

RSO Advisors

Thank you for agreeing to be an advisor for a Recognized Student Organization (RSO). RSOs need the time and support of dedicated staff and faculty like you in order to function. While time commitment varies between RSOs, consistently RSOs with sincere involvement from their RSO Advisor thrive.

Effective advising requires numerous skills normally associated with teaching, coaching, or counseling and a willingness to commit time to these activities. By sharing knowledge about the university and personal experience, advisors provide professional expertise to RSO officers and members.

Requirements of RSO Advisors

RSOs must have a primary RSO Advisor; some RSOs choose to have secondary RSO advisors.

- The primary RSO Advisor must be a full or part-time employee of the staff or faculty of Minnesota State University, Mankato.
 - RSO Advisors on sabbatical or abroad cannot be primary RSO Advisors while away from campus.
 - Graduate students are not eligible to be the primary RSO Advisor.
 - Secondary RSO Advisors can be a non-university employee, a graduate student, or an advisor who is abroad.
- RSO Advisors represent and protect the interests of Minnesota State University, Mankato in all matters pertaining to the RSO.
- RSO Advisors serve as a resource for students.
- We ask that RSO Advisors refrain from advising more than 2 RSOs at any point in time. While there may be exceptions to the rule, RSO advising is just one of many responsibilities our advisors have, and more than 2 RSOs may impact the ability to maintain balance in their roles.

Benefits of Being an RSO Advisor

There are several rewards associated with being the RSO Advisor:

- Observe and assist in the leadership development of students.
- Mentor and coach students.
- Observe culture changes in the life of the University and community.
- Form networks with colleagues involved as advisors in similar organizations.
- Participate in an RSO whose purpose you support.
- Receive recognition by the institution, the RSO, and students for a job well done.

RSO Advisor Responsibilities

In assuming the role of RSO Advisor, you agree to fulfill these responsibilities in the manner listed below:

- Take an active role in advising the RSO
- Know the general purpose of the RSO and be familiar with all provisions outlined in its constitution or by-laws; review the governing documents annually with the RSO membership.
- Serve as the official person responsible for the budget, including signing financial forms, budget requests, etc.

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- Remain informed of all activities sponsored and conducted by the RSO.
- Establish with the RSO President expectations for the way the advisor will participate in the RSO's activities; i.e., programs, social events, recruitment and new member activities, and meetings.
- Know the officers and members of the RSO.
- Be familiar with the status of the current membership of the RSO and know RSO's process for obtaining new members.
- Offer guidance to the RSO on goal setting, organization management, program planning, problem solving, and group evaluation.
- Be knowledgeable of and adhere to University policies and procedures which pertain to RSOs.
 - Review and adhere to the policies in the [RSO Handbook](#).
 - Review and adhere to the [Student Conduct Policies](#)
 - Inform RSO officers and members of their responsibilities.
 - Review with RSO membership policies and procedures.
- Immediately report to Student Activities any activities that may or will violate University policies.

Practical Tips for Advising Your RSO

Here are some practical and general expectations about what advising an RSO really means:

- Meet with the RSO President on a regular basis (at least twice each month is recommended).
- Attend RSO meetings and events.
 - No, you do not need to attend every meeting and every event, although some advisors do.
 - At a minimum you should attend all events for which there are any liability concerns (i.e. a dance).
 - Establish with the RSO President expectations for the way the advisor will participate in the RSO's activities; i.e., programs, social events, recruitment and new member activities, and meetings.
- Advising does not mean doing.
 - RSOs must be created by, run by, and populated mostly by MNSU students.
 - The role of the RSO Advisor is to give guidance, offer suggestions and ideas, but not to direct the RSO.
- Travel: While there is no separate travel policy for RSOs and RSO Advisors are expected to adhere to the University's vehicle use policies. Specifically, note that, when using a university vehicle, "[Any trip over 400 miles and/or beyond Minnesota's borders](#) requires a staff person and/or graduate assistant to be one of the eligible drivers." **For all student group travel, however, advisors should have in writing the travel itinerary, members traveling, and contact information for group members.**

Choosing or Changing RSO Advisors

RSOs are generally responsible for selecting their own advisor, in accordance with the RSO constitution and/or other governing documents, unless it is specified in an employee's position description. For example, the Program Coordinator for Campus Recreation/Sport Clubs is the official advisor signing off on certain finance and travel forms for sport clubs.

Any student organization may have more than one advisor.

All changes to RSO Advisors should be updated in Mav Central, and if applicable, on 901 accounts and in RSO email accounts.