



Title: Anti-Hazing Policy
Effective Date: July 1, 2025
Issuing Authority: Provost
Policy Contact: Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
478-301-2685

Purpose

Mercer University believes that the safety and wellbeing of the student body and Mercer community are of utmost importance to foster a positive educational environment that upholds the University's Community of Respect doctrine. Hazing is a serious violation of this goal and potentially undermines and threatens the mental and physical wellbeing of our students. Therefore, Mercer is actively committed to addressing hazing and maintains an Anti-Hazing Policy in accordance with the Max Gruver Act that was adopted on July 1, 2021, in the State of Georgia and the Stop Campus Hazing Act that was signed into federal law on December 23, 2024.

Scope

This Policy applies to all University students, employees, volunteers, and guests who are engaged with the University community.

Exclusions

None

Policy Statement

Mercer University Reporting, Investigation, and Sanctions for Hazing

Hazing is strictly prohibited at all Mercer campus locations and in all programs and organizations affiliated with Mercer, whether on or off campus. All reports of suspected hazing are investigated under the Student Code of Conduct. Student organizations suspected of hazing will be investigated as outlined under our procedures for Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations. If a student or student organization is in violation of the Anti-Hazing Policy, the student or organization may be subject to discipline, including but not limited to probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Mercer University defines Hazing and Student as follows:

Hazing: any act which endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into,

affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, a group or organization. The express or implied consent of the victim will not be a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing is a violation of this rule. Specific examples of acts which may constitute hazing include but are not limited to:

- A. The wearing of signs or advertisements;
- B. Quests, treasure or scavenger hunts that serve a non-educational purpose and/or single out a select group within the organization;
- C. Acts of servitude;
- D. Acts that embarrass, harass, or ridicule an individual;
- E. Acts that create excessive fatigue (which includes but is not limited to: forced exercising, congregating at odd hours of the night, and staying awake for long periods of time);
- F. Morally degrading or humiliating games or activities;
- G. Acts which destroy or remove public or private property;
- H. Acts which violate federal or state law;
- I. Consuming any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug, or other substance in a manner which subjects the student to a risk of emotional, mental, or physical harm, including sickness, vomiting, intoxication, or unconsciousness;
- J. Experiencing threatened or actual exposure to physical injury, including injury resulting from whipping, beating, paddling, branding, dangerous physical activity, or exposure to elements;
- K. Experiencing threatened or actual exposure to mental injury, including injury resulting from activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact, or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment; or
- L. Any action not covered above but defined as hazing in the Max Gruver Act, O.C.G.A. § 16-5-61 or in the Stop Campus Hazing Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f).¹¹

Student: all persons either registered or taking courses at Mercer University, both full-time and part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies, or who may reside in Mercer University housing, including residence halls, apartments, and Mercer Lofts. This policy includes non-degree seeking students. Persons who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with Mercer University are considered students (e.g., students enrolled in another college for a term, between semesters, internships, and admitted students).

Criminal Prosecution and Punishment for Hazing

In addition to investigation and discipline by Mercer University, hazing violations may lead to criminal prosecution and punishment. On July 1, 2021, Georgia enacted the Max Gruver Act, which increases the criminal and civil penalties related to hazing. Hazing is a crime and

¹ Additional legal definitions provided in Appendix at the end of this Policy.

punishable by up to five years imprisonment or a fine of up to \$50,000.00. Hazing is a crime regardless of whether the victim consents, and consent is not a defense to hazing under the law.

Any person acting in good faith and in a timely manner who reports or participates in reporting an allegation of hazing to law enforcement or school officials upon learning of the hazing and who takes reasonable steps to prevent the hazing shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the reported hazing incident under Georgia law.

Any person acting in good faith and in a timely manner shall not be subject to administrative, civil, or criminal liability related to alcohol or drug possession, consumption, or distribution if a law enforcement official or school official has contact with the person because the person:

- A. Requests emergency medical attention for himself or herself or another person who needs or appears to need medical attention because of an injury or alcohol or drug consumption related to alleged hazing;
- B. Acts in concert with another person who requests emergency medical attention for himself or herself or another person who needs or appears to need medical attention because of an injury or alcohol or drug consumption related to alleged hazing; or
- C. Appears to be in need of emergency attention because of an injury or alcohol or drug consumption related to alleged hazing.

The criminal definition of hazing and the criminal penalties for hazing can be found in the Max Gruver Act, O.C.G.A. § 16-5-61.

How to Report a Known or Suspected Hazing Violation

In accordance with Mercer University's Student Code of Conduct, each student is responsible for reporting any and all infractions of the standards valued by the Community of Respect. All students accept this responsibility when they enroll. If a student sees, knows, or hears of a violation, he/she is responsible for reporting the suspected violation to Mercer Police and/or the Vice President of Student Affairs. Any employee or agency within the University that becomes aware of hazing should immediately notify Mercer Police and/or the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The process for reviewing a report is initiated by: (1) the filing of a police report with Mercer University Police Department; (2) providing a signed written statement directly to the Vice President of Student Affairs (or designee); or (3) submitting an anonymous report on our Hazing Reporting Form found at

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercerUniv&layout_id=3.

This information will then be reviewed by the designated authority to determine the appropriate action to be taken. This may result in conducting further investigation into the incident, resolving the conflict in an informal manner, or initiating charges in accordance

with the procedures contained in the Student Code of Conduct. You may also call Mercer Police, the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office, or the Office of Student Conduct Resolution:

Mercer Police (Macon): 478-301-4357

Mercer Police (Atlanta): 678-547-6358

Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office: 478-301-2685

Office of Student Conduct Resolution: 478-301-2866

Hazing Prevention

Mercer University seeks to prevent hazing and raise awareness of the potential harms and risks associated with hazing through prevention and awareness programs, including:

- A. Prevention programming at student orientation events and for student organizations, such as fraternity and sorority programs;
- B. Ethical leadership training for student organization leaders;
- C. Prevention programming for faculty and staff;
- D. Web-based learning modules for students regarding hazing prevention, bystander intervention, and reporting procedures if a student is aware hazing has occurred; and
- E. Resources provided on the Stop Campus Hazing webpage.

Public Reporting of Hazing Violations

In accordance with the Max Gruver Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-1-31 and the Stop Campus Hazing Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(9), Mercer maintains a Campus Hazing Transparency Report which publicly reports the findings of violations of Mercer's Student Code of Conduct and/or federal or state laws related to hazing that are reported to school officials, law enforcement officials, national organizations, or any organization formally affiliated with Mercer. The Campus Hazing Transparency Report includes:

- A. The name of the student organization;
- B. A general description of the violation that resulted in a finding of responsibility, including whether the violation involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs, the findings resulting from the investigation, and any sanctions placed on the student organization by Mercer, as applicable, and
- C. The dates on which:
 - The incident was alleged to have occurred;
 - The investigation into the incident was initiated;
 - The investigation ended with a finding that a hazing violation occurred; and
 - Mercer provided notice to the student organization that the incident resulted in a hazing violation.

Additional information is available related to findings, sanctions, and whether the sanctioned organization complied with the imposed sanctions, in the Office of Campus Life, Office of Student Conduct Resolution, or Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office. The number of reported hazing incidents in the Annual Security Report represents instances when hazing was reported to the University. There may be discrepancies between the number of reported incidents of hazing and the number of investigations that resulted in a finding of responsibility reflected on the Campus Hazing Transparency Report. Members of the public may obtain additional information that is not protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g on the [Incidents Reports](#) and from the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office and the Office of Student Conduct Resolution. Mercer maintains the reported hazing violations for five years from the date of publication for each violation.

Additional Resources

1. Anti-Hazing Reporting Form: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercerUniv&layout_id=3
2. Mercer University Hazing Incidents Report: <https://policies.mercer.edu/anti-hazing/incident-reports/>
3. Student Code of Conduct: <https://policies.mercer.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>

Appendix

The Stop Campus Hazing Act provides the following definitions regarding hazing:

The term “hazing”, for purposes of reporting statistics on hazing incidents under paragraph (1)(F)(iv), means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that –

1. Is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and
2. Causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury including—
 - a. Whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing a harmful substance on someone’s body, or similar activity;
 - b. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;

- c. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
- d. Causing, coercing or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
- e. Any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
- f. Any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law, and
- g. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law.

The term “student organization”, for purposes of reporting under paragraph (1)(F)(iv) and paragraph (9)(A) of the Stop Campus Hazing Act, means an organization at an institution of higher education (such as a club, society, association, varsity or junior varsity athletic team, club sports teams, fraternity, sorority, band, or student government) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the institution of higher education, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the institution.

20 U.S.C. § 1092(f).

The Georgia Max Gruver Act defines *Hazing* as follows:

“Haze” or “hazing” means to subject a student to an activity which endangers or is likely to endanger the physical health of a student or coerces the student through the use of social or physical pressure to consume any food, liquid, alcohol, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to a likely risk of vomiting, intoxication, or unconsciousness regardless of a student’s willingness to participate in such activity.