

Thinking of Joining a Group? Consider this...

Are you interested in joining a recognized student organization at W&M? One of the hallmarks of the William & Mary student experience is the opportunity to be involved in campus life. Joining a team, club, or group can help to create some of your most meaningful experiences - contributing to that special sense of community at William & Mary. But doing so should never put someone in harm's way.

At William & Mary, being demeaned or exposed to harm should never be part of campus life.

Initiation:

If you are thinking about joining a group, consider whether or not doing so might involve some type of initiation. Initiation into a group can be a single event or an extended process. And, while most groups at W&M don't haze, whenever new members join a group, there is the potential for hazing to occur. Therefore, it is important to gather as much information as you can about the experience for which you are signing up. The suggested questions below do not guarantee that the group you're joining doesn't haze, but they may help you learn more about the organization/team and their culture and traditions.

Ask current members:

If the group members cannot give thorough descriptions of what new membership involves or if they seem evasive, have your guard up. Even if they say that they do not haze, be cautious if they are unable to describe what it is that they do. Some questions to consider:

- What are the joining responsibilities for new members?
- What kinds of things do you have to do to join the group?
- What is the group's position on hazing?
- Has the group ever been in trouble for hazing?
- How long does the pledging and/or new member process last?
- Does the group have a policy of transparency or do they keep their activities a secret?
- How much time will be involved?
- Does the group have a "hell week"?
- If the group initiates members after an intake or recruitment process, do you pledge "underground"?

Ask others for more information about the group:

- What do you know about this group?
- What kind of a reputation does it have?
- Have you heard about how the group treats new members?
- Review the discipline histories of Recognized Student Organizations (including hazing violations) at: https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/communityvalues/org_discipline/index.php

Report Hazing:

Our goal is to empower all in our community to recognize hazing in its various forms, to know what to do when they see hazing activity or experience it directly, and to feel confident in taking action. If you think you have observed concerning behavior, report it. <https://www.wm.edu/sites/hazingprevention/reportinghazing/index.php>