

# ASA Guide for New Groups and New Group Leaders

Prepared by Rachel Meyer, Summer 2010 -- Updated Spring 2020

This document is intended to be a guide for newly recognized groups and students new to leadership roles in student groups. It is certainly not complete, but it should be a solid starting place. This document begins with a brief, one-page summary of the bare minimum groups have to do and know to operate on campus, and continues with more in-depth descriptions of the resources available to student groups for those who are interested.

More information is available on the ASA website ([asa.mit.edu](http://asa.mit.edu)) and questions can be sent to the ASA Executive Board at [asa-exec@mit.edu](mailto:asa-exec@mit.edu).

## Table of Contents:

- I. [One page summary: What do I have to do to be a group?](#)
- II. [ASA Regulations](#)
- III. [Engage Database and Mailing Lists](#)
- IV. [Financial Accounts and Funding](#)
  - A. General Finances
  - B. "Regular" Funding Boards
  - C. LEF and ARCADE
  - D. Other Funding Sources
- V. [Student Organizations, Leadership, and Engagement office \(SOLE\)](#)
  - A. Event Registration
  - B. Other SOLE resources
  - C. Receiving Mail
- VI. [Room Reservations](#)
  - A. CAC Spaces
  - B. DAPER Spaces
  - C. Classroom Spaces
- VII. [ASA Allocated Resources](#)
  - A. Office and Storage Space
  - B. Bulletin Boards
  - C. Activities Midways
- VIII. [Other Resources](#)

## I. What do I have to do to be a student group?

Welcome to your new organization or your new leadership role! We know it can be very confusing starting out because there are so many moving parts. Here's the breakdown of the basics of the requirements for you as an ASA group to stay recognized!

1. **Keep your exec email updated:** All ASA announcements are sent through our asa-official mailing list, which contains the exec email list for every student group. If your officers are not on your list or you start a new one and don't tell the ASA, you will not receive our messages and be penalized. This is seriously one of the most important things to staying in the loop!!! It's also important to keep your [engage.mit.edu](https://engage.mit.edu) database membership information updated, but your email list is really #1.

2. **General Body Meetings:** Once a semester, the ASA holds a General Body Meeting where each student group is required to send one representative or else be fined. At these meetings, the Board discusses what their current initiatives are, upcoming deadlines, and the Board is elected in the spring. Because the ASA are the representatives of student groups, it's extremely important to come to these meetings and join in the discussions!

3. **Spring re-recognition:** Every year from mid-April through the end of classes, the ASA holds a required re-recognition process. The general structure is to have an officer fill out a form asking for basic group information for our records, and to have five club members respond to a second form confirming that they are part of your group. That's it! Through this process we also confirm that your group officers agree to abide by the MA State anti-hazing law.

That's the bare minimum the ASA requires! Now, where do you go if you want to...

### *Get or spend money?*

- Information and trainings on the ASA [Group Funding](#) and SOLE [Finance Resources](#) websites
- Most detailed breakdown in the [MIT Student Organization Handbook](#)
- [atlas.mit.edu](https://atlas.mit.edu) is used for purchasing and payments

### *Reserve space or have an event?*

- Classrooms through the [Registrar](#), CAC/DAPER space through [Virtual EMS](#)
- For events, the CAC [event planning guide](#) and [MIT Student Organization Handbook](#) are both wordy but walk through the process!

### *Publicize your group?*

- Our website has lists of publicity resources (<https://asa.mit.edu/advertisingpublicity>), including our Midways and guidelines for putting up posters

Keep reading for even more detailed information.

## II. ASA Regulations

Our ASA [operating guidelines](#) describe in full the expectations of both the ASA Board and any ASA-recognized student group. (If you haven't read it, it's worth it to know!) Here are some of the most pertinent for basic operations:

1. *Membership guidelines* – A group must have at least 5 MIT student members and its membership must be at least 50% MIT students. A group needs a president and treasurer (or corresponding officers) that are distinct MIT students. All financial signatories must be MIT students. Postdocs are not classified as students. All groups must follow the MIT Non-Discrimination Policy, with respect to membership, officer positions, and other opportunities.

2. *Constitutions* – every group is required to have and adhere to constitutions that follow ASA requirements. Additionally, groups must provide URLs to their current constitution in the Engage Database and have any changes to their constitution approved by the ASA Board.

3. *Publicity Rules* – ASA has Publicity Rules that all groups, and non-groups, must follow. Some groups have access to reserved poster boards (applications for these are held periodically), but the ASA also has many general poster boards throughout campus that any group can poster on. However, on these public boards, a group can have no more than one poster per board, posters must be flat and no larger than 17" by 22", poster only in designated areas, and never tear down other posters. In addition to poster rules, groups are prohibited from chalking vertical surfaces (such as sides of buildings).

4. *Orientation Recruitment Rules* – student group recruitment of incoming students is prohibited before the Activities Midway. These rules prevent recruitment events and place restrictions on what kinds of advertising are allowed.

5. *Rules in general* – beyond the specific rules mentioned, all groups must follow all other ASA rules and Institute policies, as well as local, state, and federal laws. This includes any new rules or specific rulings of ASA, Institute tax-exemption and donation policies, and rules of other offices such as restrictions for using SOLE financial accounts or reserving CAC, DAPER, or Schedules space.

6. *Resource responsibility* – use allocated resources responsibly. There is always high demand for the money and space we allocate, and misusing those resources is not fair to your fellow students who also want them. This includes following any rules and conditions of the allocation and "returning" any resources you are not using. For example, if you request a Midway booth, either use the booth or email ASA in advance saying you can no longer use it. If you have office, storage, or bulletin board space and find that you are no longer using it, let ASA know so it can be reallocated. Additionally, any permanent changes to offices and bulletin boards need to be approved by ASA, and please take care of your offices in general.

### III. Engage database and mailing lists

Your group is officially recognized when you have an entry in the Engage database ([engage.mit.edu](http://engage.mit.edu)). After that point, **you** are responsible for updating and completing your entry. In particular, you need to add website and constitution URLs, membership numbers, financial and reservation signatories, and a description. The financial and room reservation offices mentioned in later sections use the signatories to determine who is allowed to handle financial matters or reserve rooms. Please note that your group's roster is not what is used during the re-recognition process: those numbers are collected through a separate form the Board distributes. You will need to perpetually keep your Database entry updated – whenever you change officers, need new signatories, and so on.

If you ever want to change your officer mailing list or group name, then you need to email the Board ([asa-exec@mit.edu](mailto:asa-exec@mit.edu)) for approval and then we can make the change. If you are having issues with the database itself, email [engage@mit.edu](mailto:engage@mit.edu) (**not** the ASA). SOLE provides walkthroughs of using Engage on their website: <https://studentlife.mit.edu/sole/engage>.

As mentioned before, make sure to populate your officers' email list (**and update it when your officers change**). ASA will use this as the contact point for your group. IS&T has a website with links to how to set up and manage mailing lists: <https://ist.mit.edu/email-lists>, or you can access your Moira and Mailman lists directly (<https://groups.mit.edu/webmoira/> and <http://mailman.mit.edu/>, respectively.) We recommend using Moira for exec mailing lists, as Mailman is useful for its filtering capabilities, but this has led to issues with groups missing important announcements from the asa-official emails that the ASA sends.

As an ASA group, you can send a request to Athena Accounts ([accounts@mit.edu](mailto:accounts@mit.edu)) to create an Athena locker for your group. (Information on Athena Lockers: <https://ist.mit.edu/lockers>) You can use your locker to store any electronic group materials and publish your website. Other resources for making a website can be found on the ASA site: <https://asa.mit.edu/group-resources/group-websites>.

## IV. Financial Accounts and Funding

### A. *Finances in General*

When your group is officially recognized, you will also be assigned a main account and possibly a funding account -- these should be listed on your group's Engage page, and you should email [sole@mit.edu](mailto:sole@mit.edu) with any questions or visit them in W20-54, see as well the [MIT Student Organization Handbook](#)). You can also ask for SAP web access so you can view balances and transactions online. All financial matters for your group need to be done through SOLE. They have reimbursement vouchers that financial signatories fill out and attach a receipt to after a purchase is made. It is important to note that MIT student groups are tax-exempt under MIT's tax status. When making purchases you need to present the tax exemption forms to the vendor and when submitting receipts and vouchers you must exclude any tax that was paid. If you are making larger purchases or purchases through specific vendors, then there are ways to get checks in advance. If you're interested in this, then you should email or go speak with someone in SOLE. Additionally, SOLE does Treasurer Training every semester – you are required to go to one of these. Reimbursements are done electronically and more details are on the SOLE website. Please review the training materials (or go to training) before submitting a reimbursement if you are not familiar with the system.

More information: <https://studentlife.mit.edu/sole/finance>

Tax Exemption Forms: <http://vpf.mit.edu/site/forms>

### B. *“Regular” Funding Boards*

If your group is a Funded Student Group, then you are also eligible to apply to either the Undergraduate Association Finance Board or the Graduate Student Council Funding Board. Which funding board you are eligible to apply to is determined by what the majority of your student members are. This eligibility allows you to apply for funding, but does not guarantee funding. Both of these boards accept applications on a roughly quarterly cycle. From a broad perspective, you submit applications with line item budgets and explanations or “defenses” and then the funding boards decide what they can allocate money for. There are some things they either cannot or will not fund, so read the rules and ask any questions you have. Don't be too surprised if you do not get funding for everything you request – the funding boards get more requests than they have money.

GSC Funding Board: [gsc-treasurer@mit.edu](mailto:gsc-treasurer@mit.edu), <https://gsc.mit.edu/funding/>

UA Finboard: [ua-finboard-chairs@mit.edu](mailto:ua-finboard-chairs@mit.edu), <http://ua.mit.edu/financial-board>

### *C. LEF and ARCADE*

LEF is the Large Event Fund and ARCADE is the fund for Assisting Recurring Cultural and Diversity Events – these funds are allocated by the ASA Board in cooperation with the GSC and UA. These funds are for specific events, or some cases a short series of events. LEF is for events with budgets over \$2,500 and attendance over 150 MIT students and ARCADE is for events with an emphasis on cultural and diversity components. LEF/ARCADE allocates on a quarterly schedule similar to the GSC Funding Board and applications are fairly straightforward: background information, event plan and description, and a line item budget.

Contact information: [asa-treasurer@mit.edu](mailto:asa-treasurer@mit.edu)

Website & application: <http://asa.mit.edu/group-resources/funding-large-events>

### *D. Other Funding Sources*

There are many other funding sources at MIT, beyond those funding boards. An extensive list can be found on the ASA website: <http://asa.mit.edu/group-resources/group-funding>.

You can also solicit other donations or non-MIT grants. Speak to SOLE about how you can receive tax-deductible donations. A fair number of groups also charge regular membership dues or charge for specific events or opportunities.

## V. Student Organizations, Leadership, and Engagement office (SOLE)

### A. Event Registration

SOLE details the procedures surrounding event planning in great depth in their [MIT Student Organization Handbook](#). All events that fit any of the requirements below need to be registered. SOLE provides the paperwork for this process and can help you figure out if you need to register your event and what you need to do to register it. Types of events that need to be registered:

1. Event attendance over 100
2. Alcohol is being served
3. Money will be collected
4. Over 20% non-MIT attendance
5. Minors will be present
6. When working with non-MIT organization

Depending on the type of event, you may also need an entertainment license, liquor license, or license for raffles, carnivals, or selling merchandise.

### B. Other SOLE Resources

Beyond event registration, SOLE provides many kinds of assistance for student groups. They can work with you on planning events or retreats, leadership development programs, or organizing more general aspects of your group. Generally speaking, basically no matter what idea you have, they can help you figure out how to turn it into reality (or help you make it more feasible, legal, etc.).

SOLE website: <https://studentlife.mit.edu/sole>

Office: W20-500

Email: [sole@mit.edu](mailto:sole@mit.edu)

### C. Receiving Mail

The ASA no longer maintains mailboxes for groups in the W20-4 hallway. Groups can receive mail addressed to W20-500 (the SOLE office) where it will be sorted by group and can be picked up any time during business hours. Make sure the mail has the name of your group on it.

Please direct mail to:

[Name of group]  
Room W20-500  
84 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

## VI. Room Reservations

### *A. Campus Activity Complex Spaces*

The Campus Activity Complex manages spaces in the Student Center, Kresge Auditorium, Walker Memorial, and more. They also control the publicity booths in the Student Center, Lobby 10, and the Stata Center, as well as some outdoor spaces. In addition to managing these spaces, CAC provides event and logistics assistance, retail and contracted services, and managing access lists to student group offices. Reservation signatories of your group can reserve rooms online using the Virtual EMS system, but first you need to make an account (one account per student group accessible by all reservation signatories -- many previously existing groups likely have an account already). The system is fairly straightforward, and has a thorough instruction document. You can reserve space for the current school year and for the following year, depending on the time of year and type of space.

CAC Website: <https://studentlife.mit.edu/cac>

CAC Contact Information: [campus-activities@mit.edu](mailto:campus-activities@mit.edu), W20-500, (617) 253-3913

CAC Contact for Updating Office Access: [caclocks@mit.edu](mailto:caclocks@mit.edu)

Virtual EMS Online Reservation System: <http://cac-ems2.mit.edu/VirtualEMS/>

Event Planning Guide Website: <http://web.mit.edu/eventguide/>

### *B. DAPER Spaces*

In addition to CAC Spaces, you can use the Virtual EMS system to reserve Department of Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation (DAPER) spaces. DAPER spaces include rehearsal and practice spaces, the large gyms, and outdoor fields. All groups can use these spaces, but Club Sports groups have reservation priority (and can reserve the spaces further in advance).

DAPER website: <https://daper.mit.edu/>

Contact Information: [athletics@mit.edu](mailto:athletics@mit.edu), W35-297, (617) 253-4498

Virtual EMS:Online Reservation System: <http://cac-ems2.mit.edu/VirtualEMS/>

### *C. Classrooms*

Student groups can also reserve many classrooms through the Schedules Office, under the Registrar. Classrooms can be used for all events except religious ceremonies, performances that require the use of platforms, scenery, stage, and lighting, and political events. Questions about restrictions should be directed towards the Schedules Office. Food and beverages are not allowed in classrooms.

Website and request form: <https://registrar.mit.edu/classrooms/reserving-classroom>

Contact Information: [schedules@mit.edu](mailto:schedules@mit.edu), 5-111, (617) 253-4788

## **VII. ASA Allocated Resources and Events**

### *A. Office and Storage Space*

Office and storage spaces (including lockers) in the Student Center and Walker Memorial are allocated by the ASA Board every other year, usually on odd years. If you want to request space in between cycles, then email the ASA Board ([asa-space@mit.edu](mailto:asa-space@mit.edu)) and we can try to meet your needs or put you on waiting lists. Otherwise you can wait until the next allocation cycle and apply regularly. Funded Student Groups are generally given priority for space, but all groups are eligible and space allocated based on demonstrated need and compelling applications. There is not enough space for all groups to get the amount of space they want, but the ASA Board will do its best to meet the needs of all groups as best as possible.

ASA Webpage on space: <http://asa.mit.edu/group-resources/officestorage-space>

### *B. Bulletin Boards*

Another resource that ASA allocates are the bulletin boards along the Infinite Corridor or in the Stata Center. While all groups can post on the “public” board around campus, there are also boards reserved for specific groups that ASA allocates. Like office and storage space, bulletin boards are allocated every other year.

ASA Webpage on boards: <http://asa.mit.edu/advertisingpublicity/asa-bulletin-boards>

### *C. Activities Midways*

ASA organizes two Activities Midways every year – one during Campus Preview Weekend in April geared towards newly admitted students and one during Orientation geared to both new graduate and undergraduate students. All groups, besides Dorms/FSILGs, can request booth space and performance time at these Midways. Club Sports are nominally eligible for space at either the ASA Orientation Midway or the DAPER Athletics Gateway, however ASA will still allocate Midway booths, space permitting. Generally, ASA is able to allocate booth space to all groups that request it, although you may not get multiple tables if you request them. Performance time is more limited and will be allocated to as many groups as feasible.

ASA Webpage on Midways: <http://asa.mit.edu/advertisingpublicity/midway>

ASA Contact Information: [asa-midway@mit.edu](mailto:asa-midway@mit.edu)

## VIII. Other Resources and Privileges

Beyond ASA resources and the other resources mentioned above, there are many other campus resources for groups and some ASA-specific privileges, including:

1. **Use of the MIT name** – seemingly small, but very important. ASA or SOLE can also provide official letters acknowledging your group's recognition to non-MIT entities when requested.
2. **Publicity Resources** – many publicity resources including: ads in The Tech, DomeView slides, LSC slides, drop poster spaces including the Lobby 7 displays, Infinite Corridor projectors and other electronic displays, MIT Homepage spotlight, and more. Many of the resources provide student groups with some amount of free usage. Others are available for a charge, but student groups may be eligible for reduced prices.
3. **Alumni Association** – the Alumni Associate can provide a range of resources for groups interacting with alumni – from setting up donation accounts to providing lists of alumni listing your group to assistance with reunions.
4. **Public Service Center** – beyond the funding opportunities mentioned earlier, the PSC provides project and planning support for service groups or other groups taking on service initiatives.
5. **SIPB & [scripts.mit.edu](http://scripts.mit.edu)** – the Student Information Processing Board (SIPB) runs the [scripts.mit.edu](http://scripts.mit.edu) service that provides several web packages that groups can use with their Athena lockers including MediaWiki, WordPress, and CGI scripts. SIPB also provides a variety of other services that you can learn about at <http://sipb.mit.edu/>.
6. **MIT Audio Visual Services** – MIT AV provides all kinds of services for groups in campus spaces, including microphones, speakers, projectors, and other hardware as well as technical staffing.
7. **Copy Technology Services** – CopyTech has three on-campus copy facilities that provide services from printing 8.5"x11" black and white posters to laminated large format color printed posters.
8. **Environmental Health and Safety** – in addition to performing safety inspections and support for student group offices, EHS also reviews projects and events and can help groups plan for making them safe.
9. **MIT Endicott House** – an MIT-owned conference center in Dedham, MA – about 20 miles from campus.
10. **E33 Productions** – E33 provides a range of services for student groups productions, namely lighting services and stage management, as well as equipment rental.
11. **MIT Disability Services** – DSO can provide assistance and guidance to make events and activities accessible and to obtain services such as translators or sign language interpreters.
12. **Catering** – MIT Dining has several on-campus catering options in addition to standing arrangements between MIT and non-MIT services (allowing you to, among other things, transfer funds or have checks drawn directly instead of paying personally and going through the reimbursement process).