

Northwestern | STUDENT AFFAIRS

Office of Community Standards

Recognized Student Organizations/Groups Guide to the University Hearing and Appeals System (UHAS)

Link: [2024-25 Student Handbook](#)

Link: [2024-25 Student Handbook Appendix : University Hearing and Appeals System \(UHAS\)](#)

Serving as the Representative for your Student Organization/Group

Student organization/group leaders, most commonly Presidents, are asked to serve as the representative for their organization/group in the UHAS process at Northwestern. Often that means the student leader is contacted by the Office of Community Standards (OCS) and asked to speak with the office regarding allegations that the organization/group has violated one or more policies in the Student Code of Conduct.

Northwestern Student Handbook and Appendix: UHAS

Student leaders representing their organization/group are encouraged to review the Northwestern Student Handbook and Appendix: UHAS prior to meeting with the OCS. You can find information regarding the circumstances in which an organization/group may be held responsible for violating University policy, rather than responsibility on individual member(s), in the UHAS Appendix (p. 9-10).

Faculty or Staff Advisor

You are encouraged to meet with your organization's/group's faculty or staff advisor at Northwestern (if applicable) regarding the organization's/groups alleged misconduct and OCS outreach prior to your meeting with the OCS. Sororities and fraternities are also encouraged to connect with their [chapter coach](#) in the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL).

Advisor in the UHAS Process

Student leaders representing their organization/group may be accompanied by one advisor as a support person throughout the UHAS process, provided that the involvement of the advisor does not result in an undue delay of the process. It is the responsibility of the student leader to coordinate scheduling with their advisor for any meetings or hearings with the OCS. Advisors may not speak, write, or otherwise communicate with a Case Resolution Coordinator, Investigator, or sanctioning panel members and may not represent the student leader or the organization/group in the process.

To enhance integrity in the UHAS process, ensure fairness for all parties, and focus on the Northwestern community and its students, advisors cannot 1) be witnesses or a party involved in the matter or a related matter, 2) **MUST** be a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student), and 3) cannot be a family member of the reporter or respondent, or an attorney. Additional information about advisors can be found in the Appendix: UHAS (p. 7).

Typically, staff in the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life or Student Organizations and Activities will not serve as advisors in the student conduct process.

Northwestern | STUDENT AFFAIRS

Office of Community Standards

Contacting Inter/National Headquarters

When an organization/group has a governing body, such as an inter/national headquarters, the OCS, or a designated campus partner such as FSL, will conduct outreach to that governing body to inform them that their local organization/group is engaged in the UHAS process at Northwestern. Student leaders are encouraged to proactively outreach to their inter/national headquarters, if applicable.

OCS Student Representatives

In non-separation level cases involving a student organization/group, the Case Resolution Coordinator in the OCS may be accompanied by a trained Student Representative to serve as a co-Case Resolution Coordinator. Student Representatives receive specific training on how to co-adjudicate organizational misconduct in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner. The student leader representing their organization/group will receive notification of the name of the Student Representative prior to the hearing. If the student leader is concerned about the Student Representative's ability to act impartially or participation in the hearing, they can request that the Director of Community Standards review the assignment of the Student Representative.

Information Collection

The OCS encourages student leaders representing their organization/group to collect information on who in the organization/group may have been involved in an incident, what may have taken place, and who else may have witnessed the incident in question prior to meeting with the OCS. Student leaders are discouraged from falsifying or tampering with information, including but not limited to coaching potential witnesses on what to share with the Case Resolution Coordinator(s) or Investigator(s). Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information in the investigation, hearing, or administration of a case is considered misconduct within the student conduct process and will be adjudicated individually (Student Handbook, p. 32).

Transparency and confidentiality is appreciated and expected for all students meeting with the OCS. Specifically, OCS expects all students within the a hearing or investigation to be honest and transparent about the incident, inclusive of providing accurate information. Further, OCS expects information shared within the hearing or investigation remain confidential and thus not shared with other students, organization members, or the broader Northwestern community.

Retaliation towards any individuals who report the alleged misconduct, or participate in an hearing or investigation, is also prohibited ([Northwestern's Policy on Non-Retaliation](#)).

Hearing Types: Non-Separation Level

Cases involving non-separation level allegations, meaning allegations that if determined responsible **would not result** in group suspension or dissolution, will typically be resolved through an Administrative Hearing facilitated by a Case Resolution Coordinator and a Student Representative in the OCS. Information on non-separation level cases can be found in the Appendix: UHAS (p. 18-19).

Acceptance of Responsibility

Student organizations may engage in both self-governance and collaboration with the University to resolve a non-separation level complaint. When an organization accepts responsibility for the prohibited conduct, or presents credible information and accepts responsibility for some charges, the case may be resolved collaboratively with university staff in lieu of engaging in a Formal Non-Separation Level Meeting. Information on this process can be found in the Appendix: UHAS (p. 19-20).

Northwestern | STUDENT AFFAIRS

Office of Community Standards

Hearing Type: Separation Level

Cases involving separation-level allegations, meaning allegations that if determined responsible **could result** in group suspension or dissolution, including housing removal if applicable, will be resolved by one or more investigators, and if applicable, a Sanctioning Panel. Information on separation level cases can be found in the Appendix: UHAS (p. 21-28).

Acceptance of Responsibility

In cases typically used for separation level matters, prior to the conclusion of an investigation, Student Organization may elect to take responsibility for some or all of the prohibited conduct by contacting the Office of Community Standards via the link in their initial letter. Information on this process can be Appendix: UHAS (p. 22-23).

Appeals

Following an administrative hearing or sanctioning panel a student organization or group may request an appeal. In circumstances when an organization or group formally accepts responsibility the matter will not be eligible for appeal. Additional information about the appeals process is outlined in the Appendix: UHAS, non-separation level appeals (p. 20-21) and separation level (p. 28-30).