



STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

POLICIES

Harvard Graduate School of Design



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September 2, 2026

Dear Student Leaders,
Welcome to the 2026-2027 academic year at the Harvard Graduate School of Design! Student-led organizations are integral to the university's academic and cultural vitality, fostering the cross-disciplinary collaboration, innovation, and community engagement that define the GSD experience. We appreciate your dedication, time, and leadership in shaping our campus culture.

To support your initiatives while ensuring a safe, equitable, and compliant environment for all, Harvard GSD grants official recognition to student groups that adhere to the university's standards of conduct and governance. This document serves as your governing framework for the upcoming year, outlining the privileges, compliance mandates, and operational procedures necessary to maintain active status. As you plan your year, please review this document closely for critical guidance on:

- Annual Registration: The mandatory registration process required each September on Engage to secure your official status and access university resources.
- Institutional Governance: Regulations regarding structural leadership, membership eligibility, non-discrimination policies, and digital/social media compliance.
- Financial & Operational Management: Protocols for funding applications, bank accounts, external collaborations, and strict limitations on signing contractual agreements.
- Event Compliance & Safety: Comprehensive policies governing high-profile guest protocols, crowd management, security requirements, and the safe, legal service of alcohol on campus.

Please remember that as student leaders, you are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by all regulations set forth in this document, the GSD Student Handbook, and overarching Harvard University policies. Additionally, all designated officers must complete the mandatory student organization training modules on Canvas to fully activate and maintain their group's recognized status.

Student Life is fully committed to partnering with you to help your organization thrive. For administrative support, financial approvals, or event-planning guidance, please visit us in Gund 420 or utilize the Engage platform. Thank you for your leadership, and we wish you a successful and impactful year ahead!

All the best,
Ryenne & Erica



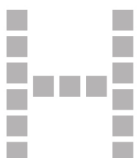
Student Organizations at Harvard Graduate School of Design

Ryenne DePuy, Assistant Director of Student Life

Erica George, Senior Coordinator, Student Life

48 Quincy Street | Cambridge, MA 02138 | +1 617-495-5454

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Student Organizations at Harvard Graduate School of Design

2026-2027

Introduction

Harvard Graduate School of Design grants recognition to student organizations.

Student Organizations at Harvard GSD are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by all policies regarding student organizations, including, without limitation, those set forth in this document, GSD policies for student conduct, and Harvard University policies.

These policies include, but not limited to, the following:

- [Harvard University Statement of Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Harvard University Campus Use Rules](#)
- [Harvard University Non-Discrimination and Anti-Bullying Policies](#)
- [Harvard GSD Student Handbook](#)
- [Harvard GSD Policy on Campus Postings \(page 72-73 of Harvard GSD Student Handbook\)](#)
- [Harvard GSD Statement of Mutual Respect and Public Discourse Policy](#)
- [Harvard GSD Anti-Hazing Policy](#)
- [Massachusetts Hazing Law](#)

Recognized student organizations must also comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

Resources for student organization leaders are housed within the required Canvas training modules, which must be completed by all officers. For additional support, leaders are welcome to contact Student Life in Gund 420.

Student Organization Recognition

In order to obtain the benefits of GSD recognition, student organizations must register and be approved through the Student Organization Registration Process and respond to any inquiries for additional information from Student Life staff. [Please refer to this Engage article](#) for details on how to form or reactivate a Student Organization.

Recognized Student Organizations (hereafter, “Student Organizations”) at Harvard GSD are permitted to:

- Use “Harvard GSD” in their organization name (see naming policies section of this document)
- Use the Harvard GSD Logo or Wordmark within student organization guidelines (see [GSD Identity policies](#))
- Receive an Engage organization page on the Harvard GSD Engage website
- Request use of space on campus, including in Gund Hall and the Houses
- Apply for GSD Student Organization Fund funding
- Within guidelines and with specific permission, apply for funding from non-GSD sources as an officially recognized student organization
- Use approved publicity channels, such as sending emails or poster

Annual Student Organization Registration

To become and remain a recognized Student Organization at Harvard GSD, organizations must complete the Annual Student Organization Registration process with Student Life each September. Instructions will be posted on [Engage](#), our student organizations' online platform. As part of the registration process, organizations must ensure that all officers complete the required training modules and upload their current bylaws to Engage.

Organizations that wish to be active, but do not satisfy all requirements for recognition, including maintaining the required number of student leaders, may be placed on provisional status. Provisional status allows an organization one academic semester to fulfill all outstanding recognition requirements and maintain its status as a recognized student organization.

If a student organization fails to complete the registration process by the last day of classes of the fall semester, it will lose its recognized status and be designated as inactive. Inactive organizations are ineligible for all GSD and Harvard resources and funding and cannot represent themselves as recognized organizations within or outside the University. Organizations that miss the fall deadline or form after the fall deadline may still submit a registration, but their requests for recognition may take longer to process and there may be fewer potential resources, such as funding or limited event dates, available to them if they obtain recognition. The final opportunity to register a new organization during an academic year is March 1. Organizations that miss this deadline must wait until the following academic year to register.

Informal groups that choose not to register for recognition or are denied recognition must clearly state in all communications that they are not recognized as a GSD student organization. Informal groups must abide by the [GSD Community Standards](#) and [GSD Standards of Conduct](#) as outlined in the [Harvard GSD Student Handbook](#).

Loss of Recognition

Student Organizations that lose their recognized status will:

- No longer be a recognized Student Organization
- Not be able to use Harvard or GSD in the Organization name
- Not be able to use the Harvard GSD Logo or Wordmark
- Be removed from the GSD [Engage website](#)
- Not be able to reserve or use spaces on campus, including Gund Hall and the Houses
- Not be able to host or co-host events such as Beer & Dogs or co-sponsored events led by other student organizations
- Not be able to receive GSD Student Organization funding or non-GSD funding as a recognized organization
- Not be able to use publicity channels, such as sending emails or poster

Eligibility Requirements

This section sets forth the eligibility requirements organizations must meet to obtain recognition as Harvard GSD Student Organizations. In the event that Harvard GSD determines that a recognized Student Organization is not continuing to meet any of these eligibility requirements, Student Life may give notice to the Student Organization of the eligibility issues. If the Student Organization does not act promptly to resolve the eligibility issues, Harvard GSD may de-recognize the Student Organization. Student Life may

consider petitions for reinstatement and grant such petitions once it determines that the eligibility issues are resolved to Harvard GSD's satisfaction and are not likely to recur.

Leadership

1. All Student Organization officers must be registered students at Harvard GSD.
2. Each Student Organization must designate and identify to Harvard GSD at least two students to serve as officers and contacts.
 - a. Each organization must have at least two officers with a leadership role (such as a President and Vice President, or two Co-chairs).
 - b. Each organization must also have one officer designated as Treasurer and one designated as Events Liaison. The Treasurer and Event Liaison roles may be added as additional roles to one or more existing officers.
 - c. All designated officers are required to complete the mandatory leadership training modules on Canvas, and the university-wide hazing awareness module.
3. When Student Organization officers change, the Student Organization is required to update its Engage rosters promptly to reflect the changes.
 - a. Officers, as listed in Engage, are accountable for the organization's compliance with these policies.
 - b. Incoming officers must complete the required Canvas training modules and hazing awareness module upon taking office.

Membership

1. A Recognized Student Organization must have at least five members, including its identified officers.
2. A majority of the organization's members must be actively registered students in degree programs at Harvard GSD.
3. All members of a GSD Student Organization must be actively enrolled students.
4. Harvard University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity in education and employment. Discrimination on the basis of protected categories or any other legally protected basis is unlawful and is prohibited by the [Harvard University Non-Discrimination Policy](#). It is your responsibility as a student leader to review this policy and ensure your organization maintains compliance.

Name Use and Organization Titles

Official Organization Titles

A Student Organization's full official title **must include** 'Harvard GSD' and indicate that it is a student organization. Variations on the word "Organization," such as Club, Group, Association, and Publication, may be used with approval from Student Life. These official titles must be used in the Organization Name or Summary field in the Organization's Engage profile.

Student Organizations can choose from one of these three options:

- Harvard GSD XX Student Organization
- XX Student Organization at/of Harvard GSD
- XX, a Harvard GSD Student Organization

Examples:

- Harvard GSD Real Estate Club
- Black Student Union at Harvard GSD
- ChinaGSD, a Harvard GSD Student Organization
- Queers in Design, a Harvard GSD Student Organization
- Harvard Indigenous Design Collective, a GSD Student Organization

Informal Names and Acronyms

Student Organizations may use informal names and acronyms within the GSD community when it is already clear from the context that the Organization is a student group at the GSD. An informal name or acronym may be used as the Organization Name on Engage if the full title is included in the summary field.

Examples:

- “BSU and ChinaGSD are co-hosting Beer & Dogs”
- “Don’t miss the Queers in Design film series”
- Use of informal name or acronym on Organization merchandise for the community

Use of Harvard Name in Organization Titles

Student Organizations may not use “Harvard” in their title without also including GSD and indicating that they are student groups. Organizations that have affiliations with other student groups at other Harvard schools or with a university-wide student group may indicate their affiliation by naming themselves as GSD chapters of the larger group.

Example:

- Harvard Circular Economy Symposium | GSD Student Chapter

External Affiliations

Affiliations with groups and professional organizations outside the university must be approved by Student Life.

Example:

- Harvard Student Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

Identification

Student Organizations must clearly identify themselves as an officially recognized Student Organization of Harvard GSD in all print and electronic materials (including web and social media sites and event publicity emails and posters) that are created to represent their student organization and its activities, and in any communications with parties external to the GSD or Harvard.

Insignias (Using the Harvard Shield or GSD Visual Identity)

Harvard Trademark Program

All Student Organizations at Harvard GSD must comply with all policies of the Harvard Trademark Program, including, without limitation, the [Use of Harvard Names and Insignias policy](#).

- Provided it is in conjunction with the Student Organization name, Student Organizations can use the Harvard GSD Logo or Wordmark within student organization guidelines (see [GSD Identity policies](#)).
- Student Organizations **cannot use** Harvard University's shield or the GSD's shield.

Merchandise

Use of Harvard or GSD visual identity on merchandise:

1. All proposed use of Harvard or GSD visual identity on merchandise must first be proposed to GSD Student Life.
2. If approved by Student Life, the proposed merchandise is reviewed by GSD Communications.
3. If approved by GSD Communications, it may advance to the Harvard Trademark Program office for final review and approval. Please note that the Trademark Program process can take several weeks.
4. Note that only licensed providers are authorized to produce merchandise with Harvard or GSD branding.
5. Note that all merchandise must be planned as self-funding. This is achieved either by merchandise giveaways such as promotional items funded through tickets purchased for a conference, or by selling items through the GSD's authorized Harvard sales system. There are tax restrictions on what items can be sold, limiting those items primarily to clothing. Specific items must be approved by Student Life.
6. All merchandise orders for student organizations, whether or not the Harvard or GSD name or insignia are used, require advance approval from Student Life.
7. For more information, see the [Policy on the Use of Harvard Names and Insignias and the Guidelines for Ordering Internal Insignia Items \("SWAG"\) for Harvard Schools, Departments, Units, and Officially Recognized Student Organizations and Affiliates](#)

Website/Social Media Guidelines

1. Student Organizations must follow the GSD's [Digital Governance Policy](#)
2. Student Organizations must follow Harvard University guidelines and best practices for using websites and social media.
 - a. This includes guidelines on [digital accessibility compliance](#).
 - b. Here is a link to the University's communications guidelines and best practices and specifically, its [social media guidelines and best practices](#).
3. A Student Organization website must add a Trademark Notice, usually as a footer: "The Harvard GSD name and/or logo are trademarks of President and Fellows of Harvard College and are used by permission of Harvard University."

4. If a Student Organization uses the tagline “Student Organization at Harvard GSD,” it must be placed in a prominent location on the Student Organization’s website (typically in conjunction with the Student Organization’s name) and in a font size comparable to other fonts being used on the website.
5. Student organizations maintaining external websites must provide prompt access to financial documents, such as receipts, to be eligible for GSD Student Organizations Fund financial support for those websites. External websites must still adhere to Harvard's policies, including around digital accessibility.
6. Organizations are encouraged to work with Student Life to migrate external websites to internal hosting through the GSD. Information on this process will be made available to organization leaders.

Relation to Harvard University

1. Until officially recognized, a Student Organization is not permitted to use the “Harvard GSD” name or imply through its title or otherwise a connection with the University.
2. No Student Organization may be connected with any advertising medium that uses the Harvard name.
3. No Student Organization may, in any manner or media, purport to represent the views or opinions of Harvard University, Harvard GSD, or Harvard’s student body.
4. Student Organizations may not sign binding contracts of any kind, whether on behalf of the Organization, or on behalf of Harvard University or Harvard GSD. Student Organizations seeking to enter into contractual relationships must contract GSD Student Life.
5. Prior to appearing on a commercially sponsored radio, TV, or similar media program, a Recognized Student Organization should consult with Student Life regarding appropriate steps to take to ensure that the Organization members are not and do not appear to be speaking for GSD or Harvard.
6. Student Organizations are not part of Harvard University and are not covered by Harvard University’s tax-exempt status.
7. Student Organizations are not automatically registered as 501(c)3 organizations and do not, therefore, automatically receive tax-exempt status.
8. In some cases, GSD Student Life can make tax-exempt purchases intended for use by Student Organizations. These purchases must be made through Student Life.
9. Student Organizations may not independently seek donations or funding from outside of Harvard University. All proposed external fundraising is subject to review and is not guaranteed to be approved.
10. Student Organizations may seek funding from within the University, such as from research centers, but must do so through GSD Student Life. Student Organizations may not seek funding from Harvard GSD departments or program offices, with the exception of the Joint Center for Housing Studies and the Loeb Fellowship.
11. Student Organizations may not generate income for individuals and/or the organization itself and must independently comply with federal and state laws.
12. Student Organizations with HFCU accounts may need to comply with federal and state laws including tax laws and filing requirements both at the federal and state levels.

13. Student Organizations are not covered by Harvard's insurance.

Relation to Outside Organizations, Contracting, and Sponsorship

Student Organizations must maintain local autonomy. This means that they must have no institutional connection with outside organizations. All Student Organization policy decisions must be made by the Student Organization alone, without obligation to any outside organization.

Moreover, non-Harvard Organizations may not sponsor events at Harvard by using Student Organizations as a vehicle to appear on campus, gain access to Harvard spaces, or represent a partnership with the University.

Student Organizations **DO NOT** have the authority to sign contracts on behalf of Harvard University, Harvard GSD, or on their own behalf as an Organization. All contracting necessary for any Student Organization must be accomplished through GSD Student Life. Student Organizations must not make financial commitments of any kind to external entities without going through Student Life. This includes commitments for payment of honoraria and travel expenses for guests.

Student Organizations should be cautious about co-sponsoring on-campus events with external or unrecognized organizations (e.g., non-profit organizations, businesses, independent contractors) and should be thoughtful about collaborating with unrecognized Student Organizations on campus. Any employment events must be coordinated in conjunction with GSD Career Services (see [Events with Employers](#)).

Faculty or Staff Advisor

Student Organizations may have advisors. While they are not required, some Student Organizations benefit from having a faculty or staff member serve as an advisor. Advisors can help guide the Organization and transfer historical knowledge. Advisors:

- Must be a current Harvard faculty or staff member, or active Harvard chaplain
- Should be familiar with the policies and resources for Student Organizations
- Are not directly responsible for the conduct of the Student Organization they support
- Have no legal responsibility for Student Organization finances, including any debts the Student Organization owes

Financial Management

Student Organizations must get advanced approval for all use of funds through the budgeting process outlined in Engage. Once funding is approved, Student Organizations may make purchases and request reimbursement through the Payment Request process. The [Budgeting Request and Payment Request processes](#) are outlined in Engage and in the required officer trainings in Canvas.

Student organization funding is meant to benefit all GSD students. While each organization may plan activities that focus on its members as the primary intended participants, such activities should be open to all organization members, and membership in the organization must be open to all GSD students.

- Funds allocated to organizations by the Student Organization Fund cannot be used for activities restricted to a select few, such as travel or free merchandise for organization leadership.
- Funds allocated in one academic year must be spent in that academic year and cannot be carried over to a new academic year.

Honoraria

Student Organizations may offer Honoraria to guests who perform a service for the Organization. Legal and practical capacity to offer honoraria may vary by guest, including based on the individual's nation of citizenship. Student Organizations must not make financial commitments for payment of honoraria and travel expenses for guests without advance approval from Student Life.

Gift Policy

Harvard University has a strict gift policy for employees that Student Organizations need to follow when giving gifts to faculty or staff. See the [Gift and Celebratory Events for Employees and Nonemployees](#) on the Financial Policy Office website and the [Gift Taxability Table](#).

Separation of Personal and Organization Funds

Student Organizations must keep their funds separate from the personal funds of their officers or members. Student Organizations are not allowed to use a personal checking or savings account for Student Organization funds. For organizations with an HFCU account, funds should be deposited in a checking or savings account in the name of the Student Organization.

Bank Accounts

Certain Student Organizations maintain accounts at the Harvard Federal Credit Union (HFCU) with annual Student Life approval, though most organizations do not require one.

- All student organization bank accounts must be held exclusively with HFCU. To discuss opening an account, student leaders must meet with Student Life staff.
- Organizations that lose recognized status and reactivate later risk losing their bank funds, depending on the length of inactivity. Under Massachusetts law, unclaimed property must be reported and remitted to the Commonwealth after three years.
- In June of each year, all signers are removed from student organization accounts with HFCU. Student leaders who will continue in their roles for the following academic year must complete the required forms again.

Student Organization Salaries

Earnings of any Student Organization should not be given to individual members. In extremely rare cases, some Student Organization members can be eligible for payment for services performed by those members. Student Organizations wishing to consider this rare exception should discuss it with Student Life staff.

Fundraising

Student Organizations require permission from Student Life to conduct fundraising in any form. This includes raising funds from alumni or other individuals, businesses or corporations, foundations, government grants and contracts, and special events (on or off campus), as well as selling merchandise. Before making an appointment with the Student Life staff about fundraising ideas, Student Organizations

must develop and submit to Student Life a project budget for the specific program or event they are planning. Project budgets should include both projected expenses and income.

Please note: Harvard GSD and Harvard University coordinate and limit solicitation of alumni and certain corporations and foundations for funds to support the basic needs of the University, and these should not be assumed to be an easy source of funding. Any request for funds from alumni, Harvard GSD, or Harvard Federal Credit Union, and certain corporations and foundations requires prior approval from and direct involvement of the Student Life staff.

Please keep in mind the following guidelines as it pertains to fundraising:

- The purpose for which the funds are raised must be consistent with the purpose of the recognized Student Organization.
- Funds must be used for the specific event or purpose for which they were raised.
- It is generally better to receive in-kind donations than funds.
- Student Organizations may not solicit or receive funds from persons or organizations subject to sanctions administered by the US Department of the Treasury.

Student Organization Events with Alcohol

All students are expected to comply with [the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#) and with all University or School rules governing possessing or serving alcohol.

- The consumption of alcohol on public property or on property open to the public is prohibited.
- The transportation or consumption of alcoholic beverages in open containers in public areas of campus is prohibited.
- If a person is seriously harmed, or could have been seriously harmed, because of consumption of alcohol or drugs at an event held, sponsored, organized, or supported by a Student Organization and those directly responsible for the provision of alcohol or drugs are not identified, then Student Life staff may hold the event hosts personally responsible.
- Social event attendees must not be served more than one alcoholic beverage at a time.
- The service of alcohol at any event held, sponsored, organized, or supported by a Student Organization must not exceed 4 hours.

Drinking Age

The minimum drinking age in Massachusetts is 21. To be served or provided with an alcoholic beverage, an individual must show proof of minimum drinking age by presenting a government-issued photo identification.

- The sale, delivery, or furnishing of alcohol to persons under the age of 21 is prohibited.
- The possession or transportation of alcoholic beverages by individuals under the age of 21 is prohibited.
- Proper age verification (21 years) is required for all social events where alcohol is being served.

Bartenders

Whenever the number of people in attendance exceeds 30 for an event where alcohol will be served, the Student Organization is responsible for hiring a bartender(s). Student Life can advise organizations on

whether and how to hire bartending staff. Note that in general, Student Organization events should plan not to serve alcohol.

Food and Alcoholic Beverages

A proportional amount of food and nonalcoholic beverages must be available at any event where alcohol is served.

- Alcohol may not be served unless water, non-alcoholic beverages, and food are also made available.
- Water and non-alcoholic beverages must be visible and as accessible as alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol and Entertainment License/University Alcohol Policy

One-day alcohol and/or entertainment licenses are required when: attendees are charged for admission, there is a cash bar or professional performances, or the event is open to the general public. Student Organizations are responsible for obtaining such licenses from the appropriate city. Student Organizations will need an approval email from HUPD when applying for licenses with the appropriate city. Plan to start this process at least three weeks before the event. This process must be managed with Student Life staff. Please view the [Harvard University Alcohol License Policy](#) for additional information.

Policy Governing Alcohol Service to Students at the GSD

The GSD has a special policy governing the serving of alcohol and alcoholic beverages at student events. This includes those held on school property, which are open to the GSD community and/or invited guests. This policy also applies to student events held off the GSD or Harvard campus. Exceptions to this policy must be granted in advance and on a per-event basis by GSD Student Life.

A student event is defined as any event led by students and/or primarily aimed at a student audience. This includes all events sponsored by Student Forum or any other form of student government, and all student groups, including any ad hoc informal groups and formally recognized Student Organizations. Faculty and staff sponsoring events with alcohol for students should assume these guidelines also apply to them and check with Student Life if exceptions are sought.

1. Students organizing or hosting a student event must notify Student Life in advance about their intention to serve alcohol at their event. In the student events proposal form on Engage, there is a question about alcohol, which serves as a notification when answered. However, groups should not assume they have permission to serve alcohol until it is explicitly granted. Even if approval to have alcohol at an event is obtained, student organizations are not allowed to use Student Organizations funding to pay for alcohol.
2. As with all other events, students must first fill out the event proposal form. Student Forum, Class Representatives, and officers of registered student groups can do this in Engage. Students seeking to serve alcohol in a course-related setting should connect with the instructors and/or the course's academic department. If your proposed event does not fall into those categories, please contact Student Life.
3. If alcohol is being served, there must also be a non-alcoholic beverage option, and food must be available. If there are no water fountains/dispensers, water should be made available free of charge, even if other beverages require payment.

4. Absolutely no hard liquor is permitted at any student-sponsored event. Alcohol served should be beer, wine, or hard cider. Hard seltzers can sometimes be permitted, but an exception from Student Life should be granted, and care must be taken to distinguish alcoholic and non-alcoholic seltzers.
5. Mixed drinks can occasionally be permitted at specific pre-authorized major events, if served by professionally trained and TIPS-certified bartenders. This exception is generally granted exclusively for events co-sponsored by GSD Departments.
6. Student-sponsored events held on the GSD campus must use alcohol served in individual cans when possible. For events in which glass wine bottles are preferred, the group should ask for that exception to be approved by Student Life. Kegs are not permitted.
7. Every event with alcohol should have one lead contact person, known as the Responsible Party. That person should be designated and approved in advance of the event. At the event, the Responsible Party must check in with representatives of security and custodial staff and ensure the lead staff have their mobile phone number and know where to find them if needed during the event.
8. Events involving 100 or more people are subject to additional rules. Such events are required to hire a HUPD detail officer and may also be required to hire additional security guards and/or custodial staff. Such events may require you to hire professionally trained bartenders with TIPS certification. When trained bartenders are required, they must be the only servers of alcohol at the event. All such hires are at the expense of the sponsoring group.
9. Persons designated to serve alcohol will not serve or provide alcoholic beverages to anyone appearing intoxicated.
10. The minimum drinking age in Massachusetts is 21. Persons wishing to be served alcoholic beverages by the GSD or its agents are presenting themselves as being 21 years of age or older, and must be prepared to demonstrate proof of minimum drinking age by showing a valid ID.
11. Any student who knowingly makes a false statement about their age, shows false identification, or makes alcohol legally obtained from the school or its agents available to an underage person is subject to serious disciplinary actions, including probation or dismissal from the GSD and Harvard University.

Events Requiring Crowd Control

In accordance with the [Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations](#), a Student Organization events with over 100 people must have a designated Crowd Manager. Student Life staff will notify your organization if hiring security staff is necessary to meet this requirement.

Additional guidelines for parties and similar events:

1. All existing event planning guidelines apply to parties, whether alcohol will be served.
2. Events held at the GSD campus (indoors and outdoors) must obtain prior permission for using noise amplification (such as the speaker used at Beer & Dogs). If approved, event sponsors will be given a cutoff time beyond which amplification is no longer allowed. On Friday or Saturday

nights, this is generally 8:30 pm. Amplified events are also subject to Cambridge noise ordinance; a decibel meter may be borrowed to ensure compliance.

3. Events that generate excessive trash may require additional custodial staff. Such events may also be limited to specific locations to allow time for cleaning the space before other functions, such as academic courses, need those spaces. If additional custodial staff is not required, students may be required to remove trash bags, bring trash and recycling bins to a designated location, and/or other cleanup to restore the space to its original condition. On request, Building Services can leave out extra bins in advance of an event.
4. If there is a spill inside a GSD building, such as alcohol or ice water from a beer cooler, custodial staff must be notified immediately.

Police Presence

Harvard University requires a Harvard University Police Department (HUPD) detail to be present for student-sponsored events whenever the number in attendance exceeds 100 and alcohol is served. A police detail can be arranged by visiting the HUPD website and is generally arranged by Student Life staff. The appropriate number of police officers will be determined by the HUPD. See [Harvard University Police Department \(HUPD\) website](#) for pricing.

Additional policies on hiring of security:

The services of the Harvard University Police or Securitas Security may be required under the following circumstances:

1. When the organization is collecting cash for admissions
2. When the safety of an invited speaker or community members is suspected to be at risk
3. When a large crowd is expected
4. When an event, lecture or speaker is suspected to be controversial in nature
5. When alcohol is sold, for events of any size
6. When alcohol is served and more than 100 people are expected
7. When the Druker Design Gallery (Gund Hall lobby and main exhibition space) is used
8. When the event occurs on Harvard property other than Gund Hall, or off Harvard property
9. When the event takes place on a weekend or holiday

For security costs and additional information or questions about security, please consult with Student Life (for student events) or Facilities and Campus Services.

Protocol Involving Dignitaries and High-Profile Guests

Harvard University regularly hosts distinguished visitors on campus. To facilitate the necessary official courtesies for distinguished visitors, Student Life staff must be notified in advance, and then appropriate University approval must be obtained before invitations to visit Harvard as guests of a Student Organization may be issued. The process for inviting any speaker to campus begins with proposing that speaker to Student Life for review, regardless of the guest's profile. Student Life staff will assist the Student Organization in meeting additional required protocols as needed.

The [University Marshal's Office](#) is the point of contact for the University and can offer advice and assistance on matters of protocol and appropriate procedures for issuing invitations to heads of state and other high-level dignitaries and officials. All Harvard students pursuing high-level invitations to speaking engagements on campus should read the following [Information for Student Organizations](#).

In most cases, GSD Student Life staff will work with the University Marshal's Office on behalf of the requesting student organization. For guidelines on inviting heads of state, dignitaries, and other high-profile visitors to speak at Harvard, please visit the University Marshal's website and refer specifically to its [Invitation Protocol](#), [Head of State or Head of Government Protocol](#), [Planning Checklist](#), and [Student Organization Policy for Inviting Heads of State and Distinguished Guests](#).

Political Candidates During an Election Year

The University, as a charitable organization, cannot invite any declared political candidate (local, state, or federal) for what could be considered a "campaign" event. [Find the policy here](#).

Policy on Student Organizations Making Public Statements

In some situations, Student Organizations may wish to make statements regarding topics of discussion in the campus community or broader society. Student Organizations wishing to consider releasing public statements of any kind must develop a process to make decisions about statements before considering any specific such statements. The development of the process must involve all Organization officers and Student Life. Student Forum follows a multi-step process outlined in the Student Forum Bylaws.

Officers of Student Organizations should be mindful that not all members of the Organization may agree with a statement published by the Organization, and that if the statement becomes a matter of public controversy, all members of the Organization may be affected, regardless of their role in drafting and publishing the statement. Accordingly, unless the Organization has reached unanimous agreement on the content of a statement the Organization should consider attaching a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in the statement do not represent the individual views of every member. A Student Organization should take special care when publishing statements on matters unrelated to the purpose and objectives of the Organization.

Policies on Showing Videos and Films

By law, all motion pictures, pre-recorded videocassettes, DVDs, and electronic media are subject to copyright laws. No films can be rented or purchased from a video store and shown to a group via any GSD platform without the proper license, even if no admission is charged. Such showings are considered public performances and are governed by the U.S. Copyright Act, which grants the owner of the copyright exclusive rights to the film or video. It is illegal to show films or videos without the proper license.

Student organizations considering the screening of a video or film must obtain permission to do so from copyright owners. This should be initiated at least three weeks prior to the planned screening. Student organizations should begin this process by consulting with Student Life as early as possible. Students should never order a film unless the budget for the rental and licensing fees has officially been approved. All video requests should be for videos with an option to show closed or open captions.

Violation of the copyright law is a federal crime and is subject to substantial fines and/or a jail term. Harvard University will not defend or be responsible for fines imposed on an individual or individuals who violate the law.

Please Note: The screening of a film as part of face-to-face teaching in connection with a specific academic course is not an infringement of copyright.

Student Organization Events with Employers

[GSD Career Services](#) often collaborates with Student Organizations at the GSD to help them better manage their relationship with employers and to support career-related events for the Harvard community. Partnering with Career Services also enables Student Organizations and Harvard to maintain a long-term relationship with invited speakers and employers. In addition, Career Services can help publicize events related to careers.

All events with employers, including virtual and off-campus events, must be coordinated with GSD Career Services. This process begins when the Organization first makes an Engage request to consider holding an event.

If a Student Organization event is open to all students at the GSD, Career Services may be able to help with:

- Planning and Logistics
- Publicity
- Employer and Alumni Connections

If Student Organizations are alerted to job opportunities, they must forward them by email to Career Services (career@gsd.harvard.edu) to be added to the jobs database.

Student Organization Events with Travel

Student Organizations considering traveling on business, even locally, must seek advance permission from Student Life. Organizations may need to collect travel waivers from leaders and members before their trip. Additional requirements may include the use of vehicles rented through Harvard or through University agreements with providers. Meeting these requirements can lead to additional costs for the outing, some or all of which may need to be covered by attendees.

Student Organizations considering domestic or international travel should refer to resources from the Harvard Global Support Services website.

Student Organization Space Reservation Policies

Student Organizations must follow all applicable policies and procedures for the spaces they are reserving or using.

GSD Room Reservation Policies

Student Organizations that reserve and use space in Gund Hall and the Houses must adhere to the [GSD Room Usage Policy](#). Students are not permitted to book space for Student Organizations through SERT and must make room requests through the Event Request Form on Engage. This applies even to students who have SERT access through other roles. Attempting to bypass the Engage process by using SERT access granted for another purpose, such as a TA job, can jeopardize continued access to SERT.

U.S. Restricted Party Screening for Student Groups Organizing, Sponsoring, or Hosting Programs/Events Online and Abroad

Student groups at Harvard provide valuable educational and social opportunities for students and give them the opportunity to form connections around common academic, cultural, political, and social interests. Student groups also contribute to the overall intellectual and social life of the University and enrich the opportunities and experience of Harvard students, faculty, and staff, by offering programming and events that are consistent with the University's teaching and research mission. These may include programs or events hosted abroad or online that include international participants. This guidance is designed to help ensure that student groups and their leaders engage in international programming in a manner consistent with their legal responsibilities.

U.S. federal law – including regulations administered by agencies such as the Departments of Treasury, Commerce, and State – restricts or prohibits U.S.-based individuals and entities from providing services, including University and student-organized programs and events, to certain foreign individuals and entities that are formally designated on U.S. sanctions or export controls restricted party lists ("Restricted Parties"). All U.S.-based individuals and entities, including Harvard students and student groups, are also prohibited from engaging in many financial transactions (such as accepting fees or payments, accepting gifts in support of the organization, providing compensation or stipends, or reimbursing costs) with Restricted Parties. Individuals who violate U.S. sanctions and export controls laws may be subject to federal civil and criminal penalties.

To facilitate compliance with U.S. sanctions and export controls laws, Harvard has adopted University-wide guidance governing screening of Restricted Parties for educational programs. This includes any programs, conferences, seminars, workshops, webinars, or similar events that Harvard is directly involved in facilitating, sponsoring, or organizing. The guidance covers events that take place online (partially or fully) or abroad that Harvard hosts, sponsors (meaning that Harvard provides resources, support or official backing for the program), or organizes, independently or with others as a co-host, co-sponsor, or co-organizer.

As part of its compliance responsibilities, each Harvard student group must comply with Harvard's University-wide guidance on Restricted Party and export control screening for events that are online or that take place outside the United States where the student group is itself a host, sponsor, or organizer (or co-host, co-sponsor, or co-organizer) – particularly for events that involve international payments to or from student organizations. In addition, Harvard student groups must coordinate with their School's development office before accepting gifts from donors to ensure appropriate screenings have been conducted.

If you have questions about compliance with U.S. sanctions and export control laws, or require assistance with screening, contact your Dean of Students office, who will work with your School Export Control Administrator (ECA).

For more information, reference the University's [Educational Program Screening resources](#), including the [Bulletin on Educational Programs and Screening](#), the [FAQs](#), and [Infographic](#) on Screening for Educational Programs.

At the GSD, Student Life facilitates screening of all parties subject to this screening for involvement in Student Organization activities. In most cases, students will submit the Export Control form on Engage. Two of the most common cases needing screening are speakers at events, and paid attendees at conferences and symposia. Please allow two weeks for the processing of any screening.

Filming on Campus

Harvard Public Affairs and Communications (HPAC) administers Harvard University's restrictions on photography and videography on campus.

For example:

- Any photography or videotaping that portrays official signs, insignia, or emblems of Harvard University or its schools must have advance written permission from the Trademark Office (exceptions are made for press invited to cover University events).
- Commercial filming anywhere on Harvard's campus is prohibited without advance written permission from the University.
- Filming inside dormitories, cafeterias, or classrooms is prohibited without advance written permission from the University.

A full list of restrictions and how to request a permit can be found in the [Policy on Photographing and Filming on Harvard Property](#). Questions regarding the policy should be sent to media@harvard.edu.

Anyone seeking to film, including informally, such as at an event for social media, should seek permission from both the event organizers and anyone recognizable in the video. Attention should also be paid to the [GSD Non-Attribution Policy](#).

Policy for the Safety & Protection of Minors

Harvard University is committed to providing a safe environment for everyone on its campuses and in its programs. This includes the thousands of minors who participate in programs and activities both on and off campus. Members of the Harvard community who interact with minors in any official capacity must foster and maintain an appropriate and secure environment for minors. The process for approval includes government-required training and background checks. For more information, see the [Harvard University Policy for the Safety & Protection of Minors](#). Any proposed Student Organization activity involving minors must seek advance permission from Student Life.

Student Organization Disciplinary Process

All recognized Student Organizations, leaders, and members are required to abide by all policies at Harvard GSD and Harvard University.

Concerns that a recognized Student Organization at Harvard GSD has not upheld University or Harvard GSD policies should be brought to Student Life staff, studentorgs@gsd.harvard.edu.

GSD Student Life staff must be kept up to date on Student Organization leadership transitions to ensure continuity throughout the process and outcomes if applicable. When determining appropriate disciplinary outcomes, Student Life staff will consider the incident and its context and any prior disciplinary findings; these factors can be considered as part of any response.

Informal Complaint Process

A person considering lodging a formal grievance against a Student Organization should discuss the matter with Student Life staff at studentorgs@gsd.harvard.edu. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the student may ask Student Life to arrange for mediation of the dispute or to conduct some other process appropriate to the circumstance; the process may or may not include elements of the formal grievance procedure described below.

Formal Investigation

Harvard GSD or an aggrieved person may submit a formal complaint alleging that a Student Organization has violated one or more of the policies in this document. Upon receiving such a complaint, Student Life will investigate the matter and solicit a written statement from the Student Organization's officers. Student Life may also request to meet with officers and members of the Student Organization. Upon completing its investigation, Student Life will provide notice to the Student Organization's officers of its findings and any sanctions leveled against the organization. If in its investigation Student Life learns of possible policy violations by individual students, it may refer these matters to the Harvard GSD Review Board for potential discipline.

Determinations by Student Life that a Student Organization is not meeting eligibility requirements for recognition are not subject to this process. *See above* ("Eligibility Requirements").

Possible Sanctions for Student Organizations

- **Warning:** Formal communication from Student Life staff notifying the Student Organization of a violation and that another violation likely will result in a more severe outcome.
- **Period of Probation:** Probation is a period during which the Student Organization is given the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to abide by all applicable policies and procedures. An outcome of Probation may be accompanied by a period during which certain of the Student Organization's privileges are suspended, for example, accessing room booking, participating in Harvard GSD events/programs (such as the Student Organizations Fair or hosting a Beer & Dogs), or other appropriate restrictions. If the Student Organization is found responsible for violating any policies during the probation period, the Student Organization immediately may be subject to additional sanctions, including, without limitation, suspension or loss of recognized status.
- **Suspension of Recognized Status:** Suspension of recognized status is a designated period during which a Student Organization loses Harvard GSD recognition and forfeits all privileges accorded to recognized Student Organizations. After the designated period of suspension, the suspended organization may petition Student Life for reinstatement of its recognition as a Student Organization. The petition must demonstrate that the Student Organization has abided by the terms of suspension and satisfy Harvard GSD that it will comply with applicable policies in the future.
- **Permanent Loss of Recognized Status:** A Student Organization that permanently loses recognition status forfeits all privileges accorded to a recognized Student Organization. The name of the Student Organization and all symbols associated with Harvard University will be removed from all Harvard University property, including Harvard's websites. The organization is prohibited from, among other things, using the Harvard GSD name and visual

identity. A Student Organization that permanently loses recognized status may not petition for reinstatement and may not apply for recognition in any subsequent academic year.

Resources and Support

Resources for student organization leaders are available in the required Canvas training modules, which all officers must complete. Leaders can also reach out to Student Life at studentorgs@gsd.harvard.edu for support and assistance.

Updated as of September 3, 2026