

Dear Student,

Joining a group, team, or organization can be one of the best parts of the UMass experience. Group membership and participation can lead to lasting friendships, rewarding leadership opportunities, and a greater sense of community. Entry into some groups may include an approved initiation ceremony, but **none should involve hazing.**

The term "hazing," as described in [Massachusetts General Law](#) (MGL Chapter 269, Section 17, 18 and 19) and the [UMass Code of Student Conduct](#), is *any means of conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.*

While understanding the formal definition of hazing is important, recognizing hazing is vital. Some examples of hazing include:

- Forced consumption of alcohol, any food, non-alcoholic beverage, drug, or other substance
- Beating
- Branding
- Forced exercise
- Performing tasks for others
- Sleep deprivation
- Exposure to weather

Hazing is a crime under Massachusetts law and it is prohibited by the UMass Code of Student Conduct. It is important to note that **a person cannot give their consent to be hazed.**

University community members are obligated to report all incidents of hazing. You can report incidents to the [Dean of Students Office](#), 227 Whitmore, 413-545-2684, and/or to [UMass Police](#) at 413-545-2121. You may also wish to review [active bystandership techniques](#) for intervening in a potentially harmful situation.

For additional information, please read the [hazing information](#) on the Dean of Students Office website. It details applicable hazing policies, how to report incidents of hazing, how hazing can affect you, hazing myths, and campus resources.

Hazing endangers student well-being and academic success. With a new semester of studying, extracurricular activities, and socializing underway, I ask that you help ensure that UMass is a safe community for everyone.

Sincerely,
Evelyn L. Ashley, Ph.D.
Dean of Students