



AHSU

AFRICA HEALTH
SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

AHSU Student Organizations Policy

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1. Policy statement

AHSU is committed to a well-governed, inclusive, and professionally responsible student community. The University therefore establishes a single Student Union as the official umbrella structure for all student representation and all student organizations. This policy defines how the Student Union is constituted, how undergraduates and residents are represented, how international students are supported through a dedicated association, how student activities are coordinated, and how a fixed Student Union budget is allocated, controlled, and reported.

This policy is binding on all students and student-led structures. No student group may operate as an official AHSU student body, association, or club unless recognized under the Student Union and managed in accordance with this policy.

2. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear governance and accountability framework for student representation and student activities across AHSU. The policy is designed to achieve four outcomes.

First, it ensures legitimate and balanced representation for both undergraduates and residents, acknowledging that residents are based in clinical learning environments and may be distributed across training sites.

Second, it ensures that all student organizations operate under a single coordinated structure to improve fairness, reduce duplication, and protect AHSU's professional standards.

Third, it establishes a consistent approach to student projects and events that protects student wellbeing, patient safety, and institutional integrity.

Fourth, it creates a transparent funding and reporting system, including trimester reporting to the Student Welfare Directorate that justifies the use of the fixed Student Union budget.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

A **student** is any person enrolled in an AHSU undergraduate program or residency training program (and any other trainee category explicitly recognized by AHSU as part of the student body for welfare and representation).

The **Student Union** refers to the AHSU Student Union, which is the only formally recognized umbrella student structure at AHSU.

A **Student Union Representative** refers to the elected head of the Student Union who also serves as the student member of the University Senate.

A **recognized student organization** refers to any student club, association, society, cohort group, or interest group that is registered under the Student Union and recognized through the designated AHSU process.

A **ministry** refers to a portfolio within the Student Union that carries defined responsibilities for planning, coordination, documentation, and reporting (for example, welfare, finance and projects, or academic affairs).

4. Scope

This policy applies to all activities conducted by or on behalf of AHSU students, including but not limited to academic societies, cultural groups, sports clubs, resident associations, student welfare initiatives, innovation groups, outreach activities, conferences, and any projects that use AHSU resources, platforms, branding, or learning environments.

This policy applies equally to activities conducted on campus and at clinical training sites. Where training sites have additional rules, those site rules apply in addition to this policy.

5. Governance structure for student affairs

5.1 Coordination

AHSU recognizes one Student Union as the sole umbrella body responsible for coordinating student representation and student activities. All student organizations and all student-led activities under AHSU shall be led and coordinated through the Student Union. This requirement exists to ensure fairness in access to support, consistent standards for professionalism and safety, and clear accountability for the management of funds and activities.

A student group may exist informally for social interaction; however, it may not represent itself as an AHSU student organization, solicit funds as an AHSU group, or organize activities using the AHSU name, logo, official platforms, or institutional venues unless it is recognized under this policy.

5.2 Representation of Students

Because AHSU includes both undergraduates and postgraduates, the Student Union structure must provide formal representation pathways for both groups. Undergraduates shall be represented through undergraduate structures within the Student Union, and residents shall be represented through resident structures that reflect residency programs and training sites. The Student Union must ensure that decisions, plans, and budget allocations consider the needs of both groups.

The Student Union Representative is the formal student leader of AHSU and shall serve as a student member of the University Senate. In that role, the Student Union Representative is expected to present student perspectives responsibly and to provide feedback to students on Senate matters to the extent permitted by confidentiality obligations.

6. Student Union leadership and organs

6.1 Core leadership roles

The Student Union shall have, at minimum, three elected student leadership positions that together support balanced representation: the Student Union Representative, the Undergraduate Representative, and the Residents' Representative.

The Student Union Representative leads the Union, chairs its executive leadership, and ensures compliance with this policy, including budget accountability and trimester reporting. The Undergraduate Representative leads undergraduate engagement and coordination. The Residents' Representative leads resident engagement and ensures resident activities respect clinical schedules, training site rules, and patient safety expectations.

6.2 Student Union organs

The Student Union operates through the General Assembly, the Student Union Cabinet, the Undergraduate Council, the Residents' Council, and the Student Organizations Council. Each organ has a distinct role. The General Assembly provides democratic legitimacy and student-wide deliberation. The Cabinet is responsible for implementation and day-to-day coordination. The Councils gather concerns and coordinate activities for their constituencies. The Student Organizations Council manages recognition, renewals, compliance monitoring, and organizational support.

7. Elections

7.1 Election requirement for Student Union Representative

AHSU requires that the Student Union Representative is elected once every academic year at a General Assembly of students. The election must be conducted transparently, fairly, and in a manner that supports participation for both on-campus students and residents who may be deployed across training sites.

7.2 Standard election calendar

Since the AHSU academic year begins in September, the University adopts the following standard election timeline each year:

From **1 September**, the Student Welfare Directorate ensures an Election Committee is constituted and trained on election standards and dispute handling. Nominations open on **8 September** and close on **15 October**. Candidate eligibility review and publication of the final candidate list must be completed by **20 October**. Campaigning may occur from **21 October** to **30 November**, subject to the campaign code of conduct. Voting is held during the Student Union General Assembly between **1 December** and **5 December**. Results must be published by **7 October**, and leadership handover must be completed by **21 December**.

7.3 Election standards and participation

Candidates must be enrolled students in good standing and must not be under disciplinary suspension. Campaigning must not include harassment, intimidation, bribery, coercion, or misuse of AHSU resources. Voting must be by secret ballot. Remote participation must be enabled for residents and any students located away from the main campus, using a secure method approved by AHSU.

Disputes must be submitted in writing to the Election Committee within seventy-two hours of results being released. Final appeals shall be addressed through the Student Welfare Directorate, which may recommend corrective action where process violations are confirmed.



8. Student Union Cabinet

To ensure clarity of responsibility and continuity between successive student leadership teams, the Student Union shall operate through a ministry structure. Ministries are functional portfolios responsible for planning, coordination, documentation, and reporting in their areas. Each ministry must maintain a workplan and maintain evidence of implementation that supports trimester reporting.

8.1 Required ministries

The Student Union shall include, at minimum, ministries covering:

- Academic affairs
- Student welfare and mental health
- Finance and student projects
- Communications and student engagement
- Sports and culture
- Equity and safeguarding
- Research and career development
- International students affairs.

AHSU may approve additional ministries depending on student needs and capacity. Where the student cohort is small, AHSU may permit a limited consolidation of portfolios; however, the functions must still be performed and reported.

9. International students

AHSU recognizes that international students may face distinct integration, welfare, and administrative challenges. The Student Union shall therefore include a formally recognized International Students Association under its umbrella.

The International Students Association must support international students' integration and representation and must have a defined leadership team. The International Students Association Chair, or an elected international student representative, shall be integrated into the Student Union Cabinet through the international students affairs portfolio to ensure international student needs are reflected in planning, coordination, and reporting. International student initiatives remain subject to the same standards of recognition, events approval, financial governance, and reporting as all other student activities.

10. Recognition and management of student organizations

10.1 Recognition requirement

All student organizations operating under AHSU must be recognized under the Student Union and approved through the designated AHSU process. Recognition is granted for one academic year and must be renewed each year. Recognition may be withdrawn where an organization breaches this policy or fails to meet accountability requirements.

10.2 Governance requirements for recognized organizations

Every recognized organization must have a written constitution and a leadership structure that clearly assigns responsibility. The constitution must define , founding principles, purpose and

provision, membership rules, leadership terms, decision-making procedures, meeting requirements, financial controls, conflict of interest management, disciplinary processes, amendments, and dissolution.

To ensure sustainability and transparency, every recognized organization should have structured documented leadership transition and record keeping policy to maintain smooth activity continuity and knowledge transition.

Every recognized organization must also have an AHSU faculty or staff advisor who supports compliance, professionalism, and safety. The advisor does not run the organization; however, the advisor may require that activities be modified or paused if they create safety, legal, reputational, or professionalism risks.

10.3 Special standards for resident organizations and clinical environments

Resident organizations and any organization operating in clinical training sites must comply with training site rules in addition to this policy. Student activities must not interfere with clinical duties or patient care.

Patient-identifiable information must not be collected, stored, displayed, or shared through student organization activities without formal approvals and legal compliance.

Outreach activities that involve health services require appropriate institutional authorization and professional supervision consistent with applicable regulation and AHSU governance.

11. Coordination of student activities and student projects

All AHSU student activities must be planned through the Student Union calendar and coordination system. This includes activities proposed by undergraduate groups, resident groups, and the International Students Association.

Student projects may be submitted by recognized organizations and by Student Union ministries and councils. Projects must be described clearly with objectives, implementation arrangements, budgets, risk controls, and success indicators. To avoid activity overlap and duplication, recognised student organizations are encouraged to have Inter-organisational collaboration and joint activities.

Where a project requires external guests, off-campus travel, clinical-site engagement, public media coverage, or significant funding, additional review may be required by the Student Welfare Directorate or other designated offices.

Student organizations shall submit periodic written reports of all conducted activities under the endorsement of the Student Union, Student Welfare Directorate, or other respective AHSU offices to the Directorate of Student Welfare.

12. Student Union funding

12.1 Budget

AHSU shall provide the Student Union with a fixed annual amount to support student activities and to fund student projects submitted through recognized associations and Student Union ministries.

The Student Union must manage the allocation of this budget fairly and transparently across undergraduate, residents, and international student priorities.

The Student Union must not create commitments that exceed the available budget.

12.2 Funding decisions and accountability

Funding decisions must be linked to a documented plan and must be supported by proper approvals and receipts.

The Student Union must keep clear records showing which projects were supported, why they were selected, and what outputs were achieved.

Where appropriate, AHSU may require funds to be released in stages rather than in full at the beginning of a project.

12.3 Prohibited practices

Student Union funds and organization funds must not be held in personal accounts.

Expenditure without receipts or without clear linkage to an approved activity is not permitted.

Conflicts of interest must be disclosed and managed, including where a leader has a personal financial interest in a supplier or service provider.

Where misuse is suspected, AHSU may suspend funding, request clarification, conduct audits, and initiate disciplinary processes where appropriate.

13. Reporting

The Student Union must submit a trimester report to the AHSU Student Welfare Directorate three times per academic year. The purpose of this reporting is to justify how the fixed annual budget has been used, demonstrate what activities were delivered, and provide evidence of compliance and value for students.

AHSU adopts the following trimester structure aligned to the September-to-August academic year:

- Trimester 1 covers **1 September to 31 December**, and the report must be submitted by **15 January**.
- Trimester 2 covers **1 January to 30 April**, and the report must be submitted by **15 May**.
- Trimester 3 covers **1 May to 31 August**, and the report must be submitted by **15 September**.

Each trimester report must include a narrative explanation of priorities and decisions, an itemized financial statement, and an evidence pack.

The evidence pack must include receipts, approvals, meeting minutes, attendance lists, and outputs or deliverables produced.

Any changes from approved plans must be explained with justification. Photos may be included only where permitted and must never include patient-identifiable information.

14. Records management

The Student Union must maintain an approved repository for records, including meeting minutes, approval decisions, project documentation, financial records, and trimester reports.

Records must be retained for at least five years or according to AHSU policy, whichever is longer.

Outgoing leaders must complete a structured handover, including transfer of accounts, passwords, financial records, and active project files.

15. Misconduct, complaints, and enforcement

Concerns regarding misconduct, misuse of funds, discrimination, harassment, unsafe activities, abuse of office, non-compliance with approved procedures, or breaches of University or clinical-site rules may be reported to the Student Welfare Directorate, or any other designated AHSU reporting channel.

Where a student organization or ministry fails to comply with this policy, the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix A), financial accountability requirements, or other institutional standards, AHSU may impose graduated measures depending on the nature and seriousness of the breach. These may include a written warning, a corrective action plan, suspension of specific activities, suspension of access to funding, temporary suspension of recognition, removal of leaders from office, or derecognition of the organization.

AHSU shall ensure that concerns are handled in a fair, timely, and confidential manner, consistent with the principles of due process and institutional accountability.

15.1 Reporting and preliminary review

Any complaint, concern, or allegation involving a recognized student organization, ministry, student leader, or member acting in an official capacity may be submitted in writing or through another approved reporting mechanism.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the responsible office shall conduct a preliminary review to determine:

- whether the matter falls under this policy
- whether immediate action is needed to protect safety, property, or institutional integrity
- whether the complaint requires informal resolution, corrective action, or formal investigation

Where necessary, the matter may be referred to another relevant University office in accordance with the nature of the complaint.

15.2 Notice and opportunity to respond

Before any formal decision is taken, the organization, ministry, or individual concerned shall be informed in writing of the concern or allegation and shall be given a reasonable opportunity to respond.

The response may include written explanation, supporting documents, or any other information relevant to the matter under review.

15.3 Review and Determination

Following review of the available information, AHSU Welfare directorate shall determine whether a violation of this policy, the Code of Conduct, financial requirements, or other applicable institutional standards has occurred.

A written outcome shall be issued, setting out:

- The concern that was reviewed
- The findings reached
- Any actions required
- The timeline for compliance, where applicable

15.4 Corrective and disciplinary measures

Where a breach is established, AHSU may impose one or more measures depending on the seriousness, frequency, and impact of the violation. These may include:

- Verbal or written warning
- Mandatory corrective action plan
- Required training or re-orientation
- Closer supervision of organizational activities
- Temporary restriction of specific activities
- Suspension of access to funding
- Removal of a leader from office
- Temporary suspension of recognition
- Derecognition of the organization
- Referral to formal disciplinary procedures under applicable AHSU rules

15.5 Suspension and Derecognition

AHSU may suspend or derecognize a student organization or ministry where there is:

- Repeated non-compliance with this policy or the Code of Conduct
- Serious misconduct by leaders or members acting in an official capacity
- Misuse, misappropriation, or poor accountability of funds
- Unsafe conduct that places students, patients, staff, or the institution at risk
- Failure to submit required constitutions, reports, records, or other mandatory documents
- Conduct that seriously harms the reputation, integrity, or orderly functioning of the University

Suspension may be applied for a defined period and may include restrictions on meetings, events, use of the AHSU name, access to funds, or participation in official activities.



Derecognition shall result in loss of official status under AHSU and withdrawal of the organization's authority to operate, represent itself as an AHSU body, access institutional support, or use the AHSU name, logo, platforms, or facilities.

An organization that has been suspended or derecognized may only resume operations upon satisfying the conditions set by AHSU and receiving formal written approval.

15.6 Records and Follow-up

All complaints, findings, and decisions made under this section shall be documented and retained in accordance with AHSU records management requirements.

Where corrective measures are imposed, the responsible office shall monitor compliance and may require progress updates, supporting evidence, or follow-up meetings as appropriate.

16. Implementation and transition

This policy takes effect on 1 September 2025.

Student groups existing prior to this policy may be given a transition period of up to eight weeks from the effective date to complete recognition requirements, appoint an advisor, and submit constitutions.

During the transition period, only low-risk activities may continue, provided they are coordinated through the Student Union and do not involve fundraising, external sponsorship, clinical-site activities, or public representation as an official AHSU organization without recognition.

16.1 Review of the Policy

This policy shall be reviewed every two years, or earlier where required by changes in law, institutional structure, operational needs, or identified implementation gaps.

The Student Welfare Directorate, in consultation with relevant offices and stakeholders, shall coordinate the review process and submit proposed revisions through the appropriate University approval structures.

Any review of this policy shall consider:

- implementation experience
- reported challenges and complaints
- effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms
- alignment with other University policies
- changing needs of students and student organizations

17. Roles and responsibilities

The Student Welfare Directorate owns this policy and receives trimester reports, oversees the annual election process through the Election Committee, and ensures compliance.

Student Affairs supports recognition processes, student conduct alignment, and administrative coordination.

The Student Union leads coordination of student activities, manages the fixed budget responsibly, supports student organizations, and provides trimester reporting with evidence.

Recognized organizations implement activities within approved limits, keep records, and comply with all requirements.

18. Supporting documents and required templates

The Student Welfare Directorate shall maintain the official templates for recognized organization applications, organization constitutions, project proposals, event approvals (where required), and trimester reporting.

These templates form part of the operational requirements of this policy and may be updated from time to time without changing the policy's intent, provided the updates strengthen governance and accountability.

19. Appendices

Appendix A: [AHSU Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy](#)

Appendix B: [AHSU Student Association Registration Form](#)

Appendix C: [AHSU Student Association Activity and Financial Reporting Form](#)

20. Approval and signatures

Names	Role	Signature	Date
Dr Belise Uwurukundo	Registrar		30 December 2024
Dr. Edgar Kalimba	Dean of the School of Medicine		31 December 2024
Dr. Zerihun Abebe	Vice Chancellor		31 December 2024

