

Messiah University

Hazing Policy

Messiah University prohibits hazing in any form. Hazing harms University members by violating community commitments to respect, dignity, and safety.

This policy addresses a range of inappropriate conduct for which the common elements include any act—whether intentional, reckless, or planned—that happens in connection with joining, trying to join, or participating in a student organization, club, team, or University-sponsored group, that a) is not reasonably related to legitimate group goals or preparation, and b) is “excessive, humiliating, or dangerous” (i.e., puts someone at serious risk of physical, emotional, psychological, and/or sexual harm), and/or c) breaks the law or University policies, “regardless of the consent of the participants” (Adapted from Cimino, 2017).

Legal Context

Hazing is both a federal crime and a crime in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Messiah University supports and maintains compliance with Pennsylvania’s [Timothy J. Piazza Anti-Hazing Law, Act 80 of 2018](#) and the federal [Stop Campus Hazing Act \(H.R. 5646\) of 2024](#).

These laws have increased punishments for hazing as a crime, accountability measures for institutional and individual hazing violations, accessible hazing reports, and obligations for institutional policy and process to better prevent, address, and educate on hazing.

Hazing in Pennsylvania is considered a misdemeanor of the third degree if conduct results in, or creates a reasonable likelihood of, bodily injury. When the hazing results in serious bodily injury or death and (1) the actor acts with reckless indifference to the health or safety of the victim or (2) the actor causes, coerces or forces the victim to consume alcohol or drugs, this will be considered aggravated hazing and will be a felony offense. Protection from criminal prosecution will be provided to an individual who makes an immediate report of hazing in order to obtain medical attention for the victim. *For more information, please see the section on Amnesty.*

Pennsylvania Definition of Hazing

The [Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law](#) outlines the following:

A person commits **Hazing** if the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a minor or student into or with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing a minor or student’s membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a minor or student to do any of the following items:

- Violate Federal or State criminal law;
- Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the minor or student to a risk of emotional or physical harm;
- Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics or exposure to the elements;

- Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment;
- Endure brutality of a sexual nature;
- Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the minor or student.

A person commits **Aggravated Hazing** if the person commits a violation of **Hazing** that results in serious bodily injury or death to the minor or student; and

- The person acts with reckless indifference to the health and safety of the minor or student; or
- The person causes, coerces, or forces the consumption of an alcoholic liquid or drug by the minor or student.

An organization commits **Organizational Hazing** if the organization intentionally, knowingly or recklessly promotes or facilitates a violation of **Hazing** or **Aggravated Hazing**.

In addition, violations of the [Stop Campus Hazing Act](#) will also constitute violations of this policy.

It should be noted that nudity, indecent exposure, performing or mimicking sexual acts, and engaging in harassment may constitute violations of the hazing policy as well as the University's Sex-Based Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence Policy.

Hazing that does not violate the state and federal laws but may endanger the health or safety of a student at Messiah University for the purpose of engaging in or maintaining membership in a student organization could result in charges and sanctions (assigned to individuals and/or organizations) for violating this policy.

Reporting Hazing

Messiah University takes its responsibilities under these regulations seriously. Therefore, University community members that wish to file a complaint of hazing may do so in whichever manner best addresses the concerns of that individual.

Concerns and complaints may be submitted online: www.messiah.edu/incident.

This form also provides an anonymous reporting option.

To report an allegation of hazing in person (or to address questions about incidents of hazing or this policy), contact one of the following University resources:

Dean of Students

Doug Wood

Eisenhower Campus Center 204

dwood@messiah.edu, 717-796-1800 ext. 3200

Department of Safety

Greenbriar Building

717-791-6005

Brad Neuenschwander, Director of Safety

dneuenschwander@messiah.edu

Maranda Hogue, Assistant Director of Safety

mhogue@messiah.edu

To hear reporting and response options confidentially or to submit an anonymous report in person, community members at Messiah University may contact:

Prevention & Education Specialist

Emma Dougherty

Old Main 1st Floor

edougherty@messiah.edu, 717-796-1800, ext. 7085

Retaliation

Retaliation in response to a report—including against someone who reports an allegation of hazing, or against someone who participates in the investigation of hazing—is strictly prohibited by University policy and by law.

Retaliation can occur in many forms; freedom of association and freedom of personal expression are not considered acts of retaliation unless the actions include actual or perceived threats of harm.

Retaliation is defined as conduct that may reasonably be perceived to:

adversely affect a person's educational, living, or work environment because of his or her good-faith participation in the reporting, investigation, and/or resolution of a report of a violation of University policy; or discourage a reasonable person from making a report or participating in an investigation under University policy.

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, acts or words that constitute intimidation, threats, or coercion intended to pressure any individual to participate, not participate, or provide false or misleading information during any proceeding under University policy.

Examples of retaliation include:

- abuse or violence, other forms of harassment
- making false statements about another person in print or verbally with intent to harm their reputation
- suspending an individual from a team or organization
- changing an individual's position to an undesirable one
- withdrawing opportunities from an individual
- giving an individual lower or failing grades
- preventing an individual from participating in activities
- threatening an individual with suspension or expulsion

Retaliation can be committed by any individual or group of individuals. Retaliation is prohibited even when any initial allegation does not result in a finding of responsibility, is eventually dismissed or is deemed to lack merit.

Retaliation on behalf of a member of the University involved in a hazing investigation (reporting, responding, or witnessing parties) by someone outside the University community (i.e., a non-employee or non-student) may result in the University imposing sanctions on the allied University party.

Amnesty

Students, regardless of age, will be granted immunity from university disciplinary proceedings for the possession or consumption of alcohol if the Department of Safety, Residence Life staff, or other

University officials, becomes aware of the possession or consumption solely because the individual was seeking medical assistance for someone else. The person seeking assistance must reasonably believe he or she is the first to call for assistance, must use his/her own name with authorities, and must stay with the individual needing medical assistance until help arrives. Students will be immune from student disciplinary proceedings for consumption or possession of alcohol if she/he can establish the following:

1. The only way University officials became aware of the person's violation is because the person placed a 911 call, or a call to Dispatch/ Department of Safety, police or emergency services, in good faith based on a reasonable belief that another person was in need of immediate medical attention to prevent death or serious injury.
2. The student reasonably believed she/he was the first person to make a 911 call, or a call to Dispatch/Department of Safety, police or emergency services, and report that a person needed immediate medical attention to prevent death or serious injury.
3. The student provided his/her own name to the 911 operator or equivalent campus safety, police or emergency officer.
4. The student remained with the person needing medical assistance until emergency health care providers arrived and the need for his/her presence had ended.

The health risks associated with the use of illegal drugs and the abuse of alcohol are significant. Alcohol and other drugs affect brain functioning, result in direct injury to body tissue, are the cause of several thousand traffic fatalities each year, lead to addiction in some individuals, and can alter moods in a potentially harmful way.

The University desires and is prepared to help students and employees who have a drug- or alcohol-related problem. Students who ask for help will be treated through the Counseling Center rather than through the disciplinary process, in most circumstances. Similarly, employees seeking assistance will be provided with access to substance abuse programs, community resources for assessment and treatment, and counseling. Confidential assistance is available through Counseling Services. The University will also refer students to off-campus treatment centers if requested or if the issues being addressed warrant such referral.

For additional information on resources available, students should contact the Engle Center.

Confidentiality

Any person—complainant, respondent, or witness—involved in an allegation and/or report of hazing may have access to a confidential resource. On-campus confidential resources include:

- Prevention and Education Specialist (ext. 7085)
- Professional staff in the Counseling Center (ext. 5357))—*confidential for undergraduate students only*
- Campus Pastors (ext. 3080)—*confidential for undergraduate students only*
- Community Pastor for Employees (communitypastor@messiah.edu)—*confidential for employees only*

Confidential staff are required to pass along non-personally identifiable statistical information to the Clery Coordinator, with the knowledge of the community member. Statistics given to Safety will be made available through publication in the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report.

Please note the University is required by law to use any information included in an anonymous report of hazing to investigate the report when possible. If personally identifiable information is included in an anonymous report, it may be used in an investigation.

A complainant who reports confidentially (to the Prevention and Education Specialist, Community Pastor for Employees, Campus Pastors, or staff in the Engle Counseling Center) needs to understand that, if the complainant wants to maintain confidentiality, the University may be unable to investigate the complaint or pursue disciplinary action against the respondent.

Even so, confidential staff members will still assist community members in receiving other necessary protection and support, such as advocacy, academic support or accommodations, disability, health or mental health services, changes to living assignment and adjustments to working or course schedules.

A complainant who at first requests confidentiality may later decide to file an informal or formal complaint with the University or report the incident to local law enforcement.

Supportive and Protective Measures

Messiah University provides access to University-issued supportive measures for complainants, respondents, and witnesses that are impacted by allegations of hazing in our community. The University will provide supportive measures as requested by affected parties and as appropriate—the provision of supportive measures is evaluated based on availability, precedence, and reasonable burden for the University and/or affected parties.

Supportive and protective measures available for request include:

- Academic support or flexibility
- Transfer to a different section of a class or a different assigned group
- Adaptations of practice and/or conditioning schedule
- Withdrawal from a class (if there is no option for moving to a different section)
- Move to a different room, residence hall, or on-campus apartment
- Provide permission for living off-campus
- Change in work schedule
- Change in work assignment
- Change in parking assignment
- Safety escort on campus

Supportive measures *may* include changes or restrictions imposed on another community member (such as the respondent) including:

- Change in residential assignment or Grantham Campus/commuting living privileges
- Campus restrictions
- Prohibition from enrolling in or maintaining attendance in specific course offerings
- Prohibition from attending specific events or activities
- Implementation of a No Contact Mandate and/or restrictions from campus
- Other reasonable supportive measures

Supportive and safety measures may be obtained by speaking to University personnel including the Dean of Students, the Prevention and Education Specialist, and the Director of Safety.

Response to Allegations of Hazing

Messiah University is obligated to investigate any reports of hazing made to the University, including allegations shared verbally with a University official. *Employees designated as Campus Security Authorities at the University are obligated to report disclosures, allegations, and/or suspicions of hazing to the University.*

Once a report has been received, a University official (typically the Dean of Students or a campus safety officer) will contact the complainant (if possible) to notify the complainant of his/her options regarding rights, resources, accessing safety and support measures, and information about the investigation process. Students are not obligated to respond to or engage in University processes but have the right to access or deny the options provided.

The Dean of Students works closely with collaborating partners on campus to investigate and address allegations of hazing, often along with the Department of Safety.

The Dean of Students, Department of Safety, and/or a University designee (in accordance with Messiah University student disciplinary procedures) will investigate the allegation. Investigations will be completed in a reasonable time—factors that may impact the timeline of an investigation include the immediacy of the complaint, complainant's requests, severity of the allegations, necessary evidence collection, and number of participants. Investigations will be prompt, thorough, and unbiased.

If warranted, a disciplinary hearing of alleged violations of this policy will be called by the Dean of Students, and/or designee. Adjudication shall be conducted pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct.

Violations of this policy may result in sanctions for the students involved as well as the entire student organization, athletic team, or residence life group. The severity of the sanctions for a hazing offense will be determined in proportion to the hazing activity.

Sanctions and Remedies

The scope for disciplinary sanctions and remedies is described below. The application of sanctions and remedies will reflect the seriousness of the allegation and history of previous violations.

The University considers violations of this policy to be extremely serious violations and may be subject to SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, and/or TERMINATION from the University.

- 1. Letter of Reprimand or Warning:** Written documentation of inappropriate behaviors or attitudes with a temporary record kept in the community member's file.
- 2. No Contact Mandate:** University personnel may implement a No Contact Mandate at the request of a complainant *or* at the discretion of the University, according to the perceived need for boundaries and community impact.
- 3. Loss of Privilege:** May include but is not limited to: loss of a privilege of participating in a University activity, in registration of vehicle, in visitation, or other matter. Graduating senior community members who violate University policies prior to graduation may lose the privilege of participating in senior activities and commencement ceremonies. The University may also implement the loss of supervisory and/or leadership roles at the University, or loss of eligibility for promotion.

4. **Housing Restrictions:** Students may be required to abide by specific housing assignments which may include but are not limited to: on-campus housing permission only, assignment to a single residence (without roommates), assignment to off-campus housing, or change in housing assignment as determined by the University. Additionally, residential community members who are on disciplinary probation within 6 months prior to the off-campus housing application deadline are not eligible to apply to live off campus.
5. **Developmental/Educational Assignments:** May include but are not limited to: attendance at educational programs, personal essay, mandatory professional development, and written reflection on issues relevant to one's discipline case or involvement in a mentoring relationship.
6. **Assessment and Treatment:** Community members may be assigned to undergo an off-campus assessment and relevant treatment as a condition for remaining in the community or as a condition for returning to the community.
7. **Fines:** A monetary fee imposed to deter and prevent activity detrimental to the community.
8. **Restitution:** A monetary fee imposed to compensate for loss, damage, or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service, monetary, or material replacement.
9. **Community Service:** Assignment to complete relevant, appropriate, and/or educational community service on or off campus.
10. **Disciplinary Probation:** A strong written reprimand. Notification is made to appropriate University officials: University-based financial aid may be reviewed, and community members in leadership positions (e.g., residence staff, SGA leaders, captains of intercollegiate athletics teams, ministry team leaders, supervisors, committee chairs, etc.) will be required to step down from their positions of leadership. Students in certain majors or programs will be subject to additional review by faculty within their academic discipline (e.g. Social Work, Teacher Education Program, Nursing, etc.). Community members who have applied to study abroad programs and/or cross-cultural courses will be subject to further review by appropriate University personnel.
11. **Ban from Campus:** Written notification to individuals: within the University community, closely affiliated with the University community, with prior affiliation to the University community, with intention to join the University community, and/or posing a threat of some kind to the University community. This notification indicates that the individual(s) in question are not permitted on University-owned property and/or to attend University events or activities. The University notifies local law enforcement of the implementation of a campus ban; should a campus ban be violated the University will notify local law enforcement and pursue action.
12. **Suspension:** Involuntary separation of students from the University for a specified period of time. For suspensions of less than one semester, the suspended student is normally required to spend the period of suspension at home. A permanent record is kept in University disciplinary files. Academic advisors, residence directors, classroom instructors, and parents are normally notified. For short-term suspensions which permit the student to complete the semester, no refunds are issued for days missed. As determined by the Community Standards Committee, exams or assignments which are due in this period of time will be considered "0's" and no credit will be given. Although absence from class and chapel is not excused, individual professors may take the initiative to permit students to make up work missed. For suspensions where the student is not permitted to complete the semester, any refunds are issued in accordance with the withdrawal

policy. For more information, please refer to the following web address:
http://www.messiah.edu/offices/business/student_accounts/index.html#refund.

- 13. Withholding degree:** The University may withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until completion of the process set forth in the disciplinary procedures, including the completion of sanctions imposed.
- 14. Expulsion:** Permanent separation of the student(s) from the University. A permanent record will be kept in University disciplinary and academic files.
- 15. Termination:** Permanent separation of the employee(s) from the University. A permanent record will be kept in University disciplinary and employment files.

Appeals

The grievance process addressing an allegation of hazing includes the option for either the complaining or the responding party to file an appeal addressing the outcomes outlined in the disposition issued by the Dean of Students and/or designee.

The option to file an appeal is available if either party can provide previously unavailable material evidence that would impact the outcome(s). If either the complainant or the respondent has the ability to produce new material evidence, they may prepare a written summary of appeal and request a review. This appeal must be submitted within five (5) days of the date of the disposition to the appellate official, identified by the Dean of Students, and/or designee, in the disposition. Absent new material evidence, the determination of responsibility cannot be overturned. The decision of the appellate official will be final.

Prevention and Education

All initiation activities are subject to the approval of the University official(s) advising, supervising, coaching, and/or guiding the student organization or team. This regulation governs on and off-campus initiation and participation activities including privately owned facilities and/or property.

Student organizations, athletic teams and residence life groups are responsible for any activity in violation of this policy by any individual or group affiliated with the organization, unless it is proven that the group or individual activity was independent of, and occurred without the knowledge or consent of, the recognized organization, team, or residence life group.

Such responsibility will apply equally to situations in which one or more members (or University officials) knew or should have known of the activity and failed to make every reasonable attempt to prevent or stop it. **Consent of those impacted by hazing or participating in hazing will not be accepted as a defense for hazing activities.**

All campus departments who would be able to offer appropriate support for a community member reporting or responding to allegations of hazing need to be familiar with:

- Boundaries of confidentiality
- Reporting obligations under Title IX and the Clery Act
- Compliance with due process as it pertains to their role
- Reporting options available to the complainant
- Resources available for referral

- Services offered by the University and specific departments
- Trauma-informed response

Programming and prevention education for community members and employees addressing the issues of interpersonal violence and hazing will be addressed in multiple spaces and contexts at the University:

- Prohibited conduct, rights for community members, and reporting options for all incoming students and new employees.
- Reporting obligations for employees, and specifically for Campus Security Authorities.
- Ongoing primary prevention and awareness programs for all students and employees, including options for bystander intervention (delegation, distraction, direct intervention, and de-escalation).
- Prevention education and trauma-informed response are addressed annually in all Residence Life staff training.
- Mandatory hazing prevention and response education is provided to student groups on campus.
- Mandatory hazing prevention and response education is provided to University officials responsible for advising, supervising, coaching, and/or guiding student groups, teams, and organizations.
- Ongoing prevention and awareness programs for community members that focus on community norms, empathy-building, gender roles, and healthy relationship skills.

Hazing education or training for decision-makers, investigators, and resolution facilitators is provided annually.