to member groups prior to the General Body meeting at which they will be discussed.

### **Section 2. Special Meetings**

1. In extraordinary circumstances, the ASA president may call a special meeting of the ASA General Body. A petition signed by 1/3 of the voting ASA member activities may also call a special meeting. A special meeting shall differ from a regular meeting only in that:
  - a. Notice for special meetings must be given only two days in advance.
  - b. The agenda for the meeting shall be posted the day of the meeting.
  - c. Under no circumstances shall elections or amendments to this constitution be in order at a special meeting.
2. The quorum for special business shall be one-third of the ASA voting membership.

## **Article VII: Office and Storage Space Allocation Policy**

### **Section 1. Frequency**

The Board will perform a full room allocation process, as defined below in Section 2, under two circumstances:

1. The Board decides before the Fall General Body meeting to perform one.
2. The ASA General Body passes a motion at the Fall General Body meeting instructing the Board to perform one. Such a motion will always be in order at a Fall General Body meeting.

## **Section 2. Allocation Process**

1. The decision to perform an allocation shall be announced at the Fall General Body meeting as outlined in Section 1.
2. The Board shall set the application deadline, which must be between the first and fifteenth of November. The application shall be made available at least two weeks in advance of the deadline. Applications are described further in Section 3.
3. The Board shall perform an initial round that place groups into priority categories. The decisions of this process shall be announced within three weeks of the application deadline or within four weeks with two-thirds approval of the Board.
  - a. Each group which already has space and is not requesting a change in the amount of their space allocation shall be placed in one of these four priority categories. If a group has distinct allocations (e.g. multiple rooms), then those distinct allocations may be categorized separately.
    - i. Groups that the Board expects to retain their current space
    - ii. Groups that the Board expects to retain their current amount of space, but may be assigned to a different space.
    - iii. Groups that may have their amount of space decreased.
    - iv. Groups that the Board expects to have their amount of space decreased. Groups in this category shall then be added to one of the categories in the next item b below.
  - b. Each group requesting new space – both groups without space and groups with space requesting additional space – will be placed one of two to four priority groups. The final number of categories shall be decided by the Board.
4. Any group that wants to appeal their categorization must file a formal appeal with the Board within one week of categorizations being published or by the deadline set by the Board, whichever is later. The format of such an appeal is described in Section 4.
5. Appeal hearings for all groups which file an appeal on time will be scheduled with the group, Board representatives, and a representative from the Division of Student Life (DSL). All appeals shall be heard within one week of the appeals deadline. These hearings are described in Section 4.
6. Late applications may be accepted until the appeals deadline.
7. The Board shall publish assignment decisions within six weeks of the application deadline or within 7 weeks with two-thirds approval of the Board. When possible, these decisions shall be published by the end of fall term finals.

8. With assignment decisions, the Board will present the Interim Allocation List, which is the categorization of groups which requested space but did not receive it, as well as those groups which lost space. This list will be used for interim allocations as per Section 5.
9. Appeals to assignments shall be handled on a case-by-case basis by emailing a formal request to appeal to the Board stating what the group wishes to appeal and brief reasoning behind the request. Such requests must be received before the first Monday of IAP.
10. The new assignments shall take effect during IAP, with the specific timing decided by the Board.

### **Section 3. Applications**

An application for space allocation must include the following information, as a minimum:

1. Whether the group is requesting space for the first time or has space currently allocated to it.
2. An individual contact for the group.
3. Group membership numbers.
4. The type of activities and number, size, and intended audience of activities sponsored each year.
5. The anticipated frequency of usage of the space.
6. What kind of space the group is willing to use: office space allocated to only one group, office space shared between a few groups, and/or storage and locker space.
7. Which other groups, if any, with which the activity would be willing to share space, or groups which the group would rather not/refuse to share space with.
8. In addition, the group should submit a description of what the space will be used for and why it is needed. Activities seeking renewal should include what they have done in the office recently and whether they are interested in voluntarily changing the size of their office space. All groups should include the amount of space they feel they need, and should attempt to give examples of appropriate rooms.

All applications shall be open to the public, except responses to item 7 which will remain confidential.

### **Section 4. Categorization Appeals**

1. Appeals shall consist of a one-page description of why the group thinks their categorization(s) is incorrect. In this description, arguments should be limited to the merits of the appealing group and their current or proposed use of space; it is inappropriate to attempt to discredit or demerit another group.
2. Participants in the hearing shall include:
  - (a) At least one, but no more than four members representing the protesting group.
  - (b) At least three members of the Board
  - (c) A DSL representative
  - (d) One of the group's advisors may participate, but their presence is not required.
3. Hearing procedure:

- (a) The group shall have at least 10 minutes to explain why the categorization of the group is incorrect.
  - (b) The Board members and DSL representative may then ask questions of the group.
  - (c) The group's representatives shall also have an opportunity to ask questions of the Board members and DSL representative.
4. After the hearings, the Board shall discuss the appeals at a Board meeting with the DSL representative. This discussion session will be closed and no minutes will be taken except votes, decisions, and a brief statement of reasoning for each decision.
5. At least two-thirds of the members of the Board present must vote in favor of a particular categorization change for it to pass. Abstentions in the vote shall be considered as in opposition.
6. If after three votes a decision cannot be made, the original categorization shall remain.

### **Section 5. Interim Allocation**

Groups wishing to request space during times when an allocation is not underway may do so by submitting an application as described in Section 3. The Board active at that time shall add them to the priorities categories from Section 2, Item 8.

### **Section 6. Revocation**

The Board may revoke a group's room allocation prior to the next declared allocation process if the activity violates any of the provisions outlined in Section 7, or as a disciplinary measure.

### **Section 7. Terms**

1. No activity assigned to a space is authorized to grant permission for another activity not assigned to that space to have extended use of the space.
2. Improvements or renovations made to a room at the expense of the activity occupying the room do not guarantee that the group will continue to have that room allocated to them. Such improvements may be presented in the group's application under Section 3 for consideration of the Board.
3. The Association of Student Activities is not responsible for providing, maintaining, or financing any equipment contained in any room allocation under this policy.
4. Groups must receive permission from the Board and the Campus Activities Complex before making major modifications to their space.
5. Groups sharing office space may be required to submit a shared space agreement as requested by the Board. Such agreements would outline terms of use of shared space.

### **Section 8. Philosophy**

It is the highest responsibility of the Executive Board of the Association of Student Activities to act in the best interest of the MIT Community and of the Student Activities which it represents. No other interest or responsibility could possibly supersede it. Thus, the Board must make a good faith effort to allocate rooms fairly. The Board should attempt to ensure that the most active groups who need space and other

groups with the highest demonstrated need for space receive space. Secondary to that is attempting to allocate space to as many groups as possible.

## **Article VIII: Bulletin Board Allocation Process**

### **Section 1. Bulletin Boards**

The ASA Executive Board administers the bulletin board space in the Infinite corridor and adjoining areas that are designed for dedicated student group use. Since bulletin board space is a valuable resource, the ASA Executive Board will periodically reallocate all boards based on need and on a group's history of effective usage of their bulletin board.

The Board may deallocate a board between full reallocations if the group fails to use the space after notification by the Board. The Board may also reallocate individual boards between full reallocations when boards become available.

### **Section 2. Student Group Responsibilities**

Each group must maintain its bulletin board by filling the space with a display that advertises the group's mission, message, events, and activities. Each group must remove other materials posted in its space. Groups must ask permission before permanent modifications are made to their board space (such as putting up display cases or adding plexiglass to their space). The fact that a group has put the effort and money into renovating their board space does not ensure that the space will be allocated to the group in the future.

### **Section 3. Timeline**

The ASA will reallocate bulletin boards every other year. The application for space should be available in October such that allocations can be announced and appeals completed before the end of the fall term. The allocations will take effect during IAP with the exact date determined by the Board. The schedule for posting a display in a new space (or moving a display) should allow groups to effectively advertise IAP and Spring events.

### **Section 4. Waiting List**

Between standard full re-allocations, the ASA will maintain a list of groups that requested space in the previous standard allocation and those that requested space between full reallocations. If boards become available, the Board will preferentially allocate boards to those groups that applied in the previous full allocation cycle.

## **Article IX: Standing Policies**

The ASA Executive Board and General Body may pass standing policies. Policies passed by the General Body take precedence over those passed by the Executive Committee. Any proposed change to standing policy must be presented one week before the meeting at which it is voted on.

## **Article X: Amendments**

These Operating Guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a General Body meeting or by the process specified by the UA-GSC Bylaws. The text of any guideline amendment must be distributed with the agenda for each meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.