



Policy Number: I.39
Policy Level: Operating Policy
Originally Issued: August 17, 2026
Policy Owner: President
Policy Implementation: Dean of Students

Hazing

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

Athens State University is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and respectful learning environment for all members of its community. The University will not tolerate conduct that endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any student, or that undermines the dignity of individuals or groups.

The University strictly prohibits hazing in all forms and will promptly investigate and address all allegations in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. Confirmed acts of hazing constitute a violation of the *Student Code of Conduct* and will result in disciplinary action.

II. Definitions

Student Organization/Club – For this policy, an organization at the University (such as a club, society, association, or student government association) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the University, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the University.

Hazing – Hazing is defined by Section 16-1-23 of the Code of Alabama (1975) as:

(1) Any willful action taken or situation created, whether on or off any school, college, university, or other educational premises, which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any student, or

(2) Any willful act on or off any school, college, university, or other educational premises by any person alone or acting with others in striking, beating, bruising, or maiming; or seriously offering, threatening, or attempting to strike, beat, bruise, or maim, or to do or seriously offer, threaten, or attempt to do physical violence to any student of any such educational institution or any assault upon any such students made for the purpose of committing any of the acts, or producing any of the results to such student as defined in this section.



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(3) The term hazing, as defined in this section, does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions, and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization. The term hazing does not include corporal punishment administered by officials or employees of public schools when in accordance with policies adopted by local boards of education.

Additionally, Section 16-1-23, Code of Alabama (1975) provides that:

No person shall engage in what is commonly known and recognized as hazing, or encourage, aid, or assist any other person, thus offending.

No person shall knowingly permit, encourage, aid, or assist any person in committing the offense of hazing, or willfully acquiesce in the commission of such offense, or fail to report promptly his knowledge or any reasonable information within his knowledge of the presence and practice of hazing in this state to the chief executive officer of the appropriate school, college, university, or other educational institution in this state. Any act of omission or commission shall be deemed hazing under the provisions of this section.

Any person who shall commit the offense of hazing shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor as defined by Title 13A.

Any person who participates in the hazing of another, or any organization associated with a school, college, university, or other educational institution in this state which knowingly permits hazing to be conducted by its members or by others subject to its direction or control, shall forfeit any entitlement to public funds, scholarships, or awards which are enjoyed by him or by it and shall be deprived of any sanction or approval granted by the school, college, university, or other educational institution.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as in any manner affecting or repealing any law of this state respecting homicide, or murder, manslaughter, assault with intent to murder, or aggravated assault.



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Hazing is additionally defined by the *Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA)* as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person(s), regardless of the willingness of such other person(s) to participate that:

1. Is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in a student organization; and
2. Causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury, including:
 - a. Whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;
 - b. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;
 - c. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
 - d. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
 - e. Any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
 - f. Any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law; and
 - g. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law.

III. Reporting and Investigation

Reports of hazing will be considered a non-academic violation as defined in the *Student Code of Conduct* and shall be addressed in accordance with the procedures set forth therein.



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IV. Responsibility for this Operating Policy

Policy Owner

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the President remains the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Dean of Students.