

Blast Off Guide

Welcome to Students for the Exploration and Development of Space, SEDS for short.

Whether you've been interested in space exploration for your whole life or looking to explore the many different fields that are needed to put and keep human beings in space, we're ready to help you get started. If at any point you have any questions, please reach out to the current Chapter Expansion Manager (Dominic Tanzillo). If you're looking to found a high school chapter, feel free to contact the current High School Expansion Coordinator (Ella Barth) as well.

Registration / Re-registration with SEDS USA:

We encourage you to read through this whole document and complete The Final Checklist before registering. If you get stuck at any point contact the current Chapter Expansion Manager (Dominic Tanzillo).

Look here for the New Club Registration form and here for the Re-registration form.

If you're not located in the United States and don't know who is your country's SEDS Chapter Expansion Manager, feel free to contact our Chapter Expansion Manager and we'll put you in contact.

The Basics of Starting a Club:

If you've never started a club before, are looking to grow your existing group by joining SEDS, or want to know how to fundraise, we have tips for you.

Benefits:

SEDS provides many benefits to students looking to found a brand new club or have their existing club join an international network of fellow students, alumni, and mentors. By partnering with us, we're ready to find new opportunities and push the boundaries of spaceflight together. After all, that is how we are going to Explore and Develop Space.

First, Double Check:

First make sure that there is not an existing SEDS chapter at your school. Sometimes, they go by different names than SEDS. Otherwise, if your university is big enough, you might have missed the fact that there is already a SEDS group. Here is a list of SEDS groups.

Some schools may have a SEDS chapter that is no longer active. If you are looking to restart your SEDS club, we are here to support you however you need!

It is also important to check that there is not a student group with the same exact interest. For example, your university may already have a rocketry team and will be hesitant to charter a second club for this purpose. Accordingly, you can ask the rocketry team if they would want to join SEDS. By joining SEDS your group will get access to a national network of students and resources, private conferences, opportunities to apply for grants and mentors, and a growing alumni network.

Leadership:

Every spaceship needs pilots. To lead your organization to success you'll need to have a team to administer the group.

Faculty Advisor:

To oversee the development and success of your SEDS Chapter, you will need a faculty advisor / teacher at your school. We recommend a permanent faculty advisor who will stay with the group as students graduate. Additionally, it is important that the faculty member is eager to meet with students regularly and fill out forms when needed so that the chapter can be registered with the school.

The first places to look will be in areas where the professor will have explicit research and interest in space including aerospace engineering (and many other engineering) or physics

departments. However, any faculty can help. This individual is important for Registration with your School.

Officers:

If you're looking to start, make sure that you have at least three students in addition to your faculty / teacher advisor to run the club. The three students will typically serve as President, Vice-President, and Treasurer (although co-presidents can also work).

Additionally, for any projects your group may have, you will want people to oversee the various parts of that project. This can also help new members have a sense of ownership over the club and help maintain enthusiasm and commitment throughout the year.

Recruiting:

A big question is how to recruit new students. Before asking that question, figure out what your group is about. Are you going to work on engineering projects, host stargazing nights, invite guest speakers from relevant industry, or do all of the above? An initial meeting / pizza party is a great way to get many people involved and generate ideas to see what they would like on campus.

For every meeting make sure you have a form that is easy to find. Consider making a memorable Tiny-Url so you can easily link and share the form. Make sure to have this form at any events in case people bring friends!

Reach out to various major departments (including Aerospace, Electrical, Mechanical, and Biomedical Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, Math, Public Policy, and Business/Economics) that might attract students interested in Space. Send out notices to their mailing lists so relevant students can learn about.

Then host Social Events, Guest Speakers, and Workshops that provide value for prospective members.

Consider making social media accounts and working with our team who can make a Logo and help with branding for your club.

Registration with your School:

To join SEDS we ask that you become a Registered Student Organization (RSO) at your school. By registering your group, you will gain access to funding and support from your school

This process looks different at every school but begins by sending an email or completing a form that goes to your school's Department for Student Life / Student Affairs or similarly named department. Undergraduate and graduate students may have different contact forms and

representatives. High school students might need to contact a Vice Principal of Student Life. Oftentimes, Googling your school's name and "Start a club" will provide some guidance.

Constitution:

Some high schools and most colleges require a student group to write a constitution to figure out what your club is about. This is a perfect time to write down the ideas generated during Recruiting.

Check to make sure you are following your University's Club Requirements including having anti-hazing and anti-discrimination statements.

Consider looking at the University of Oklahoma SEDS Constitution or University of Buffalo's Chapter for inspiration.

Registration Fee and Dues:

Each year SEDS Chapters are asked to pay \$50 to SEDS Nationals to maintain their membership. This fee can be paid in the annual chapter re-registration form. Check to see once you are a Registered Student Organization if your club account can pay for this fee or reimburse the individual who does pay.

A chapter may incur additional expenses should they pursue to work on a project together and may want to look for ways to earn money to allow for the possibility including Dues.

Dues:

Some schools can ask members to pay general members to pay dues. This can be prohibitive for some students and accordingly it might be important to consider other avenues.

Consider making dues optional or project specific (i.e. if someone wants to participate in the rocketry project, they have to pay dues, but they can be a general body member for free). If dues are required you should mention it in your chapter's constitution.

Grants:

SEDS Chapters also have exclusive access to our grants for funding projects. We have a Spring and Fall grant cycle and are looking to support innovative projects, business development, and students traditionally underrepresented in professional aerospace circles. Here is a sample grant request and here is the rubric for how we evaluate grants.

Final Checklist:

That was a lot. Here is simply the four steps and then you're ready for lift-off:

1. Faculty advisor: Either a professor or other faculty member that can serve as an advisor for your chapter. Advisors are critical in making sure that the chapters are active and working in the proper manner.
2. Forming a Basic Executive/Officer Board: SEDS USA recommends that all chapters have at least a President, Vice President and Treasurer to run a successful chapter. It is encouraged that the executive/officer board is expanded as the chapter progresses.
3. Become a Registered Student Organization (RSO) at Your School: Becoming a RSO is often a requirement by the Schools. The chapter can either register under the specific college that it is associated with (e.g. College of Engineering) or under the School itself (most common form of registration, especially in high school).

New Club Meeting

Now you're ready to complete your SEDS new club registration form!

Once you've completed the form, we'll schedule a meeting to discuss your plans and answer any questions before registering you.

FAQs

Do I need to have 'SEDS' in my club name?

No, you can name your group whatever you want.

We need help designing a logo, can you help?

Yes, we have a talented team who can help you. We'll provide you with contacts during your initial meeting with us.

I already have a space related club, can I join SEDS?

Yes. In fact, you've already done all the hard work. Complete our SEDS new club registration form and we'll help you get started.

You can keep your old club name and once you register you'll get the member benefits of joining!

I've filled out the form or sent an email. How long until I hear back?

You will hear back within a week.

It's been a week and I haven't heard anything. What can I do?

Send an email to the Chapter Expansion Manager (Dominic Tanzillo), my apologies. Include your favorite space related joke / pun to let me know you've read this.

We've started the club, can you help us figure out projects and activities?

Yes, see our Chapter Development Guide!