



Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE MASTER OF CEREMONIES



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The role of the Master of Ceremonies is one of the eight required officer roles established in Article IV, Section D of the Constitution. As the ceremonial officer of the chapter, there rests in the hands of the Master of Ceremonies (MC) one of the most outstanding experiences in the fraternal life of a member of Alpha Chi Sigma – initiation. Whether it will be remembered as an enriching experience, as it is intended to be, or as a frustrating one contrary to its purpose will largely be a direct function of how well the Master of Ceremonies does the job of planning, directing and staging the ceremony. Please note – much of the guidance on how to serve as Master of Ceremonies is located in the Fraternity Ritual. Please speak with your District Counselor about how to best make use of that information as well.

Eligibility and Election

Bylaw VI states that the person elected to this role shall be elected for a term of no more than one year and must be a matriculated student at the institution with which the chapter is affiliated.

Some institutions have additional requirements that apply to all officers in recognized student organizations. If institutional policy conflicts with fraternity policy, accommodations can be made to ensure that the chapter's needs are met and that the chapter remains compliant with local rules.



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Duties

Organize and supervise all chapter ceremonial activities except the Professional Recognition Ceremony and Professional Induction Ceremony:

As a secret, fraternal organization, Alpha Chi Sigma takes pride in our tradition and our ritual. The Master of Ceremonies is the person most responsible at each chapter for ensuring that tradition is honored and that our ritual is passed on faithfully to the next generation of members. This duty includes chapter meetings, the Pledge Induction Ceremony, and Initiation, each of which are discussed further within the ritual.

- **Safety** – During the induction (pledge pinning) and initiation ceremonies, everyone has a role in ensuring the safety of all participants. Ultimately, the Master of Ceremonies is the central individual responsible for the safety of all participants. The Master of Ceremonies should make certain there are adequate safety facilities, including ventilation, charged fire extinguishers and posted emergency exits. Any chemical waste generated by these ceremonies must be manifested and disposed of by the Master of Ceremonies or an experienced individual appointed by the Master of Ceremonies. No chemical waste should be poured down drains for any reason! Each chapter must have SDS on-site during initiation and elsewhere when the chapter is using chemicals.

- **Pledge Ceremony** – The Master of Ceremonies conducts the pledge ceremony with the participation of the Master Alchemist. The pledge ceremony is a formal ceremony and should be conducted in a serious, professional manner. Coat and tie or dresses for members and pledges are strongly recommended. The ceremony should make a good and lasting impression upon the pledges. This is the first time the pledges hear the Three Objects of the Fraternity. As always, the members should stand for the recitation of the Objects. It would add to the experience to have some simple props, such as the chapter flag, charter and a table draped with a cloth on which the Badge and Coat of Arms plaques are displayed and on which the pledge pins can be placed prior to their presentation. The pledge ceremony is a secret ritual but is not to be conducted during a chapter business meeting. The pledge ceremony is a separate event and should be treated as such. At least one month before the pledge ceremony, the Master of Ceremonies must be sure there are enough pledge pins available for the anticipated pledge class. Additional pins should be ordered from the National Office.



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• **Initiation Ceremony** – The greatest privilege and most difficult duty of the Master of ceremonies is planning and presenting initiation. Within the Ceremony, the Master of Ceremonies is in charge, even over the Master Alchemist, as it pertains to the execution of the initiation. Each and every initiate is entitled to an initiation that is professionally performed so the true significance of the initiation is not lost. An effective and satisfying initiation cannot be achieved by last-minute preparations nor by haphazardly assigning parts or staging. The greatest aid to an effective ceremony is experience. Many chapters have carefully developed the properties and staging for an initiation and have recorded the instructions. If that is not the case in your chapter, now is the time to start.

• **Arrange Facilities** – As soon as possible, the Master of Ceremonies should determine the preferred date for the initiation ceremony and an acceptable alternate date. Then the Master of Ceremonies should arrange for the use of the facilities. Whichever facility is used should make possible the staging of the complete initiation without any intrusion by non-members. Be sure the site has adequate safety facilities, posted emergency exits and fire extinguishers at all stations. The Master of Ceremonies should inform neighbors and necessary authorities (such as police, fire, university authorities, etc.) of any activities with which they might be concerned. Often, working with the Chapter Advisor may help in securing permission required.

• **Assign Memorization and Role Preparation** – Another function of the Master of Ceremonies is to ensure that Brothers participating in the initiation ceremony understand their roles. Do not wait until the last minute to assign roles.

• **Direct the Ceremony** – The Master of Ceremonies has complete control and responsibility for the initiation ceremony. The Master of Ceremonies sets the schedule and the order in which pledges are initiated. The Master of Ceremonies establishes the timing and pace at which the ceremony progresses. Most importantly, the Master of Ceremonies is responsible for ensuring the ceremony is performed in strict accordance with the Ritual and that no hazing takes place.

• **Prevent Hazing** – Hazing is absolutely forbidden in Alpha Chi Sigma. The official Ritual is the result of extensive research and consideration, so no “enhancements” to the Ritual are permitted. (The national Ritual Committee and the Grand Master of Ceremonies continuously review the Ritual and do their best to keep up with changing rules and laws.) Initiation is to be completely devoid of horseplay or similar juvenile behavior. Any member found to be hazing at any time will be subject to fraternity conduct proceedings that can lead to expulsion from the fraternity. Hazing the people who are about to join our brotherhood is neither fun nor professional and is in violation of the Fraternity’s Health and Safety Policy. Any chapter found to be encouraging hazing at any time will be subject to conduct proceedings before the Supreme Council that could lead to sanctions that include the revocation of the chapter’s charter.



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Be responsible for the safekeeping and good condition of the regalia entrusted to the chapter:

The regalia used by our chapters is property of the Grand Chapter that has been issued to each chapter so they can perform their required functions. In addition, the regalia includes the chapter's charter, a very elegant document commemorating the chapter's foundation and communicating its authority to act as a chapter. A full set of regalia costs approximately \$5,000 and shipping a full set is at least \$500 due to its heft and insurance cost. Each year, the Master of Ceremonies is responsible for submitting a Charter, Ritual, and Regalia Inspection (CRRI) form to the national office. This should honestly happen after every initiation ceremony or officer change. This is how the chapter requests replacements should things be worn out or lost and the historical record of these forms establishes whether the replacement is done at local chapter or Grand Chapter expense.

A set of regalia in good condition sets the stage professionally for the initiation. Adequate storage and cleaning are required to keep the regalia in good condition.

Storage – All ritual and regalia items should be stored in a locked closet, a storage chest or a storage cabinet in a dry location. All chemicals should be stored properly, preferably not with the regalia, in an appropriate location. Regalia may be loaned only for official fraternal purposes, such as the Professional Induction Ceremony and expansion efforts.

Care and Cleaning – Soiled regalia should be dry cleaned, not machine washed. Torn regalia should be mended. Before returning regalia to storage, it should be thoroughly dry. Before hanging regalia in garment bags, it should be aired for 24 hours in order to avoid mildew. Where applicable, regalia should be stored on hangers or carefully folded and, if possible, placed in suit boxes or wrapped separately. Do not store regalia in plastic. Regalia may be protected by covering it with clean sheets or by folding it neatly and storing it in pillow cases. Wigs and beards may be hand-washed with a gentle detergent, such as Woolite, and thoroughly air-dried. All other properties should be stored in boxes.

Replacement – Regalia will be replaced at no cost to your chapter, except in cases of abuse or loss. The Master of Ceremonies should initiate replacement as soon as a need is discovered. Replacements must be approved by the District Counselor.



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Keep and account for all copies of the ritual lent to the chapter and be responsible to the Grand Chapter for them:

The ritual contains the essence of our fraternity. It contains the ceremonies that tie us together, the true foundation of our order and all our most important secrets. Understandably, its secrecy is paramount. Each chapter is issued one ritual binder which contains one full copy of each part of the ritual that is needed by a collegiate chapter. The Master of Ceremonies is ultimately responsible for always keeping that binder and its contents safe and secure. No digital copy of any kind should ever be made of any part of the ritual. While this may create logistical challenges at time, those are a reasonable cost for protection. When there are reasons where photocopying the ritual becomes necessary, the chapter is authorized to do so. Once those copies exist, they must be catalogued and protected just like the originals. They should be collected by the Master of Ceremonies after every ritual event and kept with the originals. The Grand Master of Ceremonies is responsible for any revisions to the Ritual. These usually happen only once every ten years.

Serve as Sergeant-at-Arms at Chapter Meetings:

At all formal business meetings of the chapter, which must be held in secrecy, it is the responsibility of the Master of Ceremonies to:

Prepare and Secure the Meeting Room – In this instance the word “secure” does not mean ‘obtain” but to take precautions against intrusion by a non-member. To the extent possible the meeting room should be prepared in such a manner as to prevent any non-member from seeing or hearing any of the proceedings and to prohibit entrance without permission. Remember that “secure” refers to digital intrusions as well, so take care that members in your meetings are not electronically defeating your security.

Stand or Post Guard at All Entrances – The Master of Ceremonies should stand guard or post guard at all entrances to the meeting room to assure that all who enter are members of Alpha Chi Sigma. If in doubt, the usual questions may be asked, and no one should be permitted entrance who cannot reply properly.



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Meet with your Successor

At the end of your term of office, you should meet with your successor to review the regalia, the Ritual and other properties for which the Master of Ceremonies has responsibility. The ritual prescribes many items that are not part of the regalia provided by the Grand Chapter and many chapters have further items to perform fraternal ceremonies. While these are not documented on the CRRF form, they should also be inventoried at this time.

Describing your Role

Many people are not familiar with professional fraternities and may not properly understand the work you do as the Master of Ceremonies. I've included two short sample descriptions of the role to help you communicate the skills learned in this position and the contributions you've made to your university community.

Resume/CV summary:

I organize and direct all chapter ceremonial activities, including pledge and initiation ceremonies, ensuring they are conducted safely, professionally, and in strict accordance with fraternity ritual and policies. I maintain accountability for the chapter's ritual materials and regalia, safeguard confidential ceremonial resources, and serve as sergeant-at-arms during chapter meetings to protect the security and integrity of fraternity proceedings.

One Paragraph Summary:

As Master of Ceremonies for Alpha Chi Sigma, I plan, coordinate, and supervise the chapter's ceremonial activities, including pledge and initiation ceremonies, ensuring that each event is conducted safely, professionally, and in accordance with fraternity ritual, policies, and traditions. I oversee ceremony logistics, train and prepare participants for their roles, maintain and safeguard the chapter's ritual materials and regalia, manage required inspections and inventories, and serve as sergeant-at-arms during chapter meetings to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of fraternity proceedings.