

Frequently Asked Questions

Program Structure and Requirements

What is Bridge to Brotherhood?

Bridge to Brotherhood is Alpha Kappa Psi's new pledge education program. It is a five to eight-week program comprised of six educational modules, as well as Induction, the Fraternal Exam, Mid-Term Interview, Court of Honor Presentation, Initiation, and New Brother Orientation.

Over the course of Alpha Kappa Psi's pledge education program, pledges are introduced to the key skills and practices of the Fraternity. Bridge to Brotherhood is designed to target areas of personal and professional development regarding how to become a principled business leader, as well as build an awareness and appreciation for the history, values, and vision of Alpha Kappa Psi. Through the program, Alpha Kappa Psi also aims to build a strong sense of community and friendship within the pledge class and establish bonds with members of the chapter to foster a sense of belonging within the organization.

What are the requirements of the program?

The requirements for the pledge process include:

- Attending the educational modules of the pledge class
- Completing a personal development plan
- Creating a résumé
- Conducting an industry interview
- Completing the Mid-Term Interview
- Presenting the Court of Honor Presentation
- Passing the Fraternal Exam with at least a 76%
- Recite the Anthem and Creed with a member of the pledge education committee

What is the time commitment of the program?

For the five to nine weeks of pledging, the program should require no more than five (5) hours a week of time in total, including meetings, elective attendance, and preparation, as well as time spent interviewing and networking with brothers. As everyone requires a different amount of preparation, time spent studying for the Fraternal Exam may be in excess of this time frame.

Why are we changing pledge education?

Alpha Kappa Psi is constantly reviewing its programs and events to ensure the quality of the programming and education is suiting the needs of its members and keeping up with the changing needs of higher education and corporate industry. As the start of the member experience, pledge education is no exception.

To enhance the overall member experience and ensure all student members are provided with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to stay competitive in the workplace and ever-changing higher education environment, the Fraternity Board of Directors instructed the Heritage Center and Management Team to review Alpha Kappa Psi's pledge education program after the ratification of a resolution at 2015 Convention. Fraternity staff and volunteers spent nearly two years researching and developing the program before piloting for a year to get additional feedback on implementation.

Can the chapter ask pledges to provide written reflection or updates about their process to the chapter or Fraternity educator?

While it is important for pledges to continually reflect on what they have learned, it is not their responsibility to report it to the chapter. The chapter should not require any additional writing

assignments outside those already included in the program requirements or module activities. The Fraternity educator should connect with the pledge class consistently to update them on progress and any issues that arise.

How do we introduce the pledges to our specific chapter operations?

Chapter operations are demonstrated to the pledges through a few different points in the process. Before the pledge process, members should be highlighting chapter events, expectations and operations during recruitment, and then reviewing the expectations at Induction so they are not a surprise after Initiation. During Module 3, pledges will walk through a mock chapter meeting, so Fraternity educators should use this time to incorporate their chapter specific standing rules. At the end of the process in New Brother Orientation, chapters will share any remaining pieces of chapter operations that are essential for members to know prior to their first member meeting. Through the elective bank, chapters also can select a number of electives related to chapter operations including joining chapter committees, attending chapter events, and chapter history.

How can we use chapter events to integrate the pledges with the brotherhood?

Pledges should be invited to events the chapter hosts. The chapter is already putting a great deal of effort into hosting the events, whether brotherhood, professional development, service, fundraising, or otherwise. Not only will the chapter have greater attendance by expanding its reach, but the pledges will start familiarizing themselves with chapter activities and members. Chapters can also consider allowing pledges to participate on the chapter committees. This provides another avenue for pledges to excel and get a head start on chapter participation. They may have great ideas and fresh perspectives to share with the chapter. While chapter events and committee participation are great opportunities for the pledges to take advantage of, they cannot be required.

What leadership opportunities exist in the program for the pledges?

Pledges can take on leadership opportunities through project lead roles. Certain elective options require a number of project leads to assist with the planning and management of the events, and additionally each group for the Court of Honor presentation requires a project lead to manage the group's progress. Therefore, the number of leadership roles available depends on the size of the pledge class and elective options selected by the chapter.

Are there any chapter events or activities the pledges are not able to attend?

Pledges are not able to attend chapter meetings, as they have not yet been initiated. Meetings are reserved for members in good standing to discuss official Fraternity business. All other events should be open to pledges to encourage familiarization with chapter activities and members.

What is the benefit of this program?

For pledges, the benefit of the program is the educational content and the integration to the Brotherhood. Through the program, pledges are introduced to several key skills the Fraternity researched and noted as important to excelling the workforce. The specific activities in the educational modules and elective activities introduce the key skills and professional development so pledges have a strong foundation to build upon in membership. In addition to the skill development, pledges begin to develop a fraternal network through engaging with members of the chapter, participating in chapter events, and developing personal connections with the Brotherhood.

For chapters, the benefit of the program is more flexibility in other chapter programming. As chapter officers no longer need to reinvent the wheel for each new pledge class, members have the time and capacity to dedicate more energy into their chapter events outside of pledging. This

will enhance the overall experience for the entire brotherhood. With more time dedicated to the growth and development of all members, a stronger, more engaged brotherhood will emerge.

Reporting

What if we do not submit the Program Syllabus by the deadline?

If the Fraternity educator does not submit the Program Syllabus by the deadline, the chapter is expected to complete the base program without the addition of any chapter-specific requirements or electives. The Fraternity educator still must submit the Program Syllabus but is no longer able to select electives. Therefore, it is important to ensure the Fraternity educator knows the deadlines to maximize the options for the upcoming pledge class. If there are extenuating circumstances that will not allow you to complete the Program Syllabus on time, reach out to your chapter educational resource coordinator for assistance.

Does our Chapter Advisor need to review the Program Syllabus before it's submitted?

It is a best practice to discuss the Program Syllabus with your chapter advisor before submission. Having a conversation allows you to discuss your reasoning behind the chosen length of program and electives, as well as gives you the opportunity to receive feedback before submission.

Can the chapter make edits to our syllabus after it is submitted? Or after it is approved?

If the Program Syllabus needs revised after submission due to unexpected circumstances such as inclement weather, or the chapter sees a need to change their schedule or electives for any reason, reach out to your chapter educational resource coordinator to discuss options and determine the best solution.

What if the chapter do not submit pledges or initiates on time?

Reporting your pledges after induction and the new members after initiation are the first steps in triggering a series of administrative items, so it is important Fraternity educators and/VP Membership complete these processes per the requirements. Delaying submission could cause the chapter to not receive program materials, certificates, and pins in a timely manner.

What if the chapter is having technical issues with submitting the reports?

If the Fraternity educator experiences issues with ChapterSpot or SmarterSelect should report the issue to the [chapter educational resource coordinator](#).

Educational Modules

In what order does the chapter have to facilitate the program?

The modules and rituals must be completed in order according to the provided timeline: Induction, Module 1, Module 2, Module 3, Module 4, Mid-Term Interview, Module 5, Module 6, Court of Honor, Initiation. The Fraternal Exam and oral recitations of the anthem and creed must be administered at least two weeks prior to Court of Honor. New Brother Orientation should occur within one week of Initiation when possible, but at minimum prior to the first chapter meeting new members will be attending. All electives should occur between Induction and Court of Honor.

What if the chapter needs to reorganize the meetings due to the university calendar?

The modules and rituals must be executed in the prescribed order. The suggested schedules do not factor in university calendars, and Fraternity educators should use their best judgement when scheduling the modules and electives. You should aim to have no more than two meetings a week, unless university calendars do not allow or it is in the best interest for the pledge class. Sometimes an extenuating circumstance causes meetings and events to be cancelled, such as illness, weather, or otherwise. Should a change in the university or chapter schedule affect a

pledge meeting after the schedule is set and reported, the chapter should readjust the calendar as needed. The chapter should not skip a module, but instead will need to add an additional meeting or extend the process to make up for the missed meeting. In this instance, the chapter should move forward with extending the process or accommodating an additional meeting date and time and inform the [chapter educational resource coordinator](#) of the delay. Should a university closure affect the chapter for an extended period of time, the resource coordinator can provide guidance on how to handle its effect on the pledge process.

What should I do if the chapter does not follow the prescribed lesson plans?

As the lesson plans are part of the program, not following the prescribed lesson plans would mean the chapter is in violation of the Board of Directors' approved pledge education program. This could result in missing the minimum standard and placing the chapter on show cause. This means the chapter is ineligible for Fraternity awards, and failure to correct the discrepancies could result in action by the Judiciary Committee. As the advisor, it is important to ensure your chapter and its officers understand the lesson plans are not to be added to or altered.

What if the chapter follows the lessons out of order?

The order of the modules was intentionally designed to build off one another and provide the knowledge pledges need in a specific timeframe. If the chapter is not following the correct order, you should first find out why the change was made. Explain that the order is not changeable, and if it was simply an oversight, it can be corrected moving forward. If there is a concern about the content, contact Alpha Kappa Psi's [education department](#).

What if we are not able to complete the activities in the suggested time?

The activity times are estimations based on how long the activities and discussions should take. The Fraternity educator should do his or her best to stick to the timeframe, but if an activity runs over, use your discretion on continuing the conversation for the sake of the pledges' learning versus cutting the activity short. To maintain the one-hour length of meetings, if the facilitator opts to continue an activity or discussion, he or she may need to amend the allotted time for other activities later in the meeting. If an activity is taking drastically shorter or longer than prescribed, the facilitator should both take note of it to pass along to Alpha Kappa Psi's [education department](#) and review the execution of the event to see where you could have expanded or shortened the activity.

Rituals

How are rituals utilized in the program?

During the program, pledges go through a number of Fraternity rituals based in Fraternity history and practice professional development skills gained from the pledge program. The first ritual, Induction, signifies pledges have been accepted into the pledge program. About half-way through the program, pledges go through the Mid-Term Interview. This is a professional interview that allows pledges the ability to practice interviewing skills in a low-stress environment, and be provided with feedback on their performances. The Court of Honor Presentation is the last ritual prior to Initiation where the pledge class is split into groups to provide a reflective presentation on their experiences in the pledge program.

What should I do if the chapter does not follow the ritual?

The rituals of Alpha Kappa Psi are standard across the Fraternity and are not to be amended or redacted in any way. Should you discover the chapter is not following the ritual per Fraternity guidelines, or is conducting additional rituals, contact the chapter to end the activities immediately and consult your Regional Director and Chapter Educational Resource Coordinator for assistance.

What if the chapter wants to ask a question not included in the Ritual Question Bank?

Asking questions outside of the Question Bank (found in the Facilitator Guide) creates a potential risk. The questions in the Ritual Question Bank were vetted and approved by the Fraternity, but questions outside of the Question Bank may be deemed inappropriate. Depending on what the chapter wants to ask, there is likely a question in the bank that is similar and will allow the pledge to address a similar experience. As the Executive Panel asks clarifying or follow-up questions based on the pledge's answer, panelists need to be conscious of their wording and how the question could be perceived.

How should the chapter provide feedback to the pledges?

At both the Mid-Term Interview and Court of Honor Presentation, the program has rubric sheets for the Executive Panel to provide written feedback to the pledges. The rubrics cover both soft skills of their performance as well as their preparation and content.

What is the involvement of the brothers during the rituals?

During both the Mid-Term Interview and the Court of Honor Presentation, the brothers are present and serve on the interview panels. During the Court of Honor Presentation, there should still be a panel to ask questions of the group after the presentation. Depending on the size of the chapter and pledge class, chapters should consider holding multiple interview and presentation rooms to involve more brothers in the panels and expedite the process.

Electives and Modifications

Are pledges required to complete the electives?

Yes, any electives indicated on the Program Syllabus are included as chapter-specific requirements, provided they follow all Fraternity guidelines. Should a pledge not be able to complete an elective for any reason, the chapter should provide accommodations.

What if the chapter wants to select electives that push them past the allowed number of credit hours for the program length?

The number of credit hours assigned to each elective was carefully selected based on the amount of time each activity should take. The number of credit hours allowed per program length was derived from the estimated amount of time a pledge should be spending on AKPsi activities and assignments per week, and chapters are not able to go beyond that number. Chapters need to carefully select the electives to ensure they do not go over the number of credit hours allowed. If the chapter submits a Program Syllabus with more credit hours than prescribed, the Heritage Center staff will follow up with you and the chapter to amend the selections.

What is the policy on overnight retreats and what is the process?

If a chapter wishes to hold an overnight retreat for the pledge class, it must first be approved by the Heritage Center. The overnight retreat needs to be indicated on the Program Syllabus, and the Fraternity educator will need to submit the Pledge Retreat Approval Form at least one month prior to the anticipated event. Information in this form includes the anticipated date, time, and location, as well as a complete agenda for the event. If the agenda is approved, the chapter will move into the next stage, where they will need to work with the Regional Director to find an approved designee to attend the duration of the event. This should be a Fraternity volunteer whenever possible. On the approval form, chapters will be asked to provide the name and contact for an individual they would like to serve this role and the Regional Director will then conduct an interview to determine eligibility and approval. No contracts should be signed until after an agenda has been approved. The purpose of pledge retreats should solely be for teambuilding and

relationship building, and the only attendees of the event should be the pledge class, pledge education committee, and approved designee, unless pre-approved by the Regional Director.

Can a chapter choose to hold additional electives not submitted in the Program Syllabus, as long as they are not required?

All activities and events designed for the pledge class should be submitted on the Program Syllabus and fit within the prescribed number of credit hours. Pledges can and should be invited to other events the chapter is holding, but the chapter should not plan additional optional electives specifically for the pledge class.

What if the chapter wants to do an event or activity that is not included in the Elective Bank?

Chapters can provide feedback and submit ideas for enhancements at the end of each term. The program is reviewed on an annual basis, including the proposed suggestions, to ensure the Fraternity is still meeting the needs of its chapters and incoming members.

What should I do if the chapter conducts additional activities beyond the Program Syllabus?

Submitting the Program Syllabus is the chapter's agreement to follow the program as submitted. If you become aware the chapter is not following the program it reported, either by doing different or additional activities, it is important to get as much information from the chapter on what it is doing and for what purpose. If the chapter needs to alter the schedule, changes must be reported to the [chapter educational resource coordinator](#), who will then work with the chapter to make necessary accommodations. If the chapter is not following the program for other reasons, contact your regional director and [chapter educational resource coordinator](#) for assistance. This could result in missing the minimum standard and placing the chapter on show cause. Show cause would mean the chapter is ineligible for Fraternity awards, and failure to correct the discrepancies may result in action by the Judiciary Committee.

What should I do if the chapter is not following the guidelines for the selected electives?

The elective guidelines are provided for the chapter's protection. If a chapter is not following the guidelines, it may be breaking Fraternity policies, or even local, university or federal policies. This could result in missing the minimum standard and placing the chapter on show cause. Show cause would mean the chapter is ineligible for Fraternity awards, and failure to correct the discrepancies may result in action by the Judiciary Committee. If you find out the chapter is not following the guidelines, it is important to first get as much information from the chapter on what it is doing and for what purpose. Then contact your regional director and [chapter educational resource coordinator](#) for guidance. If the chapter simply does not understand the guidelines it can be corrected, and if the chapter is choosing to conduct events outside the guidelines, you and your Regional Director can work together to coach the chapter.

Do the Formal and Informal Interviews use up any Elective credits?

No. All chapters can select an Interview option without using any of their Elective credits.

If the chapter has less brothers than the number of Interviews allowed, are we able to require alumni interviews to make up the difference?

No. The purpose of the Brother Interviews, both formal and informal, are to network with the current collegiate brotherhood. There is an elective available for conducting Interviews with alumni members should the chapter choose that option.

Fraternals Exam and Chapter History

How does the program incorporate chapter and fraternal history?

To demonstrate knowledge of the Fraternity, all pledges are required to pass the Fraternal Exam. This online exam tests their knowledge of Fraternity history, structure, and policies. Pledges are also asked to recite the anthem and creed to a member of the pledge education committee. There is a study guide, practice quizzes, and additional study materials available as study tools. Pledges will not be required, however, to use any of the quizzes or materials, and they can prepare using their study method of choice.

When providing pledges the Fraternal Exam Study Guide, chapters should also include information on local chapter history and information. While it will not appear on the Fraternal Exam, pledges will be expected to know the information and could be asked about it during a ritual. The chapter may also choose an elective activity for a deeper dive into a specific chapter topic or subject.

Can the chapter use the quizzes during meetings or ask pledges to report their scores?

The quizzes provided are designed as practice for the pledges to use as a study tool only. Chapters should not be adding quizzes as a required part of a pledge meeting, nor asking pledges to take them on their own and report their scores. Just as each student studies differently to prepare for exams in class, pledges should be able to study and prepare as they need for the Fraternal Exam. The only score which impacts membership is the Fraternal Exam, and as adults, the chapter should not be monitoring their study progress.

How does the chapter administer the exam?

The Fraternal exam must be proctored by the pledge education team in a computer lab or room where each pledge has access to his or her own computer. The pledge education team will provide the password to take the exam when everyone is ready. It should be noted up front that upon completion, pledges should share their score with the pledge education team before exiting the web browser as scores will not be sent to the Fraternity educators.

Can the chapter get the scores after the pledges take the exam?

Currently, scores cannot be provided to the chapter. Pledges will need to be sure to not close out of their browser before sharing their score with a member of the pledge education committee.

Chapter Concerns

What opportunities exist for members to engage in the pledge program?

Each pledge will be assigned a big brother to serve as their mentor throughout the program. Members in good standing who have the time commitment to serve as a role model and guide throughout the process can fulfill this role. There are specific points throughout the process where Big/Little pairs are expected to meet, but beyond that relationships can be determined by each individual pair. There is no expectation that gifts are provided to either big brothers or little brothers at any point in the process, but can be given if desired.

Additionally, as the pledges will be future members of the chapter, all pledges, current members and alumni are encouraged to interact and start building relationships from the moment they begin the process. Chapters can add in a Formal or Informal Interview requirement to assist in this process, though the number of interviews is limited based on the length of the program. To maximize relationship building and engagement with pledges, members should reach out and interact freely with pledges based on common interests and the desire to build a fraternal network.

What should the chapter do if brothers don't feel like they know the pledges?

While there are several electives that will allow the chapter to bring the pledge class and brotherhood together, the best way to increase interaction is organically. While it is important the

pledge class tries to attend chapter events and reaches out to get to know brothers, the brothers also need to make the effort to reach out to the pledges. It should not be solely on the pledge class to develop a relationship with the chapter. Reaching out to someone new can be intimidating, especially if they are seeking membership, so a brother reaching out to a pledge can help build confidence and show pledges the culture of the brotherhood. As future members of the chapter, the brothers should want to get to know the pledge class and should take the time to extend a hand. At the end of the process, if brothers feel they do not know the members of the pledge class, it is important to consider what effort they made to build the relationship.

The chapter thinks Bridge is too easy/not strenuous enough for the pledges, what can they do?

Bridge to Brotherhood is designed to target areas of personal and professional development regarding how to become a principled business leader, as well as build an awareness and appreciation for the history, values, and vision of Alpha Kappa Psi. Pledge education should build and develop individuals, not wear them down. It is not meant to be strenuous, but instead should allow pledges to feel prepared for their role as brother. Additionally, pledge's education does not end when they become initiated, and they should continue their growth and development throughout their time as a member of the organization. The pledge program is designed to be an introduction which is built upon as pledges become members and they continue in the chapter.

How can the chapter ensure the quality of members with the new pledge process?

During recruitment, your chapter should hold sufficient opportunities to meet all potential new members. Through these interactions, brothers should get to know the potential new members well enough to understand their intentions for joining and if they will uphold the values of our Fraternity.

It is important to remember individuals joining our organization do not need to have all the qualities of a strong member to start, but merely the desire and drive to becoming a principled business leader. The path to principled business leadership does not end when you complete the pledge process. The quality of membership stems from the ability of chapters to provide continual learning and growth opportunities throughout the entire membership experience. As always, a chapter should not offer bids to individuals which they are not confident will positively represent the Fraternity, but those individuals who demonstrate the qualities we aspire to be as brothers of Alpha Kappa Psi.

How will Bridge to Brotherhood affect the recruitment process?

The general way that you recruit members should not be impacted by this change. If your chapter sold your pledge program as a key feature, you will be able to do the same with the new program. Student chapters should still hold informational sessions and events to promote the chapter as they always have, and they will still need to follow all risk management policies. Chapters should be open about the pledge process and its expectations, but should not just aim to sell the benefits of pledging. Chapters should focus its efforts on selling the benefits of membership in the chapter and Fraternity.

Pledge Removal Process

What if a pledge wants to drop or the chapter find them not upholding our values?

Alpha Kappa Psi understands that sometimes what looks like a good fit may not be so. Therefore, pledges may choose to drop at any time if they are not receiving the anticipated benefits. If it is more than 10 days from their Induction date, however, they will not receive a refund of the pledge fees paid to the Heritage Center. If the chapter finds a pledge is not upholding the values of the Fraternity, removing a pledge should not be the first instinct. Members must do their due diligence

in educating and coaching the individual. The Regional Management Team should always be consulted on the proper procedure to remove a pledge from the process.

When can the chapter drop pledges?

There are sometimes instances when a pledge does not perform according to expectations or exhibits behavior that is not tolerated in the organization. Whereas chapters can remove a pledge at any time by following the proper voting procedures, it is a best practice to enact an Improvement Plan before moving for a vote to remove the candidate from pledging. Following the Improvement Plan process closely aligns with the feedback cycle in the professional world, which will set up both the pledges and chapter for greater success in focusing on the pledge's development.

At the first indication of a concern, it should be determined if it is related to a performance issue which can be addressed. At no point should a pledge be removed for something outside of their control (such as an introverted personality or having too quiet of a voice), or without the pledge first being made aware of the concern and given the opportunity to improve. Some issues can be handled with a conversation, such as asking a pledge to work on projecting their voice. It is crucial when discussing a pledge's performance to foster an open dialogue to determine whether the pledge received the tools and resources necessary to be successful in the program. When attempts to improve performance are not successful through discussion alone, the use of an improvement plan should be considered. If there is verifiable proof a pledge violates a risk management policy, please work with your regional management team to determine the best course of action depending on the incident. Regardless of the situation, pledges should always be informed of the situation and able to provide a response before removal.

What if the chapter reported a dropped pledge for an insignificant reason?

If the chapter voted correctly, there is nothing we can do for that dropped pledge, but you should address removals with the executive board. Ensure the chapter is utilizing improvement plans and viewing the pledge process as an opportunity for pledges to grow and learn, as opposed to a means to remove those who are not excelling.

What if the chapter removes a pledge without providing an Improvement Plan?

Using improvement plans is a best practice, but chapters can remove a pledge at any time by following the proper voting procedures. Following the improvement plan process closely aligns with the feedback cycle in the professional world, which will set up both the pledges and chapter for greater success in focusing on the pledge's development. Improvement plans are not only designed to inform pledges of areas of growth and assist them in improving performance with that growth, but also to protect the chapter. Should a pledge not complete his or her Improvement Plan and the chapter decides to remove him or her from the process, the Improvement Plan serves as documentation that the chapter tried to assist the pledge.

What if I don't agree with what the chapter prescribed for an Improvement Plan?

The chapter ultimately can issue an improvement plan and remove a pledge for any reason, but if they are unjust reasons, it could create larger issues. If you see signals that the chapter is prescribing improvement plans inappropriately, turn it into a coaching opportunity. Have a conversation with the chapter officers to understand why they felt it was appropriate and identify a process to handle the situation.