

**Boston University School of Law
Student Government Association
New Group Policy**

Boston University School of Law is in many ways an insular community with unique needs and interests. The Student Government Association (“SGA”) recognizes the need for unique student programming within the law school community, but must also strike the balance between over-programming and the proliferation of duplicative student groups and programming.

Prospective groups may be formed by all members, as defined in the Student Government Association’s Constitution, whether voting or non-voting members. At least one-third of the prospective group’s initial sign-up roster must be comprised of voting members, that is, J.D. students.

Section 1. Types of Groups.

When a group of students comes together to begin a prospective group, the first step in the process must be determining what type of group the students would like to form.

A. Specifically, there are two (2) types of groups: formal and informal.

1. Formal Groups:

- a. Generally, formal groups are reserved for groups eligible to request funding from SGA , but such groups are subject to the strict policies and procedures set out by SGA and Student Affairs.
- b. Applicable for groups that plan to have large events benefitting the law community at large, events with outside speakers, events with panelists, and any other events that require SGA funding.

2. Informal Groups:

- a. If the group does not require SGA funding, then the group is better suited as an informal group.
- b. Informal groups operate on their own without SGA and Student Affairs regulations, but still must comply with university policies.
- c. The major difference between informal and formal groups is eligibility of funding. SGA will only fund formally recognized groups.
- d. Note, both formal and informal groups have access to the law school’s room reservation system, SGA’s Monday Morning Email system, and are free to post promotional material in authorized spaces within the law school.

Section 2. New Group Application.

Once a group of students has determined that it requires formal group recognition, students of the prospective group must follow the steps outlined below:

- A. Students looking to provide meaningful and novel student programming may request formal group recognition by submitting a New Group Application (“NGA”) to SGA during the first month of Fall and Spring semesters.
- B. NGAs will not be accepted after the last day of the first month of each semester.
- C. Prospective student groups seeking formal recognition must submit a completed NGA containing the following:

1. A mission statement detailing the purpose of the new group, how it benefits the BU Law community, how it differs from pre-existing groups, and how inclusive or exclusive it is (for example, soccer club is too exclusive because other students could start specific clubs for every sport - an overall sports club is preferable).
2. A constitution setting out the official name of the student group, unofficial student name to be used, description of the group's purpose, election processes, and a description of officers'/board members' roles.
3. The names and BU identification numbers of at least four required group officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.
 - a. SGA requires formal student groups to have at a minimum a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. However, student groups may have additional officers as necessary for effective leadership.
2. The name, email address, signature, and BU identification number of a full-time faculty member or exempt staff member who has agreed to serve as the advisor for the proposed group.
3. A completed signature sheet requiring officers to accept and acknowledge BU's anti-hazing policy and Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 269 § 17 against hazing.
4. A membership roster comprised of no fewer than ten first-year law students, ten second-year law students, and five third-year law students, including the officers. If a non-voting member, such as an L.L.M. student, would like to submit an NGA to form a new group they must ensure that at least one-third of the membership roster is comprised of voting members, that is, J.D. students.

Section 3. SGA Approval Process.

Once a prospective group has submitted an NGA, SGA will proceed with the approval process as follows:

- A. Upon receipt of the NGA, SGA will have 30 days to either approve or deny formal recognition of the new student group.
- B. The approval process will consist of a vote from the Student Government Association, including the Executive Board and Class Representatives, as well as the President of each Student Organization that is formally recognized and in good standing with SGA on the date of the vote.
- C. The presentation of each new group's NGA will occur and be voted on at the second Community Association Council meeting of each semester.
- D. If the new group is approved by a majority of the present Executive Board, Class Representatives, and Presidents of each Student Organization, the President and Treasurer of the new group must attend the student organization refresher training held at the beginning of each semester and all subsequent student organization trainings.
- E. If the President and Treasurer do not attend the refresher training or any required trainings, SGA will not grant formal group recognition the following semester and the new group will have to resubmit an NGA the semester proceeding the unattended refresher or training.
- F. New groups may be denied formal recognition if the group does not add to the BU School of Law experience in a meaningful way.

- G. A new group will not be formally recognized if it has not put forth a compelling reason for formal recognition.
- H. Reasons for denial include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Exclusionary policies that alienate anyone from the BU community;
 - ii. A mission or purpose of promoting hate, illegal activity, violence, or any activity expressly prohibited by the University;
 - iii. Duplicative or non-novel mission statement, purpose, or programming of pre-existing groups or University departments;
 - iv. Representing a niche interest that appeals to an insubstantial proportion of the BU Law community; and
 - v. Substantially similar to a pre-existing group.
 - a. In certain situations a proposed group may be deemed duplicative, but may still warrant presence in the BU School of Law community. In these cases, SGA will suggest and facilitate the proposed group being folded into a similar, pre-existing group. If the formally recognized group decides to acquire the prospective group into their own group, the groups can determine how they will function and will be responsible for the structure of their own group.

Section 4. New Group Application Appeal Process.

If a new student group is denied formal recognition, the denied group's President must contact SGA as soon as possible if it wishes to appeal the decision.

- A. SGA will grant one appeal per semester per NGA for denials of formal recognition.
- B. Appeals must be requested within a week of SGA's denial of formal recognition.
- C. Once an appeal has been requested, the denied group's President and Treasurer must attend all required student organization trainings until a final decision is made.
- D. Failure to attend any required training will act to automatically disqualify the group's appeal and will result in the denial of formal recognition.
- E. Appeals will be heard in front of a quorum of the Student Government Association officers, that is the Executive Board and Class Representatives, and voted upon by a majority of officers in attendance.
- F. Once a decision has been made, it acts as a final decision and is not appealable.
- G. However, a group denied formal recognition may submit a new NGA the following semester for consideration, and will be considered by the Student Government Association upon a good-faith showing of consideration of the issues that were cause for the previous denial.

Section 5. Deactivation.

Formal student groups that have not shown substantial activity in the school year will be deactivated.

- A. Substantial activity consists of, but is not limited to:
 - i. at least one event that was granted SGA funding; and
 - ii. was attended by more than 20 people.
- B. First general meetings and group elections are not substantial activity for purposes of group deactivation.
- C. Deactivated groups will no longer be able to participate in SGA funding process and will not be able to request SGA funds for events.

- D. At the beginning of the Fall semester, SGA will contact groups that did not have any substantial student programming and ask them if they still wish to be formally recognized as a student group.
- E. SGA will stay the deactivation upon a successful appeal procedure similar to the one outlined in the above section, but SGA will require one substantial event or program for the current school year.
- F. If a group is automatically deactivated due to inactivity or failure to program after the deactivation appeal, the deactivated group will have to submit an NGA as if it is a new group.
- G. SGA will not grant seniority to deactivated groups during the NGA approval process, instead reviewing every NGA as a new group.