



# Special Olympics College Club Starter Guide





Thank you for your interest in starting a Special Olympics College Club on campus! This starter guide was designed to help you walk through the process of starting a Special Olympics College Club and everything you need to know to get up and running. Whether this is your first time being involved with Special Olympics or you are looking for ways to further your involvement, we hope this guide will help you register Special Olympics as an official club on campus and spark some news ideas!

To learn more about Special Olympics College Clubs, and to access more resources, please visit the Special Olympics College club site: [www.specialolympics.org/socollege](http://www.specialolympics.org/socollege)

Also, feel free to reach out at any time at [socollege@specialolympics.org](mailto:socollege@specialolympics.org). We are here to help!

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You may be wondering, what exactly is a Special Olympics College Club? Essentially, a Special Olympics College Club functions as an official club on campus and connects college students and individuals with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics athletes) through sport to build friendships and build campuses of respect and inclusion.

The club works to achieve three main components: Unified Sports®, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Whole School Engagement.

### **Special Olympics Unified Sports®**

Special Olympics Unified Sports joins students and Special Olympics athletes on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. In the context of a Special Olympics College Club, Unified Partners are college students without intellectual disabilities playing with Special Olympics athletes (individuals with an intellectual disability). At many schools Unified Sports functions as an intramural or club sport on campus, and at advanced levels this becomes tournaments with other local Special Olympics College Clubs.

### **Inclusive Youth Leadership**

A Special Olympics College Club functions as an officially registered student-led club on campus, where students meet multiple times a month to plan events. This club is most effective when Special Olympics athletes are invited to become members. Students plan and organize all Special Olympics events on campus.

### **Whole Campus Engagement**

Awareness Campaigns bring the whole college community together. Pledge signing drives, like Spread the Word to End the Word®, and rallies for respect can engage the whole student body. All students can be fans in the stands at local games, cheering on the participants. Whole School Engagement is a great entry point to introduce more students to the Special Olympics movement.

Now that we have this basic information out of the way, let's get started!



## 7 Steps to Starting a Special Olympics College Club

The process of starting an official club on campus can be daunting, but this checklist can help you get moving in the right direction. Remember we are always here to help!

- 1. REGISTER ON THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS COLLEGE CLUB WEBSITE**
  - ✓ Visit the Special Olympics College Club site and complete the [application](#)
- 2. CONNECT WITH YOUR SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATE PROGRAM**
  - ✓ Formalize a relationship with the state Special Olympics Program
  - ✓ If assistance is needed connecting with the local program, use the [Special Olympics Program Locator](#) or email [socollege@specialolympics.org](mailto:socollege@specialolympics.org)
- 3. CONTACT YOUR STUDENT ACTIVITIES OFFICE**
  - ✓ The Student Activities Office will be able to assist in the process of becoming a registered student organization on campus
- 4. ESTABLISH AN EXECUTIVE BOARD**
  - ✓ Fill the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to help with the planning and implementation of the club
- 5. GET OTHERS INVOLVED AND RAISE AWARENESS ON CAMPUS**
  - ✓ Set up an informational table on campus to raise awareness
  - ✓ Host a general interest meeting
  - ✓ Connect with other clubs/organizations on campus
- 6. DECIDE WHAT KIND OF EVENT(S) TO HOST**
  - ✓ Download and review the [Special Olympics College Club Event Guide](#)
  - ✓ Start planning events
- 7. RESOURCES**
  - ✓ Use others as a resource – don't be afraid to collaborate with other Special Olympics College Clubs nearby
  - ✓ Connect with Special Olympics online for additional resources

The next few pages will provide detailed information on all these steps.



## Step 1, 2 and 3: Getting started

The first step to becoming a Special Olympics College Club is to fill out the online application. This application indicates to Special Olympics that you would like to start a club on campus. Within one week of filling out the online application, a Special Olympics Staff member will email you and help you through the rest of the process.

### Contacting the local Special Olympics Program

After completing the online application, the next step is to get in contact with your local state Program staff. They will be the best person to work with moving forward. Stay in communication with the state Special Olympics Program, as they will be very valuable in helping the club host events and find different opportunities to get involved on campus. If you need help connecting with your state Program staff, email [socollege@specialolympics.org](mailto:socollege@specialolympics.org).

### Student Activities Office

It is important to talk to the Student Activities Office on campus to find out the necessary steps to become a registered student organization. The steps for each college may be different, but overall the process is similar.

When registering the club, they may ask for the name of the club and logo. They may also ask for proof of permission to use the name Special Olympics and any associated logos. By completing the first two steps of filling out the online application and contacting the local Special Olympics Program, it should be relatively easy to provide proof of approval.

To help ensure clubs are in alignment with Special Olympics branding guidelines and avoid possible trademark issues, please follow the guidelines below.

### Club Name

Correct Name-

Special Olympics College Club at [College/University Name]

Special Olympics Club at [College/University Name]

Incorrect name-

SO College at [College/University Name]

[College/University Name] Special Olympics College

{College/University name} Special Olympics

Special Olympics [College/University name]



## Logo

To obtain the Special Olympics logo, contact the state Program for all guidelines associated with logo usage.

## Constitution

The Student Activities Office on campus may also require the club to have a constitution. A constitution provides the foundation and guidelines for how the club will function. If assistance is needed creating a constitution, there is a sample constitution available for download online under the Special Olympics College [Resources page](#).

## Step 4: Building The Team

Running a Special Olympics College Club is a lot like playing a team sport. A well-run club requires a team of leaders working together to achieve a common goal. Generally, a club will have an executive board consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Identify the needs of the club as a team and add additional positions where you see fit.

For a well-rounded club, recruit students from various majors. For example, look for a student majoring in finance or accounting to be the Treasurer. Need help getting the club recognized on campus or help managing social media? Recruit a student who is majoring in marketing. This is a great way to help the organization thrive and it also allows students to receive valuable experience.

## Executive Positions

### President

Roles/Responsibilities: Oversees chapter logistics and all executive board positions; organizes, plans and runs meetings; acts as point of contact for the Special Olympics state Program, as well as for the school and faculty advisor; in charge of submitting all paperwork to the school and the local/national Special Olympics office when necessary. Time Commitment. 7-10 hours/week

### Vice-President

Roles/Responsibilities: Supports the chapter president; runs meetings if the president is unable to attend; can step in as point of contact for the Special Olympics state Program if the president is unable to; assists in securing rooms and venues for chapter meetings/events. Time Commitment. 3-5 hours/week

### Secretary

Roles/Responsibilities: Keeps detailed minutes from each meeting and records member attendance; emails chapter minutes 24-48 hours after all meetings; distributes chapter announcements and reminders, executive board and committee meetings and events. Time Commitment. 2-3 hours/week



### **Treasurer**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Establishes and maintains chapter's bank account; keeps records of all expenses and deposits; prepares event budgets; submits club's accounting spreadsheet and receipts to local Special Olympics state office and national office when necessary. Time Commitment. 1-2 hours/week

## **Additional Positions**

After filling the 4 positions outlined above, it may be useful to expand the executive board and add the positions below or any additional ones that may be helpful.

### **Fundraising Chair**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Plans and executes all of the chapter's fundraising events; contacts clubs and organizations to partner with on events. Time Commitment. 1-2 hours/week

### **Marketing Chair**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Posts regularly throughout the week on the chapter's social media account; designs marketing materials and submits all design proofs to local Special Olympics office for approval; contacts local and campus media outlets to secure coverage for the club's events. Time Commitment. 2-3 hours/week

### **Recruitment Chair**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Engages with students who express interest in joining the club; communicates with Special Olympics athletes for participation in upcoming events; informs students of upcoming meetings and events; works with marketing chair to promote the chapter at club/activity fairs; reaches out to clubs and organizations to inform them about meetings and events. Time Commitment. 1-2 hours/week

### **Greek Liaison Chair**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Establishes relationships with fraternities and sororities to co-sponsor chapter events; works with recruitment chair to recruit coaches, volunteers, and Unified Partners from various fraternities and sororities; serves as liaison to whose national philanthropy is Special Olympics such as Phi Sigma Kappa, Alpha Sigma Alpha, Sigma Tau Gamma, and Alpha Phi Omega. Time Commitment. 1-2 hours/week

### **Awareness Chair**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Plans and executes the chapter's awareness events such as Spread the Word to End the Word®; works with other officers to ensure awareness is incorporated into all events. Time Commitment. 1-2 hours/week

### **Volunteer Chair**

**Roles/Responsibilities:** Engages with clubs and organizations to participate in volunteer opportunities; works in collaboration with the Greek Liaison to recruit support from fraternities and sororities; ensures events have the appropriate amount of volunteers and keep a record of volunteers. Time Commitment. 1-2 hours/week



## Step 5: Recruiting Others

Once the club has been approved and the executive board is in place, it is time to begin recruiting other students. College campuses are full of students looking to get involved, but it is important to get the word out about the new club. Below is a quick Q&A to help:

### How do I recruit students to join?

One of the easiest ways to get other students involved is to set-up a table on campus to raise awareness. Check to see if your campus has an involvement fair during the spring or fall semester where the club can set up a table.

Talk to various professors and departments to see if they will let you talk to their class about the Special Olympics College Club on campus. Special Education Departments are a great way to find students who may be passionate about Special Olympics, but also reach out to other departments. Having students from various majors not only increases the size of the club, but it can really help ensure there is a well-rounded group of students.

Another way to recruit Unified Partners is by talking to the recreation department. By reaching out to the recreation department, it helps form a relationship for potential collaborative events and they are also a potential source for Unified Partners.

### How do I recruit Special Olympics athletes to participate in Unified Sports or club events?

Talk with the local Special Olympics Program about local Special Olympics athletes that may be interested.

Check with the Student Activities Office to see if there are other organizations on campus that promote inclusion and acceptance for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The organization might know athletes who would be interested in joining. Also, talk with the Office of Disability Services on campus. They may be able to provide contact information for other students or organizations on and off campus.

## Collaboration

Engage with other clubs and organizations on campus to grow and expand the Special Olympics College Club. This is a great way to increase the club's visibility and recruit new members, volunteers, coaches, and Unified Partners. Below is a list of organizations/groups that already have a national partnership with Special Olympics. They will be a great place to start because the relationship and shared goals have already been determined and outlined at the national level.



## NCAA Division III Partnership

Since 2011, Special Olympics has partnered with NCAA D.III schools to improve the lives of Special Olympics athletes through their involvement with Division III student-athletes and to foster a mutual learning experience between Division III student-athlete and Special Olympics athletes. If your school is a part of D.III athletics, make sure to connect with the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) to see how you can work together on Special Olympics opportunities in the future.

## Fraternity and Sorority

Many fraternities and sororities across the country donate their time, resources, and money to the Special Olympics movement. These fraternities and sororities host events/fundraisers, coach, volunteer, and bring awareness on campus. In fact, four Greek organizations have chosen Special Olympics as their national philanthropy: Phi Sigma Kappa, Alpha Sigma Alpha, Sigma Tau Gamma, and Alpha Phi Omega

- To see if there is a Phi Sigma Kappa chapter on your campus, visit <http://www.phisigmakappa.org/special-olympics>
- To see if there is an Alpha Sigma Alpha chapter on your campus, visit <https://www.alphasigmaalpha.org/about-us/service-giving/special-olympics/>
- To see if there is a Sigma Tau Gamma chapter on your campus, visit <https://websites.omegafi.com/omegaws/sigmataugamma/>
- To see if there is a Alpha Phi Omega chapter on your campus, visit <http://www.apo.org/Home>

## National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association

Since 2015, Special Olympics and the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association ([NIRSA](#)) have formed a partnership aimed at bringing Unified Sports to more college campuses; to offer students and participants a platform to learn the values of inclusion through experiential sports; to provide meaningful student-learning opportunities for college students and encourage them to become leaders within Special Olympics; and to provide Special Olympics athletes a forum to experience the physical and social benefits gained through ongoing interaction with peers.

Contact the school's recreation department to see how they can help bring Unified Sports Intramurals to campus. Below is information and tips on how to work with the recreation department on campus. If you do not know who to contact at your recreation center:

- Search [name of the university] campus recreation example: Duke University campus recreation
- Find the contact information for individuals with the following titles:
  - Intramural Coordinator
  - Club Sport Coordinator
  - Director of Recreation
- Contact the individual(s) at the recreation department and introduce yourself as a member of the Special Olympics Club on campus. Make sure to note about the national partnership between NIRSA and Special Olympics
- Request a meeting with members of the recreation department.

If there is difficulty connecting to the recreation department on campus, contact Special Olympics and they will help make the connection.



## Step 6: Start Planning Events

Once the club is officially established on campus and more students are on board, it is time to start planning events. It is important to not wait too long after the initial informational meeting to host an event. The longer the club waits, the more likely it is to lose a student's interest.

For event ideas and how to plan your first event, download and review the [Special Olympics College Club Event Guide](#).

If the club has questions or needs help at any point throughout the process, there are numerous tools and resources available. Below are ways to connect with the Special Olympics national office and a network of students nationwide.

## Step 7: Online Community & Resources

There are numerous tools and resources available online that can help take the club to the next level. If the club is ever stuck or looking for inspiration, be sure to check out Special Olympics' website. This go-to site will provide the club all the necessary tools and knowledge to succeed.

Lastly, don't forget to connect with others and share your club's accomplishments on social media. Most importantly, be sure to collaborate with other clubs to gather ideas and share best practices. If you face any issues or problems, there is likely another club that can offer advice.

### Special Olympics website

[www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

Read the latest information on the Special Olympics movement, use the Program locator to contact the state office, read inspirational stories, and download useful resources such as coaches' guides and rules.

### Special Olympics College website

[www.specialolympics.org/socollege](http://www.specialolympics.org/socollege)

Visit to learn more about ways to get involved with Special Olympics at the college level and to gather more information on how to connect with other clubs and organizations.

### Special Olympics College Resources

<http://resources.specialolympics.org>

Visit to download the Special Olympics College Club Event Guide, sample constitution and other great resources to help the club succeed.



## Connect with us!



For the latest Special Olympics updates and news visit [www.facebook.com/specialolympics](http://www.facebook.com/specialolympics)



Follow us on Twitter **@specialolympics**



Tag **@specialolympics** and include **#PlayUnified** in event photo captions on Instagram



Follow Special Olympics (specialolympics) on Snapchat

## Connect with other clubs!

Many of the other Special Olympics College clubs are on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Use the Special Olympics College Club locator to connect with other clubs.

Special Olympics College Clubs are divided into 4 regions (North, South, East and West). Staying in touch with the schools in your region is a great way to gather ideas, collaborate, and strengthen the club.

## Email Us!

Have questions or would like more information? Email us at [socollege@specialolympics.org](mailto:socollege@specialolympics.org)