

Policy Review: Operating Guide for Student Organizations

We believe that the operating guide is undoubtedly in need of an update, given that it's been over 5 years since the previous one. This update should be based on the changing nature of student organizations and their activities, and it should aim to provide better visibility and accuracy on the workflow behind organizing events, including the responsibilities and roles of all departments and stakeholders involved, namely executive boards, advisors, SAO, and SLC.

Amendments to Existing Policies/Sections

Color Code:

- Yellow indicates the section in question.
- Light blue involves current good practices (by SAO and SLC) that need to be included in the updated regulations.
- White refers to our proposals for modifications to the existing policies and our reasoning.
- Grey indicates proposed additional clauses to the policies.

The pages and policies cited are taken from the operating guide, which was last amended on September 1st, 2016. Link: [Operating Guide for Student Organizations](#)

Existing Policy	Proposal	Rationale
I. Student Organizations: Creation and Renewal		
Applications for the creation and renewal of clubs should be sent during the Spring semester , no later than the end of the first week of April . (1.1 and 1.2, Pages 3 and 4).	Applications for the creation and renewal of clubs can be submitted up to the last month of the semester prior to the one the club wishes to be operational in.	This has been the common practice for the last 3-4 semesters as students have been able to submit applications in the last month of a semester so that it can be operational in the following semester, pending elections. Simply put, it didn't make sense to anyone why clubs can only be created in Spring. The proposed duration enables SAO and SLC enough time to organize elections and plan for the club fair among other matters.
	All renewed club Executive Board elections should be held before the semester's club fair (to be added under 1.1 and 1.2).	Clubs need to have an executive board prior to the club fair; otherwise, the club won't be able to be present, resulting in it losing visibility and the ability to recruit more members, without which the club's operations cannot be sustainable.
III. The Student Organization Advisor		
	The advisor should be familiar with the SAO Operating Guide. (to be added to 3.1 Requirements).	To advise and guide a student organization, the advisor should be familiar with the regulations.

<p>The advisor will need to be kept informed of all details of an event (3.2, Page 6).</p>	<p>The advisor will need to be kept informed of all details of an event by the executive board. Upon approving of the student organization’s activity, this activity (regardless of its nature: talk, trip, fundraiser, etc.) cannot be halted, delayed, or questioned by SAO or other entities/departments unless it violates the university’s policies.</p>	<p>As detailed in “Improving our Student Activities” (the joint SGA-SLC report published in November 2018), many club leaders and their advisors complained about “the amount of time that is needed to convince SAO to accept a certain activity” and that SAO usually confuses between “advising and imposing ideas.” As stated in 3.2 (page 6.), the advisor’s role is to guide and advise, and in 3.4, the advisor can be revoked in case of misconduct or violation. Simply put, the guide lays out the consequences for the advisor and the executive members in cases of violation. The SAO has an important role in facilitating and enabling clubs and student engagement but it shouldn’t be allowed to stop a club’s activity if both the executive board and advisor agree on it and assume full responsibility for it.</p>
	<p>If revoked due to misconduct or violation of university regulations, an advisor can’t act as another student organization’s advisor for a year following the revocation. (to be added to 3.4, page 6).</p>	<p>Similarly to executive board probation, advisors, if proven to be incompetent, shouldn’t be allowed to be involved for at least a year following the incident and revocation.</p>
<p>IV. The role Executive board</p>		
<p>The EB should stick to the action plan. However, any change can be made in consultation with the SAO. (4.1, Page 7.)</p>	<p>The EB should stick to the action plan. However, changes can be made if the EB (in consultation with their advisor) deems the change better for the running of operations while still performing the minimum number of events required; SAO should be informed.</p>	<p>Changes in action plans are very frequent. Most events may change dates due to the availability of club members or other possible events happening around that particular time. The advisor and EB are the most qualified to deem if a change should be made.</p>
<p>The board must include a President, a Vice</p>	<p>Add to this clause: If the student organization believes that this structure</p>	<p>Certain student organizations (like Voices United Choir, AUI Chronicles, AIESEC,</p>

<p>President, a Secretary General, and a Treasurer. If necessary, committees can be formed and committee chairs appointed by the executive board (EB). (4.2, Page 8)</p>	<p>doesn't suit its operation, it should submit a proposal with a new structure, to be approved by SAO and SLC.</p>	<p>Rotaract) have a special structure because of the nature of their operations (e.g., VUC needs a conductor) or international affiliations.</p>
	<p>The Treasurer should have a copy/access of the previous board's balance sheet/transaction history. (to be added to 4.2, page 9).</p>	<p>A huge problem with club financing is that most EBs start off their mandate with little knowledge of their financial situation. A record should be kept by previous treasurers and the business office or the SAO office.</p>
	<p>The General Secretary should have access to all previous EBs paperwork (Action plans, Event forms, minute of meetings...) (4.2, Page 8.)</p>	<p>To ensure smooth transition between executive boards.</p>
	<p>The president has access to the online operating forms. (4.2, Page 8.)</p>	
	<p>The General Secretary has access to both the Campus life club group and the Club's email inbox. (4.2, Page 8.)</p>	<p>This has been the case ever since the SAO and SLC digitized the forms on the Campus Life Jenzabar module.</p>
<p>Any officer may be removed from office upon a 2/3 popularity vote of eligible members during a general assembly. (4.3, Page 9).</p>	<p>Any officer may be removed from office upon a collective decision from the current EB with the presence of a SAO and SLC member to review the case.</p>	<p>Officer responsibilities and work is more noticeable by the operating EB rather than the organization members. The members witness the last stage of event creation which is announcement and asking for help, meanwhile, officers take care of administrative operations. Therefore, Officers are more qualified to notice if one of them is not "doing his/her job". A meeting with the SAO director and SLC should be held where the matter of revocation is discussed.</p>

V. The Election of the Executive Board Officers

<p>All Student Organizations must hold elections each year during the first week of April under the supervision of a SAO staff or a designated representative. (5.1, page 9)</p>	<p>All active Student Organizations must hold elections each year during the month of April under the supervision of a SAO staff or SLC board member. As for newly created and renewed clubs, they can hold elections after their application is approved as detailed in 1.1 and 1.2 respectively.</p>	<p>This has been the case for the past semesters as this flexibility allows for more student engagement .</p>
<p>The EB should inform the SAO about the day and location of the election 72 hour in advance. (5.2, Page 10.)</p>	<p>The EB should inform the SAO and the SLC about the day and location of the election 72 hour in advance.</p>	<p>Since Spring 2019, SLC has been taking care of supervising the election process and election related matters while informing and giving SAO all final paperwork.</p>
<p>Elections are declared null if organized without the presence of the SAO staff or a designated representative.</p>	<p>Elections are declared null if organized without the presence of the SAO staff or SLC board members.</p>	<p>Same reasoning.</p>
<p>Students with fewer than 2 semesters left for degree completion are NOT eligible for holding any EB position. This rule also applies to students who plan to go on an exchange program during one or both semesters of the EB term. (5.1, Page 9)</p>	<p>To be deleted.</p>	<p>Academic standing (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) is unrelated to the ability of successfully and effectively running a club. Many instances have shown that club leaders who are in their last year or semester have demonstrated adequate performance in delivering their duties, despite the academic workload, so it is more about time management. In addition to this, the exclusion of students planning on going on exchange might need to be revisited, as most of these opportunities are not in the hands of the students themselves (they cannot ensure being admitted, or their paperwork going through,etc.)</p>

VI. The clubs duties

	<p>Add to 6.1 Active participation in the club's fair: the club's executive board should confirm their attendance at least 24 hours prior to the fair, and coordinate with the SAO and SLC about any needs for their stand and board.</p>	<p>In order to avoid some mishaps that have happened in the last two club's fairs with certain clubs coming at the last minute and asking for stands.</p>
	<p>Add to 6.1 Submission of the action plan: Once submitted, the board members don't need to fill a pre-event form for any events or activities listed in the action plan.</p>	<p>This is a new practice that the SAO and SLC adopted this semester (Spring 2020) in the process of digitizing the action-plan, as both agreed that this will streamline the bureaucratic process.</p>
	<p>To be added as a separate bullet point in 6.1: Booking of meeting venue: Once the club decides on a particular meeting day and time, they should choose a possible meeting venue. Said venue will be booked for the remaining of the semester and is only subject to change if said venue is occupied by university events. The EB must be informed of any changes as soon as the SAO is informed.</p>	<p>Booking of meeting venues is a recurring issue. A lot of clubs find themselves rebooking the same venue, every single week, which is not efficient. We do understand the need of said venues for possible university events, but in the absence of such cases, club meeting venues should be booked once for the rest of the semester.</p>
	<p>To be added in 6.2: All clubs must hold a minimum of 3 events per semester with at least one publicly open event.</p>	<p>The goal of creating student organization after all is the creation and bettering of Campus life. We can't have a club creating internal events throughout the entire semester or only holding meetings, this goes against the intended purposes of their existence.</p>
	<p>Add to 6.3: If elections for the following executive board are held in a</p>	<p>To enable a smooth transition and that the club doesn't start from scratch. Across time, the</p>

	<p>timely manner, the existing EB should hold a meeting with the newly elected EB to pass on all relevant club related information, documents and transition plan for a continuous running of operations.</p>	<p>club gains significant expertise, good practices, and contacts (sponsors and partners)—all of which should be preserved and transmitted from executive board to other.</p>
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VII. Standard Event Organization

<p>Presentation of the event: The president should meet with a SAO representative in order to discuss further details about the event (date, participants and purpose) (7.1, Page 12)</p>	<p>The president should meet with a SAO representative if needed by the SAO in order to discuss further details that aren't covered in the submitted forms.</p>	<p>All of that information (date, participants and purpose) is available on the pre-event form that is already submitted to the SAO. A meeting should only be scheduled if the SAO requires more information and details not covered by the pre-event form.</p>
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	<p>To be added to 7.1: The EB should prepare and submit all forms online and send it to be approved by the advisor then forward it to SAO. Upon submission of the forms online, the EB member will receive a confirmation email that contains a PDF of their answers. They should then transfer this email to the club's advisor, who has to explicitly state that he or she approves of the content of the action plan (which serves as digital signature and approval). Thereafter, they should transfer the advisor's response to SAO@au.ma CC'ing slc@au.ma.</p>	<p>This has been the protocol that the SAO and SLC agreed to in early Spring 2020 for the Action Plan submission and future online forms.</p>
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VIII. Special event organization

<p>Once approved, the list of items is submitted to the SAO director (Max 10 items) at least 72 hours before the day of sale. (8.1, Page 13).</p>	<p>The max 10 items should be removed.</p>	<p>The most successful fundraisers, which have involved sticker sales, have had more than 10 items listed.</p>
<p>The Fund raising is only allowed based on projects presented in the action plan or a suggested activity approved by the SAO. (8.1, Page 13).</p>	<p>These fund-raising activities should take place for whatever purpose the clubs sees fit, in consultation with the advisor and SAO.</p>	<p>Fundraisers are not always limited to a specific project on the action plan, as some clubs require more than their allocated budgets to operate (for instance, Friends Of Migrants needs the funds from these activities to finance the vans from and to Meknes for their weekly tutoring). These fund-raising activities should take place for whatever purpose the clubs sees fit, in consultation with the advisor and SAO.</p>

Proposals for Added Sections:

- A section that contains the Frequently Asked Questions and key information concerning the policies and procedures of departments (i.e., G&M, Housing, Security, etc.) that executive boards interact with during event planning. Currently, the club leaders need to ask SAO or SLC to get this information; putting it in the student guide is more optimal and efficient.
- Such information can include prices (per km for different van types, per room for housing options, per catering options, etc.), the contact person in each department that club leaders can coordinate with in cases of emergency, etc.
- The student guide can also include a protocol on how to coordinate with Dev & Com concerning pre-event advertisement and post-event reporting.
- When it comes to the business office, a section (on financial transaction, memos formatting, refunds procedures, etc.) is much needed.
- Finally, while the operating guide details at great length the responsibility of the Executive Board and that of the Advisor, it doesn't provide a clear framework for the responsibilities of SAO as an essential element in the organization of student events. Ideally, the student guide should contain the SAO's vision, a set of approved administrative policies as recommended by the OIRE, and the responsibilities and job description of each SAO staff. The absence of these elements hinders the ability of stakeholders to collaborate with SAO, as it doesn't allow for clear expectations and an accountability system.
- In line with the last point's rationale, the SLC as an essential element to student organizations and student life should have their constitution (which lists its responsibilities, functions, and role) added to the student guide to provide clear expectations, transparency, and accountability system.

Implementation Considerations:

- To thoroughly enforce and improve the regulations regarding rewarding active student organizations and penalizing inactive ones by suspending their boards:
 - Creating opportunities (like the Student Involvement Award) to celebrate and reward student organization is a great way to recognize the hard work put by the active members and executive board in addition to creating healthy competition between them.
 - These distinctions and awards should also be incorporated in the active members' and executive board's Student Activity Transcript. This would provide a qualitative assessment of the student's involvement.
 - Penalizing inactive student organizations is important in situations where the inactiveness stems from the executive board's incompetence or unwillingness to work together.
 - Suspending and closing inactive clubs tackles the issue of oversaturation (i.e., clubs that have no added value to the community and/or only exist to serve the advisor's or executive board's interests). Not only will it enable the SAO to gain better visibility but also optimize its resources and funds allocation.
 - In the aim of making this review process beyond reproach, it should involve the SAO director, SLC president, and an SGA representative.
- Other essential regulations should be closely monitored. For example, the student guide states that one of the President's responsibilities is to "work with all members of the EB to develop and implement a transition plan for the next board" (page 8). Unfortunately, this doesn't always occur. The new executive board ends up starting from scratch and not benefitting from the significant expertise, good practices, and contacts (sponsors and partners) the club has gained across time. Without this essential step, smooth transition is greatly hindered and the club's overall performance is affected.
- Undoubtedly, digitization is key as it enables for easier tracking of requests and their progress, which is beneficial to both the executive board and the SAO. This is especially

important when it comes to services and requests submitted to other departments (e.g., vans from G&M, refunds from the Business Office, venue booking, etc.).

- One of the most prevalent demands by student organizations is the need for better visibility when it comes to budgets and financial transactions. Indeed, most clubs have struggled with not knowing exactly how much they have in their budgets or knowing what the status of their financial requests is (i.e., payments and refunds); this causes many issues, especially clubs who organize big events that require external suppliers. A solution would be to set up online financial accounts (like student ones) that are easily accessible and trackable.

ILOS

ILOs should be defined on a case by case basis depending on the nature and activities of the club; overall benefits include enhancing soft skill acquisition, encouraging student integration into the AUI community, providing a productive and healthy outlet for student engagement, etc.

ILOs ought to be divided by category:

- Humanitarian:
 - Enhancing the ethics of social responsibility.
 - Enabling students to engage and contribute to the Ifrane/regional ecosystem, through direct contact and volunteering opportunities.
 - Harness AUlers' social, monetary, and intellectual privilege into serving disadvantaged communities.
- Educational:
 - Enhance and complement the academic environment, by providing a constructive space for learning and exploring the student's interests, in ways that make it complementary to their curricula.
 - Serving as a hub for students with similar interests (technological, scientific, political) to gather their collective efforts and knowledge into initiatives and ventures that are beneficial to them and the AUI community.
 - Raising awareness on relevant social issues, challenging harmful societal norms and stigma, and rethinking counterintuitive dogmas.
 - Offer opportunities for constructive discussion between people in the same areas of study, as well as networking with professionals in that same field.
 - Encourage thought-provoking discussions between students, allowing them to learn how to be good speakers and debaters.
- Cultural
 - Enlightening students on alternative cultural perspectives.
 - Fostering cultural agility and facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and sharing.
 - Learning about the history and customs of ethnic and religious communities.
 - Foster the mindsets of global citizenship and promote openness to foreign ways of life.
- Recreational:
 - Facilitate the creation of friendships between people with similar entertainment interests.
 - Allowance of social interaction in less competitive environments, in which the focus is the enjoyment of the activity itself rather than winning (as opposed to academic and athletic organizations).

