

# RSO Adviser Handbook (RSOAH)

Thank you for sharing your time and talents with our student organizations at Michigan State University!

It has been proven that students who engage with co- and extra-curricular activities feel a stronger connection to campus resulting in a higher rate of persistence. (Astin, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) The student organization Adviser plays a key role in that experience. The work you do with these students will be key in their academic, personal, and developmental pursuits.

The Department of Student Involvement and Leadership is here to support you in your work with the organization(s) that you have offered to advise. It is our hope that as you engage with the students you will use us as a resource to help you utilize existing resources on campus as well as develop new resources as we move through the evolution of higher education and our students.

I have worked with student organizations for many years and have personally witnessed the positive impact that advisers of student organizations have on groups and students. I'm so grateful and excited for the work and advising you will do as well as the learning you will also experience as you engage our student groups.

Again, thank you so much for your time to the holistic experiences of our Spartans.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the RSO Team for any needs, questions or support you and your organization may require!

Go Green!

The RSO Team

# Introduction

The Registered Student Organizations Advisers Handbook (RSOAH) is published by the Department of Student Involvement and Leadership in order to assist staff and faculty who have volunteered to advise one of Michigan State University's Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) in operational functions including but not limited to topics such as finances, registering, hosting events, and running meetings.

This handbook is designed with two functions in mind: first and foremost, this document is designed to be a guide for new advisers as they begin their role as an RSO Advisor. Secondly, this document is designed as a refresher for advisers that have already familiarized themselves with the responsibilities of an RSO Advisor.

Please read through the entirety of this document, as it outlines the rights and responsibilities that you have as an RSO Advisor, both to your organization and to Michigan State such as Clery Act reporting and RVSM reporting.

This RSOAH will be reviewed annually by the RSO Team and other appropriate campus partners.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email, call or visit the RSO Team:

Email: [involve@msu.edu](mailto:involve@msu.edu)

Phone: 517-355-8286

Address: 101 Student Services Building, 556 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing, MI 48824

# Adviser Role

## Role and Responsibilities

The role of the Adviser of a Registered Student Organization (RSO) is to provide guidance to the student organization(s) in operational functions, continuity between years and its adherence to University policies and procedures. For undergraduate only RSOs, the adviser must be a MSU faculty, staff or graduate student. For graduate RSOs, the adviser must be either a MSU faculty or staff member. Advisers should approach the work in a way that empowers the students to critically think and work through the management of their organization.

Key responsibilities that are expected of Advisers are:

- To have reviewed the student organization constitution.
- To have reviewed the Registered Student Organization's Handbook (RSOH) and this, the Advisers of Registered Student Organizations Handbook (ARSOH).
- To have an awareness and basic knowledge of federal, state, local, and Michigan State University (MSU) laws and ordinances, including but not limited to Clery Act and RVSM reporting responsibilities
- To understand the relationship between the organization, the MSU community and the greater East Lansing/Lansing
- To undergo the annual mandatory Clery Act training
- To undergo the annual mandatory Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct training
- To be present and involved in official conduct cases involving the RSO
- To be present and involved in planning large scale events that anticipates an attendance of 200 or more participants including attending the event
- To be accessible to student organization members, especially officers of the group
- To engage with the RSO by frequently attending meetings and events as much as you are realistically able to manage
- To assist the organization with setting expectations and goals for the group
- To assist the organization with budgeting and financial affairs
- To assist the organization in critically thinking through policy, procedural and operational facets, while supporting changes when necessary
- To assist with intragroup conflict through mediation and group problem solving

- To assist the group, as needed, with planning meetings and events
- To assist members in managing a balance with involvement, academics and other responsibilities they hold in their lives
- To share resources and information with officers of the organization

For those Advisers working in a co-advising model with non-MSU advisers (fraternities and sororities, religious organizations etc.) we encourage you to advise within the scope of MSU, on campus events, alignment with MSU policies and procedures and ensuring adherence to Spartan Life. Many of the organization’s operational and directional pieces can be advised by the non-MSU adviser. Best practice is to work with your co-adviser and have open communication with them. If you’d like to meet with the RSO Team to help build out your co-advising model, please do not hesitate to reach out!

### Notification Settings

Individuals can adjust notifications within their settings.

You can do this by:

1. Log into Involve@State at involve.msu.edu
2. Click on the circle in the upper right corner that has either your uploaded photo or first initial
3. In the menu, select “Account”
4. In the menu, select "Notifications"

However, we ask for RSO Advisors to have the following notification settings:

1. Unselect all System Notifications
2. At least receive the following Email Notifications:
  - a. **Informational Email Notifications: Mass messages sent to you by campus or organizations leaders**
    - i. Send me informational emails from Campus and Organizations
  - b. **Common Notifications**
    - i. Event Cancellations
    - ii. Event Invitations

- iii. Membership Invitations
  - iv. Membership Request Approvals
  - v. Organization News Articles
- c. Advanced Preferences:**
- i. Event Submissions:
    - 1. Event Approved
    - 2. Event Change Request Decision
    - 3. Event Denied
    - 4. Event Submission Confirmation
    - 5. Event Submission Discussion
  - ii. Forms:
    - 1. Form Submission Approved
    - 2. Form Submission Denied
    - 3. Form Submission Discussion
  - iii. Finance:
    - 1. All Financial notifications
  - iv. Organization Registration:
    - 1. Organization Registration Approval
    - 2. Organization Registration Denied
    - 3. Organization Registration Submission Confirmation
  - v. Reviewer Notifications:
    - 1. Select these if you wish to be a reviewer on forms and events. This can be an optional layer of review for the advisor if they so choose and is based on the relationship, trust and work the advisor does with the RSO.

### [Privacy Settings](#)

Individuals can adjust privacy within their settings.

You can do this by:

1. Log into Involve@State at involve.msu.edu
2. Click on the circle in the upper right corner that has either your uploaded photo or first initial
3. In the menu, select "Account"
4. In the menu, select "Privacy Settings"

However, we ask for the MSU community to have the following notification settings:

If you are an officer, chair, adviser, etc. of an organization, it is expected that you have "Show" highlighted in blue for your respective position(s).

It is highly encouraged that all other roles be set for "Show" if at all possible.

### Accepting the Adviser Role

Upon being assigned the Adviser Role by a student officer, out-going Adviser or RSO Team Member in Involve@State, you will be emailed a prompt for you to accept the membership and role. In the process of accepting the role you will also be accepting the responsibilities listed above. If you are not sure if you accepted the role correctly please follow the steps below:

1. Log into Involve@State at involve.msu.edu
2. Click on the circle in the upper right corner that has either your uploaded photo or first initial
3. In the menu, select "Memberships"
4. Scroll down to the organization you are confirming that you accepted the adviser role for
5. If you have confirmed it will be listed as "the month and year of acceptance – Present"

# Annual List

As an Adviser it is suggested to use the below checklist to help make sure you are set up for the upcoming year:

- Ensure you accept/confirm your role and your profile and role is visible on the Involvement@State platform by the end of the Annual Registration period
- Ensure you are receiving the weekly Adviser Newsletter
- Undergo the annual mandatory Clery Act training
- Undergo the annual mandatory Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct training
- Have a transition meeting with outgoing and incoming officers, if at all possible shortly after elections
- Have a retreat for your new officers shortly after your transition meeting
- Lay out expectations with your organization and its student leaders in regards to communication methods, relationship, etc. with you.
- Collaborate on goals for the board and organization
- Ensure officers are updated as student leaders change
- Ensure the organization leadership registers the organization on time

# Best Practices

As an Adviser the following are some best practices when working with student leaders and student organizations:

- Ask open ended questions of your students: [RESOURCE WEBSITE](#)
- Engage in active listening: [RESOURCE WEBSITE](#)
- Empower students in their development process: [RESOURCE WEBSITE](#)
- Allow the RSO to succeed and allow the RSO to fail. As the adviser, we trust you know when to allow your respective student organization to “fail” and when you need to step in. If you are not sure as situations arise, please feel free to reach out to the Assistant Director for RSOs for guidance.
- Let the students make the decisions. As an adviser, guide them through the decision-making process but allow them to come to their own decisions.
- Consider holding regular one on one meetings with the organization officer(s) or joining in executive officer/leadership board meetings periodically.
- Discuss concerns about officers with them in private.
- Praise officers and student organization members in public.
- Set specific deadlines to help student leaders and members meet them and it allows for intentional rescheduling of them if the need arises.
- Encourage the student leaders to be transparent in operations such as disseminating reports (financial, operational, position) to the general membership on a regular basis.
- Encourage leaders to understand and apply democratic principles, including recognition of minority opinions, rights and due process.
- Introduce new program ideas with an educational lens



# Non-Discrimination

The Michigan State University Anti-Discrimination policy states expectations for institutional and individual conduct. It applies to all University community members, including faculty, staff, students, registered student organizations, student governing bodies, and the University's administrative units, and to the University's contractors in the execution of their University contracts or engagements, with respect to all educational, employment, cultural, and social activities occurring on the University campus, University-sponsored programs and activities occurring off-campus, including but not limited to cooperative extension, intercollegiate athletics, lifelong education, and any regularly scheduled classes, University housing, and programs and activities sponsored by student governing bodies, including their constituent groups, and by registered student organizations.

This means that registered student organizations, and by extension their advisers, cannot discriminate against any student in respect to the former situations, as well as on the basis of a protected class. These classes are defined as a person's age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight.

These expectations are why we require RSOs have the MSU Non-Discrimination Policy within the RSO's Constitution.

# Clery Act

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is a federal law requiring colleges and universities participating in federal financial aid programs to comply with various requirements related to safety on campus. Information regarding crime statistics and the university's policies and procedures is made available through the university's annual security and fire safety report. Additionally, the Clery Act requires the MSU Police Department to maintain a daily crime and fire log of all criminal incidents and alleged criminal incidents that are reported to the campus police department.

What this means for you as an adviser is that you hold special responsibilities to the safety of campus that you may not traditionally hold. As an adviser, you are considered a Campus Security Authority (CSA); this means that you have particular responsibilities under the Clery Act.

For more information please visit: <https://oarc.msu.edu/clery/>

## Who are Campus Security Authorities (CSA)

The Clery Act designates the following individuals as Campus Security Authorities:

- Members of an institution's campus police or campus security department.
- Any individuals who are responsible for campus security but who do not constitute a campus police department or a campus security department.
- Any individual or organization specified in an institution's statement of campus security policy as an individual to which students and employees should report criminal offenses.
- An official of an institution who has significant responsibility for student and campus activities, including but not limited to, student housing, student discipline and campus judicial proceedings. This includes advisers of registered student organizations.

## What are the Obligations of a CSA?

RSO Faculty/Staff Advisers are CSAs for the duration of their Advisor role. As a CSA, if you are made aware of an alleged Clery Act crime within the capacity of your adviser role, you must contact MSUPD as soon as possible to report it.

Michigan State University CSAs must report to the MSU Police Department if they are made aware of an alleged Clery Act crime on or within Clery Geography. If you are unsure whether the incident is reportable under the Clery Act, please contact MSUPD as soon as possible and report it.

CSAs are NOT responsible for investigating or reporting incidents that they overhear students talking about in a hallway conversation; that a classmate or student mentions during an in-class

discussion; that a victim mentions during a speech, workshop, or any other form of group presentation; or that the CSA otherwise learns about in an indirect manner.

In addition to these, MSU requires all CSAs to complete an annual training. You will receive a training assignment notice via email and must complete the training **within thirty (30) days** of assignment. Campus safety and security is critically important at MSU and requires your undivided time and attention. Once the training is assigned to you, login at <https://ora.msu.edu/train/>. Then click My Requirements tile where you will see assigned training based on your responsibilities. If you have multiple CSA tracks, you only need to complete the primary CSA course once per year to cover all tracks. This course may contain sensitive topics. For accommodations or other questions or concerns, contact the Clery Act Compliance Coordinator, in the MSU Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance at [clery@msu.edu](mailto:clery@msu.edu) or 517-353-2620.

### What Can Be Reported?

The Clery Act requires institutions to report on four general categories of crime statistics:

- Criminal Offenses – murder and non-negligent manslaughter, manslaughter by negligence, sexual assault (including rape, fondling, incest, and statutory rape), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson.
- Hate Crimes – any of the above mentioned offenses and any incidents of larceny-theft, simple assault, intimidation, or destruction/damage/vandalism to property that were motivated by bias.
- Violence Against Women (VAWA) Offenses – domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.
- Arrests and Referrals for Disciplinary Action – for weapons law violations, drug law violations, and liquor law violations.

For crime definitions, visit: <https://oarc.msu.edu/clery/reportable-crimes.html>

### What Locations are Reportable?

MSU's Clery Geography includes buildings and properties on each separate campus within the following categories:

- "on campus" - owned or controlled by MSU within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area.
- "non-campus building or property" - owned or controlled by the University that is used in direct support of or in relation to the University's educational purposes, is frequently

used by students, and is not within the reasonably contiguous geographic area of the University (including RSO properties).

- “public property” - thoroughfares, streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities that are within the campus or immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus.
- “separate campus” - the institution owns or controls the site; It is not reasonably geographically contiguous with the main campus; it has an organized program of study; and there is at least one person on site acting in an administrative capacity.

For more information, visit: <https://oarc.msu.edu/clery/>

# RVSM and Title IX

As an adviser to an MSU-affiliated RSO, it is your responsibility to be informed of the RVSM & Title IX policy and your reporting obligations. Informing yourself of the policy and terms within it helps to create a supportive and safe culture for all members of the campus community.

To review the full policy, visit the MSU Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance website: <https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/index.html>

## Anti-Discrimination Policy

The MSU Anti-Discrimination Policy states:

"Members of the university community (including faculty, staff, and students) shall not discriminate or harass on the basis of a protected category. Persons who violate the policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal for students and discharge for employees."

Protected categories are as follows: age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, and/or weight.

For more information please visit: <https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/MSU-Anti-Discrimination-Policy.html>

## Mandatory Reporting

All University employees, with the exception of those who work in exempt or confidential offices, are considered "Responsible Employees."

All University "responsible employees" and volunteers who are not otherwise exempted by this policy and/or applicable law must promptly report incidents of relationship violence, sexual misconduct, stalking, and retaliation that they observe or learn about in their working or professional capacity; and involve a member of the University community or which occurred at a University-sponsored event or on University property.

# My Spartan Story

At MSU, the interactive My Spartan Story platform captures MSU student experiences outside of the classroom. These co-curricular activities can include, but are not limited to leadership programs, student employment, research positions, internships, and service-learning and civic engagement opportunities. A student's Spartan Experience Record tracks their student learning in these activities outside the scope of academic credit which can be requested alongside the transcript through the Registrar's Office.

As an Adviser, you can help build onto the Spartan Experience Record by adding/validating the different positions that the Spartans you advise are involved in.

## Adding the RSO and Activity/Position

1. Pre-plan your organization and position information by utilizing the Submission Drafting Document
2. Work with executive boards, officers, or other leaders to help write the document
3. The organization's Constitution is also a great resource to utilize
4. Once you have the *Submission Drafting Document* all filled out, log into My Spartan Story at <https://mystory.msu.edu/>
5. After logging in, select **Submit a Spartan Experience**, then review the submission process before starting your submission
6. Using the *Submission Drafting Document* as a reference, insert all the important information into My Spartan Story
7. Please note that each position will be submitted separately
8. Once all the positions are inserted and submitted, our review team will look it over and reach out for clarifications or any changes that may need to be considered.
9. Once the Activity/Positions are approved, they can then be found on the opportunity page (<https://app.mystory.msu.edu/myspartan-catalog.htm>)

## Validating the Experiences

1. After your students have served in their different roles and have achieved all the learning goals that were set for their positions, it is time to validate. Validating your student members on the My Spartan Story Platform is the official means for the students Spartan Experience Record to have the activity/positions added. To validate your students:

2. Log into My Spartan Story at <https://mystory.msu.edu/> and select the **Spartan Experience Record**
3. Check to ensure that the activity you are wanting to validate is listed under your **“Validator for the Following Activities”** (if you are supposed to be and are not seeing the activity, please reach out to [mystory@msu.edu](mailto:mystory@msu.edu))
4. Select the desired activity (please note that each position is listed in this list)
5. Review the position overview and then select the action button (black circle with white dots in lower right corner) to select **“Add Position to Student Record”**
6. In the Enter a User ID box, type in or copy and paste the student(s) NetID (their email address without the @msu.edu). There can be more than one NetID entered if there were multiple people in the role
7. Select the status of the position:
  - **Approved** will add to record
  - **Pending** will hold for a future time when ready to validate
  - **Declined** will not add to the record
8. Check the box that says to **“Email the newly added participants”** if you want to have them get an email saying you added the position to their record
9. Then click **“Add Position to Record”** and you will have placed the respective role onto the student(s) official Spartan Experience Record

Be sure to visit <https://mystory.msu.edu> for more information and for upcoming workshops to learn more about our process.