

## Frequently Asked Questions about *Nu Rho Psi* Charter Applications

### **What's the process of that *Nu Rho Psi* uses to receive and review charter applications?**

*Nu Rho Psi* charter applications consist of the cover page (with original signatures), the application itself, and a \$200 application fee. Typically, only the signed cover page is sent to the National Office (*Nu Rho Psi*, Washington College, 300 Washington Avenue, Chestertown, MD 21620). Most applicants pay the application fee using a credit card or Pay Pal via our website: [www.nurhopsi.org](http://www.nurhopsi.org). But some send a check to the National Office. The application itself should be sent, via email, to: [nurhopsi@washcoll.edu](mailto:nurhopsi@washcoll.edu).

Once received, the application is sent to 3 peer referees who thoroughly review the materials. We use a series of questions and answers on a form (reproduced below) to guide the reviews. Each question on the review form relates to a particular section of the *Nu Rho Psi* Constitution and By-Laws (see bracketed references after each question). Once the reviews have been returned to the Executive Director in the National Office, he may provide an opportunity for the candidate chapter to respond to any issues raised by the referees before all the materials (including the peer reviews/recommendations and the candidate chapter rebuttal) are sent to the National Council for its decision. Our Constitution requires that at least 2/3 of the National Council must vote to approve the establishment of a new chapter. We aim of this entire process to be completed within a 2-month period.

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### **Review Form** ***Nu Rho Psi* Charter Applications**

Has a Chair of the organizing committee been identified?

Has the President of the College/University endorsed the application?

#### **Section I. General information about the institution:**

Are the mission and goals of the College/University consistent with the mission/goals of *Nu Rho Psi*? [Section I., 1 - 2]

Is the College/University accredited by a recognized higher education accrediting organization? [Section I, 3]

Does the College/University have a published policy indicating an institutional commitment to nondiscriminatory policies and freedom of inquiry and expression? [Section I, 4-5]

Has the College/University have been cited for non-adherence to its nondiscriminatory policies and freedom of inquiry and expression? [Section I, 6]

#### **Section II. Curriculum**

Are the courses which are considered by the institution to be a part of the neuroscience major, minor, or similar track sufficient in number, content and offerings to provide students with appropriate exposure to the disciplines of the brain sciences? [Section II, 1]

Are there sufficient numbers of students and faculty to support a chapter of *Nu Rho Psi*? [Section II, 2]

Are there sufficient opportunities for undergraduate research in neuroscience? [Section II, 3]

**Section III. Information about the Faculty**

Are there a sufficient number of well-trained and productive full-time faculty teaching the courses that are part of the neuroscience curriculum? [Section III, 1-2]

Has a *Nu Rho Psi* advisor been identified from the faculty at the College/University? [Section III, 3]

**Section IV: Information about Student charter members**

Is there a sufficient number of qualified students who have met all the requirements for membership as specified in the National Constitution and the proposed chapter By-Laws? [Section IV, 1]

**Section V: Co-curricular information**

Is there a history of student co-curricular activity in the neurosciences that predict success of a chapter of *Nu Rho Psi*? [Section V, 1]

Are there appropriate plans for assimilation or accommodation of *Nu Rho Psi* into the current campus culture and co-curricular neuroscience club activities? [Section V, 2]

**Section VI: Chapter By-Laws**

Are the proposed chapter By-laws consistent with the *Nu Rho Psi* National Constitution and By-Laws?

Are there significant deviations (if any) from the *Nu Rho Psi*, model chapter By-Laws?

If so, please explain below:

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**Recommendations:**

Do you recommend accepting this application for a *Nu Rho Psi* Charter?

Please provide a short description of the factors that influenced your decision to approve/disapprove the application:

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**Is it necessary to have a Neuroscience major at our school in order to have a *Nu Rho Psi* charter awarded?**

Some of the schools that have *Nu Rho Psi* chapters do not have neuroscience majors - so this is not a requirement. Sometimes neuroscience minors or areas of emphasis are offered instead of a major. But all schools that receive a *Nu Rho Psi* charter do need to demonstrate that they offer the appropriate depth and breadth of neuroscience-related curricula, and that they have ample faculty with neuroscience expertise who provide research opportunities for their students.

**Our school has a Neuroscience Concentration and we are required to take introductory Biology, Psychology, and Chemistry. Can those count along with our Principles of Neuroscience course toward the initial required nine semester neuroscience hours for new inductees?**

Since neuroscience is interdisciplinary, many of our chapters include relevant courses in the more-traditional sub-disciplines (Psychology, Biology, and Chemistry) as neuroscience-related. Most importantly, this decision depends on the actual content of the course and how relevant it is to the study of the nervous system. This is a judgment call that your faculty can help you make since they know the curriculum best. Note that the decision about what courses may be used to meet the minimum of 9 SH in neuroscience will significantly impact the level of students (Sophomore, Junior, Senior) who will comprise the chapter. For example, if only senior-level courses are included, and seniors are inducted into the society right before graduation, the

chapter may not become an active force for neuroscience community outreach and education. On the other hand, if lower-level courses (without significant neuroscience content) are included in the calculation, the honor of *Nu Rho Psi* membership is degraded. So you can see that this selection of neuroscience courses is an important judgment call that the faculty advisor and other faculty can help make. These decisions will potentially impact many *Nu Rho Psi* candidates over the years to come.

**Can the chair of the *Nu Rho Psi* charter organizing committee be a student?**

Yes, but the application must be written in close collaboration with the proposed faculty advisor and other faculty who are part of the Neuroscience department/program. They will need to provide important advice and information along the way. For example, your faculty know your school's curriculum best and they must be consulted as you select the Neuroscience courses that will be factored into the calculation of the Neuroscience GPA (see the Model By-Laws and *Nu Rho Psi* Constitution: [www.nurhopsi.org](http://www.nurhopsi.org)). A senior administrator at the College (typically the President) will also need to approve the application. Faculty can often help coordinate this approval. Still, there is nothing wrong about a student acting as a leader and prime motivator of the coalition required to produce a successful *Nu Rho Psi* Charter application.

**Is there a minimum number of *Nu Rho Psi*-eligible students and faculty required at our school before we can apply for a charter?**

There is no hard and fast minimum number. When charter decisions are made the application reviewers and National Council look at the program as a whole. This includes the curriculum and the enthusiasm of the faculty and students for sustaining a chapter over the years. So for example, if a program is smaller but shows potential for growth then it may well be competitive for a *Nu Rho Psi* charter. The *Nu Rho Psi* By-laws do call for each chapter to have 4 officers (President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer) so that suggests that there should be at least 4 people per year to serve in these leadership roles. Some of our *Nu Rho Psi* chapters work cooperatively with predecessor neuroscience clubs or other organizations to multiply their efforts towards community outreach and education about the brain. Even a small group of enthusiastic and well organized *Nu Rho Psi* leaders can make a big difference to advance the mission of the Society on a University campus, the surrounding community, and the region.

The *Nu Rho Psi* Constitution also allows for "Cooperative Chapters". Essentially, 2 or more smaller schools that are geographically near each other may collaborate and apply for a single charter. These schools elect a single set of officers, meet frequently, and run joint programs. For more information about this option, contact the Executive Director.

**May we adopt minimum academic standards for induction of new *Nu Rho Psi* members at our school that are different from those specified in the model chapter By-Laws?**

The overall GPA and Neuroscience-course GPA specified in the model By-Laws represent the minimum prescribed by the *Nu Rho Psi* Constitution. However, *you may adopt more-stringent standards* if there are local grade inflation concerns that warrant doing so.

**I see that new members pay a one-time induction fee that goes to the National Office. What is this used for and how is it different from “dues”?**

*Nu Rho Psi* membership is for life and each member pays a one-time induction fee that is set by the elected National Council. It helps pay for member benefits such as travel grants to the annual Society for Neuroscience meeting, research grants, and the national awards we offer. It also pays for member pins and certificates. Some chapters also collect dues to support their local programs (see below) but these funds are different from the induction fee and are levied and managed by the chapters. There is no need to stipulate the collection of the induction fee in your proposed By-Laws since that fee is set by the National Council and is described in the Constitution of our Society.

**Do most *Nu Rho Psi* chapters collect dues from their members?**

Most chapters do not collect dues but local conditions may warrant them and they are certainly permitted by the *Nu Rho Psi* Constitution. If ongoing funding is required for chapter programs, most chapters rely on University funding, collect dues, or fund-raise to support them. If your chapter expects to collect dues from its members, this must be noted in the By-Laws that you propose. Some schools that collect dues also stipulate that, in the case of financial hardship, the dues can be waived by the chapter advisor, treasurer or some such individual. But that’s up to the chapter as well.

**Should we identify graduate students, faculty and alumni who are eligible to be charter members as we apply for our charter?**

Please do. The more diverse the potential members engaged in the process, the better. It gives the application peer reviewers a sense of the vitality of neuroscience studies at your school and the extent to which a *Nu Rho Psi* chapter will be supported at all levels there.

**I’m at a large state institution and getting the University System President’s signature on the application cover page will be challenging. May I ask a different high-level administrator to endorse the application?**

The goal of this signature is to ensure that, if *Nu Rho Psi* places a chapter at your University, we can be assured that there is high-level and abiding institutional support for the activities of your chapter. At smaller schools, the President always signs. However, at larger schools we have sometimes allowed Provosts or persons at the VP level to sign for the University. Feel free to open a dialogue about this issue with the *Nu Rho Psi* Executive Director if you find it impossible to get your President’s signature.

**May lecturers, adjunct faculty or other non-permanent faculty serve as a chapter advisor?**

The faculty advisor is an important part of the *Nu Rho Psi* community on each campus and stability in this position is desirable. Consistent, knowledgeable, supportive, and enthusiastic faculty advice/guidance is always essential and typically this comes from a tenured faculty member or someone on the tenure-track. This said, there is nothing in the *Nu Rho Psi* By-Laws that specifies that the faculty advisor must be tenured and faculty advisors may change from year to year depending on many factors. If your school is submitting a charter application and you are considering a “non-permanent” faculty advisor, you may wish to consider including a tenured or tenure-track faculty member to co-advise.

**The application template asks for Neuroscience faculty CVs but I'm at a large University where the number of faculty makes this very difficult. What can I do?**

Through the application process *Nu Rho Psi* is attempting to get a sense of the number, areas of expertise, and professional activities of the faculty at your school. At smaller schools, the easiest way to get this kind of information is to send copies of CVs for the entire Neuroscience faculty. However, if this is not possible at your institution, please send us the CVs (or web links to the CVs) for the key faculty involved and then just list the names and titles of the others. As a rule of thumb, if you have less than 10 Neuroscience faculty members, please send us all the CVs. However if the number is 10, or more, you may wish to make some judgments about the ones you send. Please keep in mind that you are attempting to make the strongest case you can for your charter. The more we know about your faculty, the better we can evaluate this part of the application.