

Registered and Sponsored Student Organization FAQ

1. What is a Registered Student Organization?

A Registered Student Organization (RSO) is a student-operated group formed around a common interest.

RSOs do not represent the University and may not otherwise imply that they do. RSOs do not receive special benefits from the University.

As a result of this separation from the University, RSOs are not subject to the prohibitions under SB 17. However, to comply with federal law, RSOs must allow all students to participate regardless of race, color, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other legally protected trait.

Any group of students can apply to create a Registered Student Organization (RSO) provided they meet the criteria in the [*Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities, Chapter 6*](#). The base requirements for an RSO include 10 members, an accurate and current roster, and approval by the Office of the Dean of Students.

All RSOs may:

- be listed as a Student Organization;
- reserve the use of university facilities;
- raise funds or make other permissible solicitations on university property;
- distribute literature on campus;
- publicly assemble; and
- present a guest speaker on university property.

The rules/limits governing these activities and those not listed can be found in the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*.¹

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Ch. 6. Student Organizations:

<https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-organizations/>

Ch. 10. Use of University Property, Rooms, and Space: <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/use-of-university-property-rooms-and-spaces/>

Ch. 13. Speech, Expression, and Assembly:

<https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/speech-expression-and-assembly/>

2. What is a Sponsored Student Organization?

Sponsored Student Organizations (SSOs) are student groups directly linked to colleges, schools, or units, or are student governance organizations. SSOs represent the University and can receive general operational funding and special benefits from the University. Because SSOs are an extension of the University, they are subject to the same requirements and prohibitions under federal and state law as the University, including SB 17.

SSOs must closely monitor their programs and activities to ensure they do not violate the requirements of Senate Bill 17, [Tex. Education Code §51.3525](#). If an SSO's programs and activities do not comply with SB 17's requirements, the SSO must convert to an RSO. The organization is no longer entitled to operational funding and special institutional benefits when this conversion occurs.

3. What support is available for RSOs?

A college, school, unit (CSU), or student governance organization may not provide general operational funding to any RSO. However, a CSU may allow RSOs to apply for limited monetary awards to host events. For such a program, CSUs must create a neutral application process that doesn't consider race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected trait under state and federal law. The neutral criteria may include, among other items, (i) the number of students expected to attend, (ii) whether the event is open to all students or just the RSO's members, and (iii) does the activity further/support an academic area or is it purely social. For reference, see the attached example of a neutral criteria rubric that can be adapted for specific CSU needs.

RSOs must maintain private bank accounts for their funds unless the connected CSU offers an alternative banking option, which must be available to all RSOs,

4. What type of special support is available for SSOs?

CSUs can provide operational funding and special benefits – such as travel funding, space reservations, and consultation with the department – to their SSOs. However, as proscribed by SB 17, CSUs may not fund or assist with any SSO event, program, award, or activity related to race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

SSOs must maintain a bank account with the university that UT employees actively manage.

5. We were an SSO but converted to an RSO. What happened to the money that was previously in our university account?

If a student organization was previously sponsored and has existing funds (e.g., money that was fundraised but kept in a campus bank account), the CSU may transfer those funds to the RSO's external account, provided the money was allocated before January 1, 2024. Any money in the accounts allocated after January 1, 2024, shall remain with the University.

6. Are there any limits on how the different groups reserve space?

Yes. CSUs can develop their own indoor space reservation policies for RSOs, provided that the process is neutral and open to all RSOs. CSUs may continue to provide priority space reservations and usage for SSOs.

The Office of the Dean of Students also has policies and procedures for reserving space under its control and those spaces are open to all RSOs.

7. Are there rules about communication resources?

Yes. All RSOs may have private websites off-campus.

RSOs must create a private email account and cannot have an @utexas.edu email address. They may also use [HornsLink](#).

CSUs may not provide additional communication resources to RSOs. If a CSU wishes to list RSOs on its website, it must list all RSOs. CSUs may not curate the list on their website to draw special attention to specific RSOs.

SSOs can use all departmental communication resources their sponsoring CSU provides. SSOs are also permitted to use university marks when approved by their sponsor.

8. Who processes travel requests for student groups?

The Office of the Dean of Students manages all travel requests for RSOs. RSOs must apply for travel and receive authorization from the Office of the Dean of Students.

SSOs should contact their sponsor for specifics on travel policies and procedures and apply for travel through their sponsor. *It is the responsibility of the sponsoring college, school, or unit to inform the Office of the Dean of Students of any SSO travel at least 10 days prior to departure by emailing studentactivities@austin.utexas.edu.*

Information regarding the specific policies and procedures for travel can be found here: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sa/stuorgstravel.php>.

9. What if I have additional questions that aren't answered here?

If you have additional questions or require additional information, please email Student Activities in the Office of the Dean of Students so that we can confirm and respond to your request: studentactivities@austin.utexas.edu