

A large, stylized red graphic of a rocket launch. The rocket is angled upwards and to the right, with a large plume of fire and smoke trailing behind it. The rocket body has several circular windows. The entire launch scene is enclosed within a red circular arc that is open at the top. A vertical red line runs down the left side of the page.

# Blast Off Guide

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Building a Chapter 101

# Welcome to SEDS

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This guide is exactly what you'd hope it is: **a guide to help you get a SEDS chapter started at your university!** This guide, paired with our chapter started meeting will get you the foothold needed to start a successful chapter.

If at any point you have any questions, please reach out to the Chapter Expansion Manager ([Dominic Tanzillo](#)). If you have any other questions, send them to [contact@sed.org](mailto:contact@sed.org).

## What is SEDS?

SEDS is a student-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that promotes the exploration and development of space. SEDS pursues this mission by educating people about the benefits of space, supporting a network of interested students, providing an opportunity for members to develop their leadership skills, and inspiring people through their involvement in space-related projects. SEDS believes in a space-faring civilization and that focusing the enthusiasm of diverse students is the key to humankind's future in space.

## Why Start a Chapter?

SEDS chapters all over the country are inspiring an entirely new generation of space-nerds to make tomorrow happen through projects, outreach, space parties -- er, networking events -- and other exciting endeavors. Starting a SEDS chapter will open you and your members to an entirely new world of friendships and partnerships. Being part of a SEDS chapter and a national member gets you:

- A network to find your place in space. Our chapters are involved in all types of projects: art, journalism, rocket building, CubeSat launching, policy advocating, community outreaching, and everything in-between. Space is interdisciplinary- and so are our chapters.
- Discounted registration to SpaceVision, the largest student run space conference in the nation. Discounts for NewSpace, International Space Development Conference, Satellite, and many more conferences.
- Networking opportunities through the SEDS Alumni Network: spanning the entire space industry. You name it, we've got you covered.
- Opportunities to participate in national SEDS competitions with ca\$h prize\$.
- Grant opportunities offered by SEDS. We give out thousands of dollars in grants twice a year to our chapters!
- Free membership upon graduation in the National Space Society, the Society of Satellite Professionals International, and the SEDS-USA Alumni Association.

We're excited for you to become a part of this legacy, and we'll support you on your way.

# Starting a Chapter

So you want to start a chapter? Do you even know what that involves? If your answer was no, PERFECT, that's why we're here to support you!

## 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. 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 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.

## First Stage - Booster Ignition

**Plan out what your ideal space club would be.** Does it involve inspirational videos to get everyone excited? Do you want to dive headlong into a project to get people communicating? Maybe lightning talks to hear ideas of what your members would like to see out of the organization and get everyone included? Whatever your ideas are, think about how the meetings will be structured to support them. By now, you should also **identify a meeting space**.

Once you have this figured out, we can get to real deal: Leadership, Recruitments, and becoming a Registered Student Organization!



**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. 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 (pg. 4).

### *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. First, 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: Engineering, Physics, Math, Business, and Art.

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

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.

## 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 similar. 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. Here are some examples:



University of  
Oklahoma



University of  
Buffalo

## 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 have exclusive access to our grants for funding projects. We have a Spring and Fall grant cycle and are looking to support innovative projects, professional development, and students traditionally underrepresented in professional aerospace circles.

For help with writing winning grant proposals check these out:

## Grant Examples & Rubric

### Final Checklist

That was a lot. Let's review the three steps to be ready for lift-off.

- Obtain Faculty Advisor
- Form Executive/Officer Board
- Become an RSO at Your 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.

**New Chapter  
Registration**

**Chapter  
Re-Registration**

# 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- 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](#).