

# **ETA SIGMA GAMMA**

## **MANUAL FOR NEW INITIATES INTO COLLEGIATE CHAPTERS**



**Revised 2020 Eta Sigma Gamma  
Professional Health Education Honorary  
National Office  
2000 University Avenue, CL 325  
Muncie, IN 47306**

## **Forward**

A professional organization is a group of people bonded together with a common mission and goals. The organization is governed by a formal constitution and by-laws, which contain all the operational procedures of the organization.

Eta Sigma Gamma is a National Health Education Honorary Society that offers a unique opportunity for pre-professionals and professionals of the highest caliber to work together toward common goals. Not only do individual members derive benefit from this professional Honor Society during the collegiate years, they also have access to an extended association with professional health educators. Members receive benefits from the Honor Society in the form of lifetime professional and social acquaintances.

The purpose of this manual is to acquaint initiates with the history, governance, organization, and ideals of Eta Sigma Gamma. This manual will help initiates understand the mission and goals of the Honor Society as well as their own obligations to the organization. Since it is the responsibility of the initiates to have a thorough knowledge of their organization, they should be familiar with the materials contained in this document prior to initiation.

### **The Founding and History of Eta Sigma Gamma**

The ideas and expressions of the founders and many professionals will always deserve an eminent place in the heritage of this national health education honorary.

Early in 1967, the conceptualization of a national professional honorary society for women and men in the health education discipline was outlined by the founders while en route to a national conference. Later that year on August 14, Eta Sigma Gamma was officially founded at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. The founders Drs. William Bock, Warren E. Schaller, and Robert J. Synovitz, all faculty members in the Department of Physiology and Health Science at Ball State University, filed articles of Incorporation for Eta Sigma Gamma in August 1967. The approval of this document by the Indiana Secretary of State legally established the location and national origin of the organization. Later in 1967, a group of Ball State University health education students and faculty functioned as a steering committee to accomplish tasks associated with the structural development of the National Honor Society. Student and faculty sub-committees were appointed to draw up a constitution and by-laws, an administrative guide, a pledge manual, rituals, and other pertinent documents. An additional task was applying these national ideas and materials to the local chapter structure. The Articles of Incorporation for Alpha Chapter were filed at the same time as those for the national organization. Completion of these tasks set the stage for the initiation of individual members and installation of Alpha Chapter at Ball State University, whose first initiation ceremony took place on May 12, 1968.

Eta Sigma Gamma was among the first National Honor Societies to be formed on the Ball State University Campus and the first national honorary developed for individuals in the health education discipline. In the spirit of Greek usage, the letters ETA, SIGMA and GAMMA were chosen by the founders to represent the Greek equivalents for the letters H, S and C, which is an acronym for health science, a name originally used for Health Education.

## **Mission and Goals**

Eta Sigma Gamma was founded with the ultimate goal to provide an organization that would further the professional competence and dedication of the individual members in and for the health education discipline. The mission of Eta Sigma Gamma is to elevate the standards, ideals, competencies, and ethics of professionally trained men and women in the discipline of health education.

The goals of the Honor Society are the following:

- To support the development, implementation, and evaluation of health education programs and resources
- To stimulate and disseminate scientific research
- To motivate and provide health education services
- To recognize academic achievement
- To support health education advocacy initiatives
- To promote professional standards and ethics, and
- To promote networking activities among health educators and related professionals.

## **Diversity**

Diversity refers to “the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more.”

## **Honorary Colors, Flower, and Insignia**

The official colors of the Honor Society are green and gold. The official flower of the Honor Society is the trillium. Its three-pronged petals represent the three facets of service and advocacy, education, and research. The official insignia bears the official colors of Eta Sigma Gamma and consists of a triangle surrounded by three joined circles. The triangle is divided into four equilateral triangles. These four triangles contain the following symbols: a lamp representing learning, centered to representing the lamp of learning. The three surrounding triangles contain a microscope signifying research, an outstretched hand representing service, and an open book representing education. The significance of the latter three symbols, teaching, service and research, is recorded directly beneath each. The name of the Honor Society is recorded on the lower border of the insignia and the founding place and date are recorded on the upper border of the insignia.



### **Pre-Initiation**

The pre-initiation period is the time for initiates to learn and practice those traits and qualities that will assist in becoming an active member. Initiates and members should conduct themselves in the following manner:

- Exhibit cordiality and friendliness in individual and group relations
- Encourage and tolerate differing opinions and philosophies of others
- Develop a sense of personal and professional responsibility, honor honesty and ethics
- Respect persons of a different race, gender, creed, language, sexual identity, social or economic position and all members of the Honor Society
- Attend all chapter meetings and support all chapter activities
- Cooperate with the university administration in promoting the realization of the standards of honesty, integrity, citizenship, ethics and other campus goals
- Adhere to the Eta Sigma Gamma Standards of Conduct
- Adhere to the Health Education Code of Ethics.

### **Obligations, Rights and Benefits of Eta Sigma Gamma Initiates and Members**

A person who has agreed to join a college honorary is known as an “initiate”. On becoming members of Eta Sigma Gamma, people surrender none of their legal or social rights, none of their family or personal ties, and none of their moral or religious ideals or standards. While rights as an individual are not impaired, members should adapt themselves to the Standards of Conduct established by Eta Sigma Gamma.

### **Pledge**

As a professional member of the health education discipline, I hereby dedicate my abilities and talents to promoting a higher quality of life and health among the people and communities through the ideals of Eta Sigma Gamma. As a member of the Honor Society, I dedicate myself to promoting excellence in service, advocacy, education and research in the health education profession. I pledge to incorporate these ideals in my individual life and to continue this collectively through the professional Honor Society and my collegiate chapter.

I further pledge to:

- Exhibit cordiality and friendliness in individual and group relations
- Encourage and tolerate opinions and philosophies of others
- Maintain a sense of personal and professional responsibility, honor, ethics and honesty
- Respect persons of a different race, gender, religion, language, sexual identity, disability and social economic position
- Show respect for all members of the Honor Society
- Attend all chapter meetings and support all chapter activities, and
- Cooperate with the university administration in promoting the realization of the standards of honesty, integrity, citizenship, and other campus goals.

### **Obligations**

Initiates of Eta Sigma Gamma promise to meet the following obligations:

- Give proper attention and support to the goals of Eta Sigma Gamma
- Work diligently to maintain and promote the high standards of the Honor Society
- Conduct themselves with dignity and professional courtesy at all times
- Strive to exemplify the high ideals of Eta Sigma Gamma regarding physical, mental, social, emotional, vocational and spiritual well-being
- Perform whatever tasks may be assigned for the good of the Honor Society
- Adhere to the Health Education Code of Ethics for the health education discipline, and
- Fulfill individual financial obligations for the Honor Society.

### **Financial Obligations**

An initiate and member of Eta Sigma Gamma assume certain financial obligations. These obligations must be met in full, at the proper time, for the Honor Society to function. Any new member coming into Eta Sigma Gamma, whether a Charter Member or subsequent initiate, will pay an initiation fee that includes and covers the first year's national dues, honorary jewelry, individual certificate of membership, membership card, initiation manual, and a copy of the Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession. Each member will pay annual national dues as established by the National Board of Directors. A life membership may be acquired by paying a set fee as established by the National Board of Directors. Each collegiate chapter determines assessment of local chapter dues.

### **The Governance of Eta Sigma Gamma**

The laws governing the Honor Society consist of the Constitution and By-Laws, various documents of the Honor Society, and interim actions and regulations of the National Board of Directors.

### **Life and Honorary Memberships**

Members may acquire life membership by paying a fee established by the National Board of Directors. This affords the individual to all membership rights and privileges for life. Chapter Honor Society membership in a collegiate chapter may be conferred upon non-members for

outstanding contributions to the Health Education profession. Three-fourths affirmative vote of the active membership of a college chapter is necessary to confirm Chapter Honorary Membership status.

### **Meaning and Purpose**

The initiation ceremony should be a significant and meaningful experience in order to deepen the ideals of service, advocacy, education and research of Eta Sigma Gamma. The triad represents the guidepost for the organization and, therefore, be represented in an initiation ceremony which is impressive and inspiring. The image of the Health Education profession as well as sponsoring institutions should be reflected in this enriching event.

### **Composition of the Initiation Team**

The ceremony for initiation of new members of Eta Sigma Gamma will be conducted by a team. Depending on the number of participating officers from the local chapter, the initiation team may vary in number from two to four members.

In the event that a local chapter is being formed, representatives from the National Office would carry out this installation ritual, as there would be no local officers under these circumstances. Local chapter officers would carry out all subsequent initiations.

### **People Needed for the Initiation**

- a. Presiding Officer (From the Local Office; Chapter President)
- b. Second Presiding Officer (From the Local Chapter; Chapter Vice President)
- c. Third Presiding Officer (From the Local Chapter; Other Chapter Officer or Member to assist with coordination)

### **Materials Needed for Initiation**

To carry out the initiation ceremony, the following materials should be provided:

- An appropriate room (space) to conduct the ceremony that reflects the formality of the ceremony
- A conference table with chairs for the installation team
- The chapter roll book
- Small table for signing the roll book and charter
- Green and gold Eta Sigma Gamma drape for the table
- Honor society flower (bouquet or picture)
- Eta Sigma Gamma symbol
- Lamp of learning
- Candles (optional or other lighting devices)
  - a. One small candle (battery operated) for each candidate being initiated
- New initiates materials (certificates, pins, cards, journal issues, code of ethics)
- United States flag
- State flag (optional)

- Copies of the ESG “Standards of Conduct”

### **Checklist for organizing the initiation ceremony**

- Identification of team members
- Preparation of materials including candidate certificates, cards and pins
- Preparation of the chapter roll book
- Preparation of candidates prior to the ceremony
  - a. Arrange candidates alphabetically outside of the ceremony room
  - b. Assign places after entering ceremony room
  - c. Explain that will be questions asked of them and that their answers will be prompted by the officer in charge (example: “I do”)
  - d. Explain the candle lighting procedures (place candles so far to the rear of the candle board as possible to avoid burning themselves), twist candles as they insert it into the board
  - e. Explain that they will sign the roll book when receiving their certificates
  - f. Distribute copies of the Eta Sigma Gamma pledge and explain that they will recite the pledge in unison with the presiding officer(s).
- Optional items
  - a. Arrangements for a speaker
  - b. Arrangements for a photographer
  - c. Arrangements for remarks by chapter president or faculty sponsor
  - d. Refreshments

### **Ritual for Initiation of Candidates**

#### **Entrance (Third Presiding Officer)**

The candidates for initiation into Eta Sigma Gamma will remain outside the room in which the ceremony is to take place. It is here that they will be given any necessary instructions about the ceremony. When the initiation ceremony begins, the candidates will be led (alphabetically) into the room by a member of the Installation Team (Third presiding Officer). The First Presiding Officer will ask the audience to stand as initiates enter the room. The candidates and attendees will ask to be seated and the initiation team will be seated behind the initiation table. After the candidates are seated the ceremony will begin.

Ceremony Introduction:

**1. President or Initiation officer:** Shall speak about meaning and history of Eta Sigma Gamma and the local chapter. The following may serve as an outline for a five to ten minute presentation:

- a. History and growth of the national honor society (sample: Eta Sigma Gamma was founded on August 14, 1967, on the campus of Ball State University located in Muncie, Indiana. The founding of Eta Sigma Gamma was intended to provide an organization that would further the professional competence and dedication of the individuals in and for the health education and health science discipline. In the spirit of Greek usage, the letter Eta, Sigma, and Gamma were chosen to represent the Greek equivalents for the letters, H, S, and C, which is an acronym for health science. The

first local collegiate chapter, named Alpha Chapter, was installed on May 12, 1968 on the Ball State University campus. From 1968 to present, Eta Sigma Gamma has grown tremendously, with more than 100 local chapters installed in the U.S. and Canada.

**2. President or Initiation officer:** The (name of college/university) collegiate chapter, (name of chapter), was installed as the (#) Collegiate chapter in (year). This afternoon, we are pleased to initiate (# of inductees) into the (Greek name of chapter) of Eta Sigma Gamma.

**The Sergeant-of-Arms will now lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Pleaser rise.**

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all”. You may be seated.

**3. President or Initiation officer:** By upholding the ideals and ethics of the health education profession individually and collectively through this professional honor society, you will become worthy members of Eta Sigma Gamma. The mission of Eta Sigma Gamma is to elevate the standards, ideals, competencies, and ethics of professionally trained men and women in the discipline of health education. How will the mission of this honor society be achieved?

**4. Vice President:** The mission of the honor society will be achieved in several important ways which include:

- a. supporting the development, implementation and evaluation of health education programs and resources
- b. stimulating and disseminating scientific research
- c. motivating and providing health education services
- d. recognizing academic achievement
- e. supporting health education advocacy initiatives
- f. providing health education and other services to the local, regional or national community
- g. supporting advocacy efforts to advance the profession and practice of health education
- h. promoting and following professional standards of conduct and ethics, and
- i. promoting networking activities among health educators and related professionals.

**6. President or Initiation officer:** Based upon these activities your mission is to promote ideal health. What compromises the ideal concept of health?

**7. Treasurer:** The ideal concept of health is the composite of dynamic interactions of heredity, personal behavior, health care and environment that an individual experiences throughout his/her life. These interactions are continuous and ever changing. Health is much more than merely the absence of disease, but rather one’s ability to function as effectively as possible in all six dimensions of human health (physical, mental, emotional, social, vocational, and spiritual) within one’s environment. Health involves knowing, believing, valuing, and practicing those skills that make one effective day to day and throughout all of life.

**8. President or Initiation officer:** What compromises the health education discipline?

**9. Treasurer:** Health education is a discipline that draws from the biological, environmental, psychological, educational, social, spiritual, physical and medical sciences to promote health and prevent disease, disability, and premature death through theory-based, education-driven, voluntary behavior change activities. It is characterized by a process with intellectual, vocational, emotional, spiritual, physical and social dimensions. Health education enables people to make informed decisions and behaviors that positively affect their personal, family and community well-being. It is a process based on sound scientific principles that facilitate learning and generate healthy behaviors. Health education is more than the provision of information. While it includes acquiring knowledge about health matters, its purpose is the use of that knowledge in ways that generate healthy behaviors and outcomes. It addresses the formation of values, the acquisition of skills, and the adoption or reinforcement of desirable health behaviors. It honors the individual's right to privacy, a right to meaningful information, and his/her right to make healthy choices.

Initiation Ceremony:

**10. President or Initiation officer speaking to Pledges:** On this table are the symbols that represent Eta Sigma Gamma honor society. As initiation candidates please explain the meaning of each of the items.

**11. Initiation Candidate #1:** On the table is the Eta Sigma Gamma symbol. It is comprised of a triangle which symbol represents the three specific contributions of Gamman, as well as the profession: service and advocacy, education and research. This tri-dimensional concept is also embodied in a triangle surrounded by three joined circles.

**12. President or Initiation officer speaking to Pledges:** The triangle is divided into four equilateral triangles, each containing a symbol. Please explain the meaning of each of these symbols.

**13. Initiation Candidate #2:** The triangle is also divided into four equilateral triangles, each containing a symbol. A lamp of learning is in the center triangle, surrounded by the other triangles, one contains an open book representing education, another contains a microscope signifying scientific research, and the fourth holds an outstretched hand representing service and advocacy. These other three elements form the basic purposes of the organization and the words "teaching", "research", and "service" are recorded directly beneath each triangle.

**14. Initiation Candidate #3.** The lamp of learning in the center symbolizes the unifying element of these basic purposes, as it is through the teaching/learning process that each purpose is achieved. Each of the three purposes of this honor society is distinct in its operations but unified in the ultimate goal of furthering competence and dedication among health education professionals and progress in the health education profession.

**14. Initiation Candidate #4.** Also on the table is a picture of a trillium, the official flower of Eta Sigma Gamma. The tri-dimensional concept of the organization is further emphasized in this wildflower, with its three leaves, three white petals, and its gold center.

**15. President or Initiation officer speaking to Pledges:** It is clear you understand the history, mission and relevance of the Eta Sigma Gamma Honorary. If you wish to join this honor society please answer the following questions by saying: “Yes I do”

- **Do you wish to become a member of Eta Sigma Gamma?**
  - *CANDIDATES: “Yes, I do”*
- **Do you believe in the mission and goals of Eta Sigma Gamma as presented in the challenge before you and as stated in the constitution of this organization?**
  - *CANDIDATES: “Yes, I do”*
- **Do you believe you are you willing to strive for excellence in the ideals of service, education and research as represented in the honor society’s symbol?**
  - *CANDIDATES: “Yes, I do”*

**16. President or Initiation officer speaking to Pledges:** Finally, to become a fully collegiate member of Eta Sigma Gamma you will now recite the Eta Sigma Gamma Pledge provided in your program.

**All members:** I (name of member), as a professional member of the Health Education discipline, hereby dedicate my abilities and talents to promoting the higher quality of life among people and communities through the ideals of Eta Sigma Gamma. As a member of this honor society, I dedicate myself to promoting excellence in service and advocacy, education and research in the Health Education profession. I pledge to incorporate these ideals in my individual life and to continue this collectively through the professional honor society and our collegiate chapter.

**17. President or Initiation officer speaking to Pledges:**

Lastly, Do you further pledge to:

- a. exhibit cordiality and friendliness in individual and group relations?
- b. encourage and tolerate opinions and philosophies of others?
- c. uphold the code of conduct for Eta Sigma Gamma?
- d. maintain a sense of personal and professional responsibility, honor and honesty?
- e. respect persons of a different race, gender, religion, sexual identity, and social or economic position?
- f. show respect for all members of the honor society?
- g. attend all chapter meetings and support all chapter activities?
- h. and cooperate with the university administration in promoting the realization of the standards of honesty, integrity, citizenship, ethics, and other campus goals?

If so, please say, “Yes, I do”.

**18. President or Initiation officer speaking to Pledges:** Having solemnly pledged yourself to Eta Sigma Gamma, and to signify your commitment to the mission and goals of the honor society, you will now come forward individually as your name is called to receive your Eta Sigma Gamma pin from (Second Presiding Officer), Health Education Code of Ethics, Eta Sigma Gamma Standards of Conduct, and sign the (name of chapter) chapter roll book as an outward and permanent demonstration of your pledge. After you have signed your name, please light your candle and place it on the table near the lamp of learning then return to your seat. (Optional- if using candles have initiates light their candle or turn on electronic candles and place it around the lamp of learning; receive their pin, certificate, and card; sign the roll book; and

return to their places). Read each candidate's name and hand them pins, certificates and membership cards, while the second presiding officer observes them signing the roll book.

**19. Chapter Historian speaking to Pledges:** We are now ready to present you the formal charge of Eta Sigma Gamma. Having solemnly pledged yourself to this worthy organization, you are now members of Eta Sigma Gamma. The full rights of membership in this honor society are now open to each one of you. You shall benefit from the collective design and achievement of our organization in the following ways:

- a. first, your professional competence shall be enhanced because of your association with other colleagues in health education
- b. second, your communication with individuals, groups, and agencies shall be significantly aided by the dialogue made possible through Eta Sigma Gamma
- c. third, your commitment to service shall be encouraged and recognized through our organization
- d. fourth, your dedication to academic achievement shall be acknowledged
- e. fifth, your scientific research aspirations shall be facilitated and promoted by the dictates of this honor society
- f. sixth, your orientation to recent developments in the field of health education discipline will be greatly facilitated.

**20. Treasurer speaking to pledges:** These are some of the benefits you will receive as members of Eta Sigma Gamma. You must remember that these benefits imply a responsibility on your part. As members of Eta Sigma Gamma, your responsibilities are as follows:

- a. first, to uphold the high character of your chapter and ethical standards of the health education profession as provided in the Health Education Code of Ethics and the Eta Sigma Gamma Code of Conduct
- b. second, to develop an effective collegiate chapter, which will be a source of pride to Eta Sigma Gamma, the health education profession and to (institution's name)
- c. third, to elevate the standards, ideals, and competence of professionally trained men and women in the health education discipline
- d. final charge: Will you always continue to put forth your best efforts to fulfill these responsibilities? Is so, you will say, "Yes, I will". (Candidates say, "Yes, I will")

**21. Acting Chapter President:** As President of (Greek name) Chapter of Eta Sigma Gamma, I hereby welcome you to membership in this national honor society. As a symbol of your membership, we have presented you with a recognition pin to wear on all professional occasions; and, as a reminder of the pledge you previously made. Finally, fulfilling an old Eta Sigma Gamma tradition, I ask the family and friends of our new members to stand so that they may be applauded for their efforts and support of our newest Eta Sigma Gamma members.

APPLAUSE...

**First Presiding Officer:** This meeting for the initiation of new candidates into Eta Sigma Gamma is now officially adjourned. Congratulations! This concludes our official ceremony.

**Presiding Officer and others:** The chapter sponsor, chapter president or one of the officers may inform new initiates about local chapter activities. This portion can be developed by each chapter and contain information relative to the contributions and opportunities that membership in the honor society will facilitate. Examples of themes may include; publications, awards and scholarships, grants available, and past activities. A speaker such as the Department Chair, Dean, President, Chancellor, etc. may be invited to attend and offer any additional comments. This may be a time to recognize the university administrators, department/division chair and faculty who are supporting the initiates.