

Denison University's Hazing Prevention Policy

Hazing behavior is strictly prohibited at Denison and is a criminal offense under Ohio law when it causes mental or physical harm to another person, or creates a substantial risk of such harm.¹

Denison encourages student participation in student organizations and athletics. These involvements enrich the college experience and contribute to students' social and leadership development. Hazing is entirely contrary to the purpose and values of Denison student organizations and teams. Denison condemns hazing behavior of any kind. Hazing carries risk of physical and mental harm, including serious harm or death, and harm to the personal dignity of individuals and to Denison's community values.

The potential for hazing typically arises as part of a student's recruitment, orientation, or initiation to an organization (such as a fraternity, sorority, athletics team, campus organizations, or other student groups) in which there is often a power differential between established members of the organization and those being recruited or newly joining.

Denison's hazing policy broadly covers organizations of Denison students, including but not limited to Greek organizations, athletic teams, and other student organizations.

Hazing Defined

Hazing is any action taken as part of an *initiation* (or re-initiation) into "any student or other organization" that causes *mental or physical harm* to another person (or creates a substantial risk of that harm occurring), *including coercing another person to consume alcohol or drugs*. The harmful action can either be action directly harming the victim or action coercing the victim to act in a way that leads to physical or mental harm to themselves or others.

Denison further defines hazing (more broadly than Ohio state law) to include any activity that is part of recruitment, orientation, initiation, or membership practice of a group, or that is required for continued acceptance into a group, that is harmful or potentially harmful to an individual's physical, emotional, or psychological well-being.

This hazing policy applies if the hazing takes place between two or more people who are affiliated with the University, and applies to behavior whether on or off campus.

Further, this hazing policy applies regardless of an individual's willingness to participate, the activity's actual bearing on the individual's membership status, or whether the organization's event was or was not officially approved by the organization or University.

The harmful action can either be an action directly harming the victim or an action coercing the victim to act in a way that leads to physical or mental harm to themselves, or others. Denison's hazing policy also covers knowing and intentional behavior, as well as reckless behavior. Acting recklessly means acting without regard to a substantial and unjustified risk that action/inaction will result in harm or the substantial risk of harm.

¹ See [Ohio Revised Code, 2903.31](#)

Identifying Acts of Hazing

Hazing incidents often involve:

- **Planners or Organizers** - those who have planned or organized the event
- **Members** - those who have willingly participated in the event
- **Bystanders** - those who have observed or have knowledge about the hazing, regardless of membership status
- **Victims** - those who experiencing hazing

All involved may be held responsible, though outcomes may differ based on the incident and level of responsibility, planning, or participation.

Though **not intended as an exhaustive list**, the following actions and situations constitute as hazing, if they are undertaken for or in connection with the above-noted reasons and purposes:

- Physically or psychologically embarrassing, demeaning, degrading, harassing, abusing, or endangering someone
- Removing, damaging, or destroying property
- Disrupting college or community activities or the educational process
- Expected or coerced consumption of food, drink, alcohol, drugs, or other substances.
- Sleep deprivation or interruption
- Physical or psychological shocks or extreme tests (such as those involving extreme exercise, standing, or periods of silence)
- Acts of humiliation or degradation (including those involving nudity, the wearing of degrading or humiliating apparel, or personal servitude)
- Paddling in any form
- Physical branding
- Restrictions on eating or bathing
- Interruption or interference of academic work or commitments.
- Quests or trips
- Public stunts or public misconduct
- Active members unwilling to participate in the same activity with new members
- Cryptic language is used to describe an event, activity, or interaction
- Active and new members are unwilling to discuss the full extent of the event or activity with advisors, coaches, family members, inter/national organizations, and/or prospective members
- Members justifying actions as “traditions” in an attempt to convince others that it is an appropriate behavior or activity
- Changes in behavior such as oversleeping, constant exhaustion, or an inability to focus

This list is not exhaustive of all hazing behaviors. Hazing behaviors can extend outside of this list.

Preventing and Reporting Hazing

Participating in hazing and permitting hazing are prohibited: No person shall participate in the hazing of another. Additionally, protecting against hazing behavior is the responsibility of every member of the University community, including students, employees, and other affiliates. Ohio law specifically states that “no administrator, employee, faculty member, teacher, consultant, alumnus, or volunteer” shall recklessly permit the hazing of any person. Recklessly participating in hazing and recklessly permitting hazing constitute second-degree misdemeanor criminal violations under Ohio law, and third-degree felony

criminal violations when the hazing includes coerced consumption of alcohol or drugs resulting in serious physical harm to a person.

Reporting requirements of employees, volunteers, and Denison affiliates: As required by Ohio law, every administrator, employee, faculty member, teacher, consultant, alumnus, or volunteer of Denison who is acting in an official and professional capacity must immediately report any knowledge of hazing to Denison's Office of Campus Safety (740-587-6482) or other law enforcement agency in which the hazing victim resides or where the hazing is occurring or has occurred. (The Granville Police Department can be reached at 740-587-1234 or by emergency dispatch by dialing 911). Failure to report is a fourth-degree misdemeanor, and a first-degree misdemeanor if the hazing causes serious physical harm.

Student reporting: Students should report hazing to Campus Safety at 740-587-6482, to the Granville Police Department at 740-587-1234 or for emergencies, by calling 911. Students may also report through Denison's [Anonymous Reporting System](#). However, reports submitted anonymously or with limited information may limit Denison's ability to follow up on a concern. We urge students to report as much information as possible and to provide a way for Denison to communicate in follow up.

If students need support to report hazing, or are unsure if what they have seen or experienced is considered hazing, they should contact:

Dr. Nicole Ausmer, Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life
740-587-5059 - ausmern@denison.edu

Dana Pursley, Director of the Alford Community Leadership and Involvement Center
740-587-5587 - pursleyd@denison.edu

David Rose, Director of Campus Safety
740-587-6298 - rosed@denison.edu

University Collin's Law Report: The University will publish periodic public reports of all violations of its anti-hazing policy in compliance with the state of Ohio's Collin's Law. These reports will be publicly available on the University website. These reports will be posted beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, and updated in January and August of each year.

Enforcement and Adjudication

Violations of the hazing policy may subject an individual or campus organization to the adjudication process under the Code of Student Conduct, administered by the Office of Community Values and Student Conduct.

Penalties for hazing violations may include the suspension or revocation of recognition for an organization to operate on campus, or to otherwise operate under the recognition or sanction of the University, or forfeiture of competitions or seasons in the case of an athletics team. For individuals, hazing violations may be addressed through the imposition of educational or disciplinary outcomes, up to and including disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University.

Required Training

Student Training / Program Participation Restrictions for Failure to Comply

This policy and Ohio law require all students to complete educational training on hazing awareness, prevention, intervention, and on the elements of this policy. This training program is offered as part of new student orientation. Any student who does not participate in the educational training on hazing awareness must make other arrangements to fulfill this obligation by working with the Alford Community Leadership and Involvement Center (CLIC).

Students must participate in this educational training before they are allowed membership into any University-recognized campus organization or athletics team. Students who do not participate in the training will be barred from participating in any campus organization or athletics team and may be subject to additional educational or disciplinary outcomes under the Student Code of Conduct.

Any campus organization or athletics team that grants membership to a student who has not participated in the educational training may be subject to the loss of University recognition, funding, or other privileges.

Volunteer Training by Campus Organizations

This policy and the Ohio Revised Code require each campus organization to conduct anti-hazing training for any faculty, staff and volunteers who have direct contact with students and who advise or coach a Denison-recognized organization, including athletic teams.

Any campus organization including, but not limited to, fraternities, sororities, club sports/intramurals, band/music ensembles, varsity athletics, etc., seeking to allow volunteers from outside of the campus community to be in contact with students are required to work with the Alford Community Leadership and Involvement Center (CLIC) on providing this training to volunteers.