

Club Handbook

Greetings from the Student Activities Office!

Student organizations and clubs are a vital part of campus life at Virginia Western! The Student Activities Office is here to support student efforts with resources, funding, information and organization.

Students who participate in clubs benefit from leadership and teamwork development, networking opportunities and community service opportunities. All these activities contribute to your future career and personal success!

The guidelines posted here provide the procedures and policies required by the college and the Student Activities Office.

College Policy and Procedures

All student organizations and clubs must follow all policies of Virginia Western and the Virginia Community College System.

All students are encouraged to become familiar with these policies by visiting <https://www.viriniawestern.edu/about/policies>

Clubs should pay special attention to policies for [Student Conduct](#), [Expressive Activity](#), [Use of College Facilities](#), and [Requirement for Student Activities](#).

Benefits of Starting a Club

Virginia Western supports students' ability to freely associate on campus. However, some students may want to form an officially recognized club or student organization. The benefits of formal recognition are

- Club listed on the college website
- Participation in college-wide club fairs and events

- Ability to reserve space on campus for meetings and events
- Access to college-owned technical equipment and support for activities and events (i.e. sound system) and access to resources and supplies in the Student Activities Office
- Use of a Canvas group
- Advertise on campus media (TVs, Student Bulletin, etc.)
- Ability to have a club account and hold fundraisers
- Invitations to participate in educational and leadership activities

Students who participate in organizations receive the benefits of improved interpersonal skills, learning transferable skills, assuming leadership roles, networking opportunities, service opportunities, and creating new memories and friendships.

Starting a New Club

To start a new student organization or club, **Complete the New Student Organization or Club Form**. As a part of that form, a club will:

1. Find a faculty or staff advisor.
2. Have a minimum of four currently enrolled students interested in starting the club.
3. Select one student as the primary point of contact.
4. Ensure membership is in compliance with VCCS and Virginia Western policy.
5. Create bylaws or a constitution (required if requesting use of a club account). These must state what student leadership positions are in place, how student leaders are selected/elected, how decisions are made by the club, and how changes are made to the bylaws. This document must be on file with Student Activities.

If requested, the Student Activities Office will work with the Business Office to establish a club account.

The club or organization name should not use the college's name without specific written permission.

After submitting the application, the club representatives will meet with the Student Activities Coordinator for a review of college processes and policies.

Students may hold one interest meeting to determine the viability of the club prior to obtaining an advisor, under the supervision of Student Activities. Groups may not continue meeting without a sponsor and completing the New Club and Student Organization Form.

Maintaining Active Club Status

Clubs should submit the yearly update form at the beginning of each fall semester. The deadline to submit each year is October 15. If an update form has not been submitted by this time, the club will be considered inactive.

Inactive clubs cannot reserve rooms, hold events, or use the club account. A club can return to active status by submitting the yearly update form.

As a courtesy and to support the possibility of forming interest, an inactive club will remain on the website for the remainder of the academic year. If an update form has not been submitted by the last day of spring semester in an academic year, the club is considered permanently inactive. Any students wishing to restart the club must fill out a New Student Organization and Club Application Form.

Clubs should follow all other processes and procedures required by the Student Activities Office. If a club is not following processes, a written warning can be issued. After additional violations, a club can be referred to student conduct.

Requirements for Membership and Officers

In order to gain approval and to maintain active club status, each club or organization must have a minimum of four currently enrolled students to serve as student leaders.

Membership must follow the guidelines set forth in Virginia Western Policy I-45. Membership is limited to enrolled students. This does not restrict any organization from inviting guests to visit or speak to the membership during regular club meetings.

Student leaders are required to be enrolled in classes for the current term of their position. If a student is no longer taking classes mid-year, they immediately vacate their position. The club is responsible for selecting a replacement according to that club's own procedures. It is the club's responsibility to update Student Activities with changes.

Active/Inactive/Dissolved Clubs

Clubs become inactive when a yearly update form has not been submitted to Student Activities. A club can become inactive mid-year if less than 4 students are members. The club will continue to be listed for the remainder of the academic year.

Dissolution of the Club Account

When a club becomes permanently inactive, the club account will stay open in case the club forms again.

Generally, when a club is inactive and has not had any financial transactions in a 3-year cycle, the account is considered inactive and should be closed. Any unused funds in the account may be moved to a General Scholarship account. If this occurs and a similar club restarts in the future, the club would need to establish a new club account.

Administration of the Club

Student Activities believes that every student club should have agency in deciding how their club will be administered. Each club should decide how their officers will be elected, how many leadership positions are appropriate for the club, and how clubs will make decisions together. Some clubs may be more formal than others.

However, every club using a club account must have written bylaws or a constitution on file with the Student Activities Office. A template is available and the Student Activities Office is available assist with the process.

Students should be aware that some student organizations are extensions of official college departments. While these organizations are excellent leadership opportunities, the faculty and staff sponsors retain an increased level of involvement and direction in the program. In these cases, the role of advisor will specifically be written into the employee's official job description. The students in the organization should be advised each year to this status. Student Ambassadors and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society are two examples.

Using the College Name or Logo

Students are not authorized to speak on behalf of the College. The student club shall be transparent in communication with the community to properly explain the relationship to the college.

Student organizations and clubs must be clearly named so that the campus and community can differentiate between communications from student clubs and official college departments.

Naming conventions for clubs should include a word that indicates club status. Examples include "club" "student organization" "student group" "student association" "society".

Club Events and Activities

On Campus

All meetings and events should be reserved in the Ad Astra space reservation calendar. This includes requests for table space. All events must follow the Facility Use guidelines and policy. Student Activities can submit work orders and IT tickets on behalf of the club.

All clubs should work through Student Activities to request their meeting space and events. When the advisor role is specifically part of an employee's job duties, this provides an exception to this procedure, and these employees can directly reserve space and plan events. Student Activities would still be available to support and consult.

When the college is closed, all events are cancelled.

Use of College Facilities and Event Checklist:

<https://www.viriniawestern.edu/about/legal-and-policies/policies/general-policies/v-5/>

Club Events and Activities (Off-Campus)

Clubs may often want to perform community service, take a field trip, or have other activities off-campus.

All off-campus activities must be submitted to the Student Activities Coordinator in writing via an online form with the following information: purpose, location, date(s), estimated number of participants, transportation being used, and if a college employee is in attendance.

Any off-campus activity involving overnight travel must have an advisor present.

All participants must complete a VCCS Assumption of Risk form for the activity.

Financial Procedures

Full information regarding club account financial procedures and fundraising are found in the Club Account Financial Procedures. This document will be shared with the organization and advisor upon approval.

Requirements of a Faculty Advisor

Student clubs should be student directed and student led. Decision making related to the club's activities, goals, and expenditures should ultimately be the responsibility of the students. Advisors do not vote. The advisor's role is to ensure that the students are following policy and procedure and provide guidance to encourage wise decision making.

- There shall be a faculty or staff advisor for each student organization. The advisor shall serve as a point of contact for college processes and policies.
- Attend meetings when possible.

- Ensure clubs follow the Facility Use guidelines for events and meetings
- Ensure all events, meetings, and activities are reserved through the Student Activities office.
- Sign off on financial forms and events
- Support leadership transitions by facilitating elections, as needed
- Support new student leaders by advising them to campus resources and requirements

Advisor Selection

Advisors should be full-time teaching or administrative faculty or exempt staff members. Non-exempt staff are also permitted, if their role as advisor is related to their position at Virginia Western.

Advisor Removal

Advisors should be aligned with the club's purpose and needs of the student organization. An advisor may be removed for failure to fulfil advisor responsibilities (lack of engagement, lack of responsiveness to student leaders, failure to provide appropriate oversight or guidance). An advisor can also be removed if the students feel an advisor no longer aligns with the club's purpose and mission.

Student may not remove an advisor when the sole complaint is disagreement with an advisor's ruling that is meant to protect the reputation of the college or to ensure students are following college policy. (see Advisor Authority). If students attempt to remove an advisor for this reason, the advisor should contact the Student Activities Office.

An advisor can be removed by students through a simple majority vote of the club officers. An advisor can also be removed by their supervisor or dean to ensure alignment with the employee core responsibilities.

If an advisor demonstrates behavior that creates a hostile or unsafe situation for students, or violates college policies, this behavior will be documented and submitted Human Resources for further investigation. Based on findings, the advisor can be removed.

If an advisor is removed or resigns, a Student Activities staff member can become a temporary advisor for no more than 6 weeks. If a new permanent advisor is not identified after this time, the club will become inactive for the remainder of the year until a new advisor is found.

In the cases where the role of advisor is part of the employee's job description, students may not remove the advisor by majority vote. Students who feel the advisor is not providing appropriate support should bring their complaint to the Student Activities office for review and next steps.

Advisor Authority

In cases where students are not following college policy or procedure, or where students may be planning actions that may have a negative effect on the reputation of the college, the advisor has the authority to overrule the decisions of the students. If the students disagree with the advisor's ruling, they may appeal the decision to the Student Activities Coordinator. If the students continue to disagree with the ruling, they may file a formal grievance for further review.

<https://www.viriniawestern.edu/about/legal-and-policies/policies/student-affairs/i-19/>

Advisors are welcome to bring concerns to the Student Activities Coordinator at any time.

Advisor Attendance

Advisors are not required to attend all meetings, but they should stay well-informed of the decisions and activities of the club. If a club wishes to host an event on campus, the faculty advisor must agree to be responsible for ensuring that college protocols are followed. Per the college facilities use guidelines, if the event takes place after 5 p.m. or on a weekend, the advisor, or their designee, must be present for the duration of the event.

Any off-campus activity or event must have an advisor present when involving overnight travel.

Student Engagement Hours

Advisors who are faculty members have student engagement hours that can be used for student organization sponsorship.

<https://www.viriniawestern.edu/about/legal-and-policies/policies/student-affairs/i-49/>

Last Reviewed:

July 2, 2025 (NRL)