



Hazing Policy

Purpose and Prohibition

Ayers Career College is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive educational environment in which all members of the School community can participate in academic, social and co-curricular activities without being subjected to hazing. Hazing is prohibited in all forms and will not be tolerated by the School, whether it occurs on or off campus, in person or through electronic or virtual means, or in connection with a School-sponsored or affiliated activity.

Hazing is prohibited whether it is committed by an individual, a group of individuals or an organization. The prohibition applies regardless of whether the conduct is presented as a tradition, initiation, team-building activity, rite of passage, recruitment activity, or other group practice. The School will consider the circumstances and nature of the conduct rather than the label given to the activity.

For purposes of this policy, hazing is any intentional, knowing, or reckless act by a person acting alone or with others that is directed against another person when the person knew or should have known that the act endangers the physical health or safety of the other person or causes severe emotional distress, and the act is associated with pledging, recruitment, rushing, initiation, affiliation with, participation in, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.

Hazing may include physical, psychological, emotional, or other conduct that humiliates, degrades, abuses, intimidates, or endangers another person. Examples include physical brutality such as whipping, beating, paddling, striking, branding, shocking, or placing harmful substances on a person's body; physical activities or conditions such as sleep deprivation, exposure to extreme elements, confinement, or excessive exercise that create an unreasonable risk of harm or adversely affect physical health or safety; and activities involving the consumption of food, beverages, alcohol, drugs, or other substances that create an unreasonable risk of harm or adversely affect a person's physical health or safety or cause severe emotional distress. Hazing also includes requiring or pressuring an individual to perform a task or duty that involves the commission of a crime or another act of hazing.

The examples provided in this policy are illustrative and are not intended to constitute an exhaustive list. Conduct may constitute hazing even when it does not fall within one of these specific examples. The School will evaluate the totality of the circumstances when determining whether conduct violates this policy.

Consent and Participation

A person's willingness to participate does not excuse or justify hazing. Consent, acquiescence, or voluntary participation is not a defense to a violation of this policy. Individuals may feel pressure to participate because of their desire to join or remain part of a group, concerns about retaliation or exclusion, or expectations established by other members. Such circumstances do not make hazing acceptable.

An individual who is the subject of hazing will not be disciplined under this policy merely for being the person against whom the hazing was directed. This provision does not prevent the School from addressing other conduct by that individual that independently violates School policy. The School also prohibits soliciting, encouraging, directing, organizing, facilitating, aids, or assisting another person in hazing. Individuals who know or reasonably should know that hazing is occurring are expected to take reasonable steps within their authority to prevent or stop the conduct and to report the concern through an appropriate reporting channel.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all Ayers students and employees and to recognized and unrecognized student organizations, social organizations, and other groups whose members include Ayers students or former students.

The policy applies to conduct occurring on School property and at School sponsored or affiliated activities, regardless of location. It also applies to conduct occurring off campus when the conduct involves members of the School community or a School affiliated organization including activities associated with recruitment, initiation, membership, organization events, retreats, conferences, competitions, team travel, organization travel, or other group activities. The policy also applies to conduct occurring through electronic communications, social media, messaging platforms, or other virtual environments when the conduct otherwise falls within the scope of this policy.

Organizations and their leaders may be held responsible for hazing committed by their members or participants when permitted by applicable School policy and law. The School may also take action when an organization has knowledge of hazing and fails to take reasonable steps to prevent, stop, or report it.

For purposes of this policy, an organization includes a fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, service group, social group, music group, spirit group, athletic team, academic group, or similar organization whose members are primarily students at, or former students at the School. The term also includes a national or parent organization with which a recognized or affiliated organization is associated. Pledging includes recruitment, rushing, initiation, and any action or actively related to becoming a member of an organization.

A physical activity that is normal, customary, and necessary for a person's training and participation in an athletic, physical education, military training, or similar program sanctioned by

the School is not considered hazing solely because it involves physical exertion. Such activities remain subject to all applicable School health and safety requirements.

Reporting Hazing

Any member of the Ayers community who experiences, witnesses, receives information about, or otherwise becomes aware of suspected hazing is encouraged to report the conduct as soon as possible. A report may be made to the Ayers Career College Human Resources Department, the Compliance Department or another School official. Reports may also be made through the School's established reporting mechanisms. Reports may be made to the Compliance Department at 318-213-6616, by email to compliance@ayers.edu, in person at 3010 Knight Street, Suite 360, Shreveport, LA 71105, or anonymously through the [Anonymous Reporting Form](#) on the School's website.

Reports may concern conduct involving an individual, an organization, an athletic team or any other group. A person does not need to determine whether conduct legally constitutes hazing before making a report. The School encourages members of the community to report conduct when they have a reasonable concern that hazing may have occurred or may be occurring.

When circumstances indicate that conduct may constitute a crime, individuals may also report the matter to appropriate law enforcement authorities. Reporting to the School does not prevent an individual from contacting law enforcement and the School will report alleged hazing to law enforcement as required by law, as described under Louisiana Law below.

The School will provide information about available support and resources to individuals who report hazing or who are affected by hazing. Support may be available regardless of whether the individual chooses to participate in a School investigation or conduct process.

Response and Investigation

Reports of suspected hazing will be reviewed promptly and handled in accordance with applicable School policies and procedures. The School will assess the nature and circumstances of the report, determine the appropriate response and identify the offices or officials responsible for investigating and resolving the matter.

Investigations may involve interviews with the reporting party, individuals who experienced or witnessed the conduct, responding individuals, organization representatives, and other persons who may have relevant information. Investigators may also review documents, electronic communications, photographs, videos, organizational records, or other information relevant to the report.

The School will make reasonable efforts to conduct investigations in a prompt, fair, and impartial manner while maintaining appropriate confidentiality consistent with applicable law and School policy. The School may implement interim or supportive measures when appropriate to protect the safety and well-being of students or other members of the School community while a matter is

being reviewed. Determinations of responsibility are made using the preponderance of the evidence standard, meaning whether it is more likely than not that a violation occurred.

When a report involves a student organization, athletic team, or other group, the School may conduct an investigation of the organization in addition to addressing the conduct of individual students. An organization's status as recognized, unrecognized, affiliated, or off campus does not prevent the School from taking appropriate action when the conduct falls within the scope of this policy.

Individuals and organizations found responsible for violating this policy may be subject to sanctions under applicable School disciplinary procedures. Sanctions may include educational requirements, conduct warning, probation, loss or restriction of organizational privileges, removal of organizational recognition, suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate measures. The School may also refer matters to law enforcement when appropriate or required.

Louisiana Law

Hazing is not only a violation of School policy; certain acts of hazing are criminal offenses under Louisiana law. Louisiana Revised Statutes § 14:40.8 prohibits hazing and defines hazing in substantially similar terms to those used in this policy. Louisiana law provides criminal penalties for hazing, including increased penalties when hazing results in serious bodily injury or death or involves certain forced or coerced alcohol consumption. Louisiana law also addresses circumstances in which an organization representative or officer knows that members are hazing another person and fails to report the conduct to law enforcement as required by law. Louisiana law also requires the School, upon receiving a report alleging hazing by one or more members of an organization operating at the School, to report the alleged hazing, as soon as practicable, to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction where it occurred, including all details received and the names of all individuals alleged to have committed the hazing. La. R.S. 14:40.8(B)(2). The Compliance Manager is responsible for making this report.

The School is not aware of any applicable ordinance of the City of Shreveport or Caddo Parish governing hazing.

Nothing in this policy limits the School's ability to address conduct under its own policies or prevents law enforcement from investigating or prosecuting conduct that may constitute a criminal offense. School disciplinary action may occur independently of, or in addition to, criminal or civil proceedings.

Prevention and Education

Ayers Career College recognizes that effective hazing prevention requires more than responding to incidents after they occur. The School is committed to maintaining a campus culture that promotes belonging, respect, healthy group relationships, ethical leadership, and individual well-being. Consistent with the Stop Campus Hazing Act and the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act,

Ayers will provide campus-wide hazing prevention and awareness programming designed to reach students, faculty and staff. These programs will include education regarding the School's hazing policy, reporting options, the process used to respond to and investigate hazing and applicable local and state laws concerning hazing.

The School's prevention efforts will incorporate research-informed strategies intended to reduce the likelihood that hazing occurs in the first place. These efforts may include bystander intervention and skill building, ethical leadership and values-based decision making, recognition of unhealthy group behaviors, development of healthy group norms and strategies for building group cohesion and belonging without hazing. Prevention efforts will be evaluated and adapted as appropriate to address the needs and experiences of the Ayers community.

The School expects student organizations, athletic teams, and other groups to develop positive traditions and membership practices that support inclusion, dignity, safety and meaningful participation without requiring or encouraging hazing.

Transparency and Annual Reporting

Ayers Career College will comply with applicable federal requirements concerning the collection and reporting of hazing statistics. Under the Stop Campus Hazing Act, institutions are required to include applicable hazing statistics in their Annual Security Report based on the federal definition and reporting requirements. Ayers will also maintain a Campus Hazing Transparency Report summarizing findings concerning any student organization established or recognized by the School that is found responsible for violating this policy.

Once the School has a finding that an established or recognized student organization violated this policy, the School will publish the Campus Hazing Transparency Report in a prominent location on its public website and will update it at least twice each year. For each incident resulting in a finding of responsibility, the report will include the name of the student organization; a general description of the violation, including whether it involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs, the findings of the School, and any sanctions placed on the organization; and the dates on which the incident was alleged to have occurred, the investigation was initiated, the investigation ended with a finding that a violation occurred, and the School notified the organization of the finding. The report will not include personally identifiable information about any individual student. Information in each update will remain posted for five calendar years from the date it is published. The posting will also include a statement that hazing statistics are available in the Annual Security Report, with a link to that report, and information about this policy and applicable local, State, and Tribal hazing laws. The Campus Hazing Transparency Report is separate from the Annual Security Report.

Support and Resources

Ayers Career College recognizes that individuals affected by hazing may experience physical, emotional, academic or social consequences. Students who experience or are affected by hazing

are encouraged to seek assistance from available School resources. Students may seek assistance and support even when they are uncertain whether they want to make a formal report or participate in an investigation. The School will provide information about available resources and, when appropriate, referrals to off-campus services.

Commitment to a Hazing-Free Community

Hazing is inconsistent with Ayers Career College's commitment to the safety, dignity, and well-being of its community. Membership in an organization, team or group should strengthen a student's sense of belonging rather than require the individual to endure humiliation, degradation, coercion, abuse or unsafe conduct.

Every member of the School community has a role in preventing hazing. Students, faculty, staff, organizational leaders, coaches, advisors and other members of the School community are encouraged to recognize warning signs, intervene when it is safe to do so, and support individuals who may be experiencing hazing and reporting concerns promptly. Through clear expectations, meaningful accountability, research-informed prevention, and accessible support, Ayers is committed to creating a campus culture in which students can build meaningful relationships and participate fully in campus life without hazing.