

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Student Bar Association and Recognized Student Organizations Policy

Administrative policy approved July 22, 2022.

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy in August 2022; name changed from “Extra-Curricular Activities Policy” to “Student Bar Association and Student Organization Academic Eligibility Policy” in September 2024; other technical edits made in September 2024; name changed from “Student Bar Association and Student Organization Academic Eligibility Policy” to “Student Bar Association and Recognized Student Organizations Policy” in May 2025; edits made in May 2025 to add provisions on membership, compliance, and communication and to cross-reference and harmonize with related policies; edits made March 2026 regarding limited leadership eligibility exception; edits made August 2026 regarding nondiscrimination requirements for registered student organizations.

Related policies and handbook: Academic Disqualification, Academic Probation, and Academic Improvement Program Policies; Good Academic Standing Policy for J.D. Students; Honors Programs Policies; Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs; Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct; Policy to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation; Social Media Policy for Student Organizations; Institutional Leave of Absence and Return Policy; Student Health-Related Institutional Leave of Absence and Return Policy; Free Expression Policy; Anti-Hazing Policy; Student Organization Handbook

Scheduled Review Date: May 2028 (Student Affairs Office)

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A. Student Bar Association

The Student Bar Association (SBA) is an organization for all Southwestern Law School students. Every enrolled student at Southwestern is automatically a member of the SBA.

The SBA's primary purpose is to provide, protect, and promote student interests. The SBA continually seeks new ways to respond to students' needs and interests and strives to represent Southwestern students effectively to the faculty and legal community.

To fulfill its mission, the SBA sponsors speaker programs and social and cultural events. The SBA also provides special services and sponsors club activities on and off campus.

B. Student Organizations

The SBA may organize and charter student organizations, including legal fraternities, affinity and special interest groups, and religious and social organizations. Student organizations chartered by the SBA, known as officially registered student organizations, are eligible to receive a budget and other benefits.

Together, the SBA and the officially registered student organizations provide workshops, social mixers, volunteer opportunities, symposia, and special lecture presentations to meet diverse student interests. Visit <http://www.swlaw.edu/student-life/student-organizations> for a listing of currently active, officially registered student organizations and more information about the SBA.

1. Membership requirements

Except for Southwestern's Honors Programs, which have GPA and other requirements for students to participate (see *Honors Programs Policies* for more information on membership requirements of Southwestern's Honors Programs), membership in all student organizations officially registered with Southwestern is open to all currently enrolled and continuing degree-seeking students at Southwestern.

Officially registered student organizations cannot discriminate based on an individual's race (including hairstyle and hair texture), ethnicity, color, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, reproductive health decision-making, pregnancy (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding), sex stereotyping (including assumptions about a person's appearance or behavior, gender roles, gender expression, or gender identity), sexual orientation, parental status, marital status, age, disability (mental or physical), medical condition, citizenship status, military status or service, veteran status, genetic information, any other classification, or combination of classifications, protected by federal or California law. Southwestern interprets these protected statuses broadly to include both actual status and also any perceptions and assumptions made regarding these statuses. Southwestern also prohibits discrimination and harassment based on the perception that anyone is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

While officially registered student organizations may not restrict membership based on protected characteristics or ideological beliefs, all members are expected to participate in good faith and in a manner consistent with the stated mission and purpose of the officially registered student organization. Any student who engages in conduct that materially disrupts or intentionally interferes with an officially registered student organization's lawful activities may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct or other applicable law school policies; they may also be subject to removal under the relevant student organization's constitution. Disagreement with or criticism of an organization's positions, viewpoints, leadership, or activities does not, by itself, constitute disruption or interference.

2. Policy compliance

Officially registered student organizations and their members are required to comply with Southwestern policies, including, but not limited to, the Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, Social Media Policy for Student Organizations, Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct, Free Expression Policy, and Policy to Prevent Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. These requirements apply to all Law School-affiliated programs, activities, and operations conducted by registered student organizations.

Student organizations, including the student organization identified in this policy, are student-led groups within the Law School community and play an important role in fostering engagement, dialogue, and professional development. Consistent with the Law School's Free Expression Policy, student organizations may select speakers and determine the content of their events, including on the basis of viewpoint or subject matter. At the same time, student organizations may not adopt or enforce bylaws, policies, or practices that categorically exclude otherwise eligible individuals from membership in the organization or from attending or participating in Law School-affiliated activities based on protected characteristics or identities. Student organization governing documents and practices must remain consistent with applicable nondiscrimination laws and Law School policies.

Registration and continued recognition as a Law School student organization are conditioned on compliance with these requirements. Student organizations may be required to confirm such compliance, and violations may result in appropriate corrective action consistent with Law School procedures.

3. Communicating with student organization membership

Student organization leaders must ensure that announcements related to membership opportunities, events, elections, and other organizational matters are communicated using methods reasonably calculated to reach all members of the organization. The communication methods typically used by student organization leaders are Southwestern email and the relevant student organization Canvas page. Leaders should consider the accessibility and effectiveness of communication methods to ensure that all members receive timely and relevant information.

C. Student Leader Eligibility

1. Minimum eligibility requirements

The following are the minimum eligibility requirements for any student to hold a leadership position (e.g., President, Vice President, Secretary, etc.) in an officially registered student organization at Southwestern:

- Must be enrolled in a degree-seeking program (J.D., LL.M., etc.) at Southwestern;
- Must be in good academic standing (see *Good Academic Standing Policy for J.D. Students*); and

- Non-SCALE J.D. students cannot serve in a leadership position until they complete their first year in law school; SCALE students cannot serve in a leadership position until they complete two quarters.

2. Limited exception for SBA and officially registered student organizations

Notwithstanding the requirements above, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs may permit a student to continue serving in, or to run for, a leadership position in the SBA or an officially registered student organization if the student is placed on academic probation due to a semester/quarter GPA below 2.33, provided the student's cumulative GPA remains at or above 2.60. This discretionary exception applies only to the SBA and officially registered student organizations, and does not apply to honors programs or other academic distinctions.

3. Students ineligible for leadership positions

A student who does not meet the minimum eligibility requirements above.

A student who has been found responsible for violating Southwestern's Sexual Misconduct Policy or Student Honor Code will not be eligible to hold a leadership position in an officially registered student organization for the duration of their program of study.

A student who has been found responsible for violating Southwestern's Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct will not be eligible to hold a leadership position in an officially registered student organization if the determination indicates they may not hold such a position.

A student who held a leadership position in a student organization that was found responsible for violating Southwestern's Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct cannot hold a leadership position in that or another officially registered student organization without the written approval of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Absent the permission of the Associate Dean for Student Services, Vice Dean, or Dean, a student who has (i) been placed on an Interim Health Restriction or mandated health leave of absence or (ii) taken a voluntary health leave of absence will not be eligible to hold a leadership position in an officially registered student organization during the leave period and must receive the written approval of the Associate Dean for Student Services to hold a such as position within one semester of returning to classes.

D. Removal from a Leadership Position or Disqualified from Starting a Leadership Position

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Student Services each have discretion to temporarily or permanently remove a student from a leadership position or prevent a student from assuming a leadership position of an officially recognized student organization if the student (i) has an open felony arrest or indictment for a felony that involves violence against one or more individuals or property; (ii) is the subject of an official Southwestern investigation or proceeding for conduct that, if substantiated, would pose a risk to the safety or wellbeing of others; or (iii) has failed to comply with administrative requirements associated with their leadership role, including timely training or reporting obligations.

Leaders may also be removed according to the terms of the relevant student organization's constitution.

E. Policy Revisions

Southwestern expressly reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without notice.