

Elements of a Positive Selection and Initiation Experience

Adapted with permission from MIT's Office of Student Citizenship

No checklist can guarantee that your group provides and positive selection and initiation process. Nuances of voluntary-nature, power dynamics, transparency, and shared investment can change an activity from negative to positive. This list is an initial guide for considering your selection and initiation experiences. If you have any questions about your processes, don't hesitate to consult with your group's advisor, coach, or supervisor.

Do your activities involve members at all levels participating in equitable ways?	Yes	No
Do your activities abstain from any illegal activities (including drug use, underage alcohol use, public displays of nudity, vandalism or property destruction, and disruption of peace)?	Yes	No
Do your activities celebrate new members in a way that is supportive and welcoming?	Yes	No
Does your selection and initiation processes allow members to participate in the normal demands of their life, including contact with friends and family, sleep, academic, and work demands?	Yes	No
Do participants know the elements of the selection and initiation experience from the beginning of the process	Yes	No
If your processes involve physical tasks, are the tasks physically reasonable and do you place the safety of members as your highest priority?	Yes	No
Are rituals secret because that secrecy maintains the group's exclusivity, rather than secret because they could not sustain public scrutiny?	Yes	No
If your process involves a long-standing tradition, do you know the origins of that tradition and does it correlate with the expressed values of your organization?	Yes	No
If your rituals did become public, would you be comfortable with future employers or research supervisors knowing you had participated in or led those?	Yes	No
Do you determine your process's appropriateness based on what celebrates the expressed values of your group and individuals versus what individual consent to participate in?	Yes	No
Do you offer participants an alternative activity or option not to participate without any consequence to their membership?	Yes	No
Do participants learn about your organization through a supportive and inclusive learning situation?	Yes	No



Office of Student Rights
& Responsibilities

rights@gwu.edu | 202-994-6757 | studentconduct.gwu.edu | @GWConduct

If you can clearly answer **yes** to all of the above, your selection and initiation processes are likely successful in creating a welcoming introduction for new members.

If you answered **no** to any of the above, we encourage you to examine your processes and consult with your advisors. This doesn't necessarily mean your processes are problematic, but that you may be at higher risk for some concerns. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities can help you maintain the important elements of your process while being sure you create a positive experience for all members.

The [Code of Student Conduct](#) defines hazing as prohibited conduct and states the following:

- Student groups and organizations may be charged with violations of this Code.
- Reporting to the university or any university official, cooperating with any related student conduct processes, and seeking assistance to remedy such situations will typically be considered a mitigating factor in such cases.
- A position of leadership in a student group, organization, or athletic team entails responsibility. Student officers cannot permit, condone, or acquiesce in any violation of this Code by the group or organization.
- The express or implied "consent" of the victim or participant is not a defense.
- Sanctions for group or organization misconduct may include revocation and denial of registration, as well as other appropriate sanctions.

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