

Policy on Hazing

[DRAFT 20260409]

Policy Title	Policy on Hazing
Policy #	01.112.42
Policy Owner	Dean of Students
Contact Information	Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Dean of Students at (401) 874-2884.
Approved By	President of the University of Rhode Island
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	No later than
Who Needs to Know About this Policy	All University of Rhode Island Students, faculty, staff, administrators, contractors, consultants, temporary employees, University Affiliates, and volunteers with responsibilities for academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other programs and activities sponsored by or affiliated with the University or Student Organizations.
Definitions <i>Defined terms and shorthand references are capitalized throughout.</i>	<p>Employee. Any person employed by the University, including faculty, staff, postdoctoral research fellows, and athletic coaches. Student workers, including but not limited to work-study students, graduate assistants, resident assistants, resident academic mentors, and graduate hall directors, are considered Employees for the purposes of this policy.</p> <p>Hazing. Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against another person or persons (regardless of their willingness to participate) that (1) is undertaken in the course of initiation into, affiliation with, or maintenance of membership in a Student Organization; and (2) causes or creates a risk (beyond the reasonable risks inherent in participation in the institution or the organization) of physical or psychological injury.</p> <p>Hazing may occur on or off campus, in person, or in virtual settings. The perception of the individual subjected to Hazing does not determine whether an act constitutes Hazing. Additionally, an individual's failure to object or apparent willingness to participate does not negate the fact that Hazing has occurred.</p> <p>Retaliation. For the purposes of this policy, any adverse action directed toward a person for reporting in good faith alleged acts of Hazing, or for participating in an investigation into alleged acts of Hazing. Acts of Retaliation can include, but are not limited to reprisal, penalty, discrimination, intimidation, or harassment.</p>

	<p>Student. Any individual currently enrolled in an academic offering at the University of Rhode Island, including both full-time and part-time undergraduate, graduate, professional, non-degree, and visiting enrollments, as well as individuals participating in exchange or cooperative programs under the University’s control. An individual’s status as a Student begins at the time of enrollment or the admittance to the University and ends upon graduation, withdrawal, separation, or upon the last day for registration for any semester in which the individual does not continue enrollment, barring the existence of an approved leave of absence.</p> <p>Student Organization. Any association, corporation, order, society, corps, athletic group or team, cooperative, club, service, fraternity, sorority, social group, band, student government, departmental student affinity or advisory group, or similar group, whose members are or include University Students. For purposes of this policy, the prohibition on Hazing applies to all Student Organizations regardless of whether they are established or recognized by the University.</p> <p>University Affiliate. Any individual who is not a faculty member, staff, or Student who otherwise has a formal relationship with the University, including but not limited to visiting scholars, visiting students, research fellows that are either unpaid or externally funded, professional program participants, club sports coaches, and volunteers; as well as employees and associates of the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement, URI Research Foundation, and members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. Vendors and contractors are not considered University Affiliates, except for those with an ongoing presence on the University campus as regular operations support staff.</p>
Statutes, Regulations, and Policies Governing or Necessitating This Policy	<p>Stop Campus Hazing Act, Public Law No. 118-173 (amending 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)).</p> <p>R.I. G.L. General Laws §§ Title 11-21-1 to -3, Chapter 21— (Hazing) (§§ 11-21-1 to -3)</p> <p>The University of Rhode Island Student Handbook</p>
Reason for Policy / Purpose	<p>The University of Rhode Island is committed to maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all Students and Employees. Hazing is strictly prohibited as it endangers the physical and mental well-being of individuals and disrupts the integrity of the campus community. This policy is designed to promote safety, encourage accountability, and comply with federal and state laws.</p>
Forms Related to this Policy	<p><i>Hazing Report Form</i></p>

Policy Statement

Hazing is a crime in the State of Rhode Island. Hazing in any form is prohibited at the University of Rhode Island (“University” or “URI”) in accordance with this policy and the University’s Standards of Conduct. The University is committed to maintaining a safe and inclusive community where Students can engage in academic, extracurricular,

and social activities free from Hazing. No University Student, Employee, nor Student Organization shall engage in, participate in, condone, or permit Hazing activities. This prohibition applies to on-campus, off-campus, and virtual activities. This policy is intended to be consistent with federal and state law. It will be reviewed periodically and revised in accordance with legal developments.

I. Prohibited Activities

Activities prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to, committing, causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing any of the following:

- Physical harm or threat of harm, including: whipping, beating, striking, paddling, branding, tattooing, forced calisthenics, burying in any substance, spraying, painting, pelting with any substance, exposure to the weather, or any brutal treatment or forced physical activity
- Forced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, or any other substance, legal or illegal
- Destruction or removal of public or private property
- Acts of personal servitude or humiliation, including: nudity with the intent to cause embarrassment or wearing of apparel that is conspicuous and/or indecent
- Sleep deprivation or excessive physical activity
- Extended isolation, confinement in a small space, or kidnapping
- ~~Coercion, intimidation, harassment, or any use of threatening words or conduct resulting in reasonable fear of bodily harm~~Coercion, intimidation, harassment, or threatening words or conduct that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily or reputational harm.
- The obtainment or possession of items or completion of tasks in an unlawful manner (e.g., for a scavenger hunt)
- Interrogation in an intimidating or threatening manner
- Acts relevant to a particular Student Organization (for example practice or training activities), but in a manner that a reasonable person would consider excessive or dangerous
- Acts that involve violation of any federal, state, or local law or University policy, rule, or regulation (e.g. *Policy on Sexual Misconduct* or *Policy on Nondiscrimination*)

II. Duty to Report and Cooperate

University Employees, University Affiliates, contractors, consultants, temporary employees, and volunteers must report all forms of Hazing that they witness, become aware of, or are informed of to the Dean of Students Office or the URI Police Department. Students and all other members of the University community are strongly encouraged to do the same.

A report can be filed using the ~~online hazing~~Hazing report Report Form (preferred), by calling the Dean of Students Office (401-874-2098), or by calling the URI Police Department (401-874-4910).

~~Reports can be made anonymously and will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The length of time between an incident and the filing of a report will not affect the willingness of the University to investigate the allegations or to provide support and other services for Students. However, a prompt report may enhance the ability of the University to conduct a full investigation. Reports may be made anonymously; however, providing contact information and detailed information significantly enhances the University's ability to assess, investigate, and respond effectively. The University will make every effort to protect the privacy of reporting parties and will limit the sharing of identifying information to those with a legitimate need to know.~~

The University reviews all reports and will take appropriate action based on the information available. Reports that lack specific details or are submitted anonymously may limit the University's ability to conduct a thorough investigation or take responsive action.

The timing of a report will not affect the University's willingness to review concerns or provide support; however, prompt and detailed reporting may improve the effectiveness of the University's response.

All members of the University community are expected to cooperate in good faith with any University investigation into reports of Hazing. The University prohibits Retaliation directed against a person for making a good faith report under this policy or who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation or adjudication process. Retaliation may exist even when the underlying complaint is without merit or not substantiated.

III. Investigating and Responding to Allegations of Hazing

~~Allegations of Hazing involving Students and/or Student Organizations may be investigated by the Office of Community Standards, the URI Police Department, and/or any other University office responsible for administering or enforcing an applicable University policy. Interim measures up to and including suspension may be implemented during the course of an investigation. Students and/or Student Organizations found responsible for Hazing may face disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct, and may also face possible criminal charges under state or federal law. Sanctions may be implemented by multiple departments within the University, depending on the nature and scope of the violation.~~ Allegations of Hazing involving Students and/or Student Organizations may be reviewed and investigated by the Office of Community Standards, the URI Police Department, and/or other University offices responsible for enforcing applicable policies. Interim measures, up to and including suspension, may be implemented based on an initial assessment of the available information.

Students and/or Student Organizations found responsible for Hazing may face disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct and may also be subject to criminal charges under state or federal law. Sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct are issued by the Office of Community Standards. Other University offices, departments, or affiliated organizations may take separate administrative or programmatic actions—such as those related to academic, professional, or membership standards—based on their respective policies and requirements.

The University recognizes that reports may, at times, be made in bad faith or as a form of retaliation. All reports are carefully assessed for credibility and available evidence. Reports made in bad faith or as a misuse of the conduct process may result in disciplinary action. This provision does not apply to reports made in good faith, even if the allegations are not substantiated.

Those sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Suspension or expulsion from the University;
- Referral for criminal prosecution, where applicable; and/or
- In the case of Student Organizations established or recognized by the University, including varsity athletics teams, suspension or loss of University recognition or privileges .

In addition, Students may face review for potential consequences under other applicable standards, including, but not limited to, professional standards within academic programs; conduct standards related to Athletics and/or Student Organizations; terms and conditions of housing and meal plan contracts; or review of eligibility for other University-sponsored programs.

Allegations of Hazing involving Employees may be investigated by the Office of Human Resource Administration, the URI Police Department, and/or any other University office responsible for administering or enforcing an applicable University policy.

The University's response to Hazing allegations will occur through the processes outlined in the Code of Student Conduct, the Student-Athlete Handbook, the University Manual, employee conduct procedures, or applicable collective bargaining agreement. Upon completion of a thorough investigation, determinations as to whether Hazing occurred are made by the appropriate University official, hearing officer, or hearing body with due consideration of the relevant facts and circumstances.

IV. Prevention and Awareness

At the University of Rhode Island, we are committed to fostering a safe campus environment by preventing Hazing before it occurs. All incoming Students and Employees are required to complete research-informed online training for prevention and awareness of Hazing and confirm their understanding of the University's *Policy on Hazing*.

Additionally, the University utilizes proactive strategies to engage Students, staff, and faculty in building a culture of respect, accountability, and ethical leadership. These strategies include:

- **Institutional Policies and Education** – We provide clear, accessible information on URI's policies prohibiting Hazing, ensuring that all community members understand the consequences of Hazing and the responsibilities associated with maintaining a Hazing-free environment.
- **Bystander Intervention Training** – We equip Students, faculty, and staff with the skills to recognize, intervene, and report Hazing behaviors safely and effectively, empowering them to act as active bystanders.
- **Ethical Leadership Development** – Through workshops and training programs, we promote leadership skills that emphasize integrity, responsibility, and positive team-building practices, reducing the perceived need for Hazing in group dynamics.
- **Healthy Group Cohesion Strategies** – We provide Student Organizations, including specifically athletic teams and Greek Life chapters, with alternative, research-backed methods to build unity, trust, and belonging without resorting to Hazing.
- **Awareness and Outreach Campaigns** – We engage the URI community through ongoing awareness efforts, including educational events, digital outreach, and peer-led initiatives that reinforce a shared commitment to Hazing prevention.

By implementing these proactive measures, URI strives to create a campus culture where all Students can thrive in safe, supportive, and inclusive communities.

Multiple departments within URI collaborate on the prevention of (and responses to) Hazing:

- **The Dean of Students Office** oversees mandatory online training for prevention and awareness of Hazing for all incoming Students.
- **The Office of Community Standards** oversees all aspects of the Student Conduct Process for Hazing allegations involving URI Students and Student Organizations, including investigation, adjudication, and sanctioning.
- **Student Involvement** leads Hazing prevention efforts within recognized Student Organizations and addresses concerns related to Hazing in partnership with the Office of Community Standards.
- **URI Health Services** delivers medical care, mental health support, and health resources to all Students.
- **URI Police Department** ~~investigates Hazing reports, compiles statistics on reported incidents of Hazing, enforces Rhode Island's anti-Hazing laws, and ensures proper legal interpretation and application.~~ may

conduct criminal investigations related to alleged Hazing, enforce state law, and compile incident statistics. Such investigations may occur concurrently with University conduct processes.

- **URI Athletics** implements Hazing prevention initiatives for intercollegiate athletics and responds to Hazing concerns within athletic teams in partnership with the Office of Community Standards.
- ~~URI Greek Life oversees Hazing prevention efforts within the Fraternity and Sorority community and addresses hazing-related concerns in these organizations in partnership with the Office of Community Standards.~~ **URI Greek Life** provides education, prevention, and oversight for fraternities and sororities and may address organizational concerns related to Hazing. The Office of Community Standards is responsible for reviewing and adjudicating alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct, including Hazing.
- **URI Club Sports** leads Hazing prevention efforts for all Club Sport teams, and responds to concerns related to Hazing by reporting allegations to the Dean of Students Office.
- **The Office of Human Resources** oversees mandatory online training for prevention and awareness of Hazing for all incoming Employees, and collaborates with campus partners to manage the investigation and addressing of employee conduct matters not covered by aforementioned departments.
- **Violence Prevention and Advocacy Services** supports URI Students affected by harmful, threatening, or violent incidents.

V. Public Reporting

~~The University is required by law to share information about campus safety, including reports of Hazing occurring within certain geography, and efforts to improve campus safety. Beginning in 2026, statistics on reported incidents of Hazing will be published in the University's Annual Security Report (i.e. Clery Act Report), located on the URI Police Department's website.~~

~~The University is also required to report publicly all findings of violations of the University's Policy on Hazing or other code of conduct relating to Hazing that concerns a Student Organization established or recognized by the University. Beginning in December 2025, this information will be made publicly accessible through the Campus Hazing Transparency Report located on the Dean of Students website. The University is required by law to report certain information related to campus safety, including Hazing incidents that meet applicable reporting criteria. Beginning in 2026, statistics on reported hazing incidents will be included in the University's Annual Security Report (Clery Act Report), available on the URI Police Department's website. Reporting in the Annual Security Report is based on specific federal definitions and geographic parameters, which may include certain off-campus or digital conduct when required by law.~~

~~The University is also required to publicly disclose findings of violations of this policy or other conduct violations related to Hazing involving recognized Student Organizations. Beginning in December 2025, this information will be available through the Campus Hazing Transparency Report on the Division of Student Affairs website. The reporting requirements and scope of the Transparency Report differ from those of the Annual Security Report.~~

VI. Legal Implications Under Rhode Island Law

Acts related to Hazing may result in or warrant additional or separate criminal charges in accordance with other applicable state and federal laws. Under Rhode Island law (§ 11-21-1), organizing or participating in Hazing is a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine of not more than \$500, imprisonment of 30 days to one year, or both. For incidents of Hazing resulting in permanent disfigurement, the penalty is imprisonment of one to ten years. Additionally, any school official who knowingly permits hazing to occur can be fined \$10 - \$100.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply to customary athletic events, contests, or other activities that promote physical fitness, provided they do not involve Hazing as defined herein.

Policy Review and Revisions

(Versions earlier than the first policy number may be paper only)

Policy #	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Changes to Policy
01.112.1	June 16, 2025	n/a	n/a
<u>01.112.2</u>		<u>Scheduled Review.</u>	<u>Indicate that reports lacking specific details or submitted anonymously may limit the University's ability to conduct a thorough investigation or take responsive action; establish that reports made in bad faith or as a misuse of the conduct process may result in disciplinary action; and minor clarifying revisions.</u>

