

UPSU Governing Documents

Student Media Bye Law

October 2019

Approval Details

Approved by	G&A Committee	Date	May 2019
Approved by	Trustee Board	Date	June 2019
Ratified by	Union Council	Date	October 2019
Ratified by	SU UEG	Date	August 2019
Review lead staff member	Director of Communication and Digital		

Reviewing this document

This document may be amended with the permission of the Board of Trustees, following pre-approval by Governance and Appointments Committee.

Union Council will then review any significant changes to this Bye-law prior to any such change taking effect in order to permit the Council the opportunity to provide feedback and raise any concerns in respect of any such change directly with the Union Chief Executive who will refer such feedback and concerns to the Board of Trustees for further consideration.

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1. General

- 1.1. "Student Media" - Any publication, broadcast, print or digital media recognised by University of Plymouth Students' Union for the purposes of mass communication.
- 1.2. The Students' Union may have student-led media societies composed of up to three broadcast media platforms:
 - 1.2.1. An online and/or print publication;
 - 1.2.2. Video based content;
 - 1.2.3. A radio station.

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2. Objectives

The objective of any media society is to benefit members of UPSU by:

- 2.1. Reporting and commenting on matters affecting students and of interest to them in a fair, accurate and critical manner, which is compliant with national standards of reporting;
- 2.2. Stimulating interest in and knowledge of a full range of subjects and issues affecting students, and through this enriching cultural life, fostering creativity and talent, and promoting cultural dialogue and awareness for students;
- 2.3. Informing students about current affairs, including activities and campaigns relating to and/or organised by UPSU or University of Plymouth;
- 2.4. Providing a platform for students to express and communicate their views;
- 2.5. Offering opportunities for students to develop skills in broadcasting, journalism and publishing;
- 2.6. Providing an excellent standard of content, and recognising and championing outstanding content produced by students.

3. Governance

Each Student Media Outlet will comply with:

- 3.1. The UPSU Constitution and Bye-Laws
- 3.2. Their own Code of Conduct
- 3.3. Their own Constitution
- 3.4. Sports Bye-Law
- 3.5. Societies & Activities Bye-Law
- 3.6. The UPSU Advertising Policy
- 3.7. [The National Union of Journalism Code of Conduct](#)
- 3.8. The objectives outlined in this Bye-Law

4. The Media Society Advisory Group (MSAG)

- 4.1. The Media Society Advisory Group will be comprised of the following roles:
 - 4.1.1. The Vice President of Activities and Development
(Chair of MSAG)
 - 4.1.2. The Chair of the online/print publication society
 - 4.1.3. The Chair of the TV Station society
 - 4.1.4. The Chair the Radio Station
 - 4.1.5. One other representative from each of the Media Society.
 - 4.1.6. A member of Union Staff
(Director of Communication and Digital)

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- 4.2. The Vice President of Activities and Development shall chair every meeting of the MSAG. In the case of their absence, the Group will be chaired by another Sabbatical Officer.
- 4.3. The MSAG will be open for any student to observe, and meeting dates and minutes will be published on each societies web page on upsu.com.
- 4.4. The remit of the MSAG is:
 - 4.4.1. To review the creation, implementation and outputs of long-term development plans for each media society;
 - 4.4.2. To discuss issues of shared concern including finance, membership, inclusivity, standards, value for money and legal and regulatory issues;
 - 4.4.3. To encourage and co-ordinate joint activity between Media Societies;
 - 4.4.4. To hold the Chair of each Student Media Society to account for compliance with this Bye-Law, their Code of Conduct and their Constitution, and specifically to consider whether their published content meets the governance and regulatory standards set out in those documents.
- 4.5. The MSAG will meet 3 times a semester as organised by the Chair. An extraordinary meeting may be called by any member of the Group with 24 hours' notice to consider issues relating to reputational impact.

5. Editorial independence and responsibilities

- 5.1. The Chair of each Media Society has the right to editorial independence, that is the right to print or broadcast such content as they see fit, subject to the following conditions:
 - 5.1.1. Publications and broadcasts by Media Societies must make clear that the views expressed in all content are those of the contributor and not necessarily the views of the Students' Union;
 - 5.1.2. Outlets must not state or in any way imply that they are the voice of the Students' Union or representing University of Plymouth students;
 - 5.1.3. All content must be produced in accordance with their Code of Conduct, this Bye-Law, and with all legal and regulatory requirements placed on the Students' Union;
 - 5.1.4. All content (including opinion pieces) must be checked by the Chair of the society to ensure that it is factually accurate and verifiable;
 - 5.1.5. Where content relates to or reflects on any person or organisation (including but not exclusive to the Students' Union and University of Plymouth), that person or organisation must be given the opportunity to comment on that content prior to publication, and due weight must be given to any comment received;

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- 5.1.6. Coverage of any Elections, Referenda, or other democratic Students' Union events is encourage and must be balanced, impartial, accurate and fair. Content must not express a preference (either positive or negative) towards any candidate running in any election within the Students' Union: coverage during any election period must be impartial as between candidates.

6. Concerns about content

- 6.1. The Board of Trustees has delegated authority to have oversight of all media content to the Vice President of Activities and Development, and the Director of Communication and Digital, acting jointly.
- 6.2. The Board of Trustees of the Students' Union has the right to prevent, edit or remove the publication or broadcast of any content on the grounds that it is defamatory, illegal, not compliant with this Bye-Law, has negative representational impact on the Students' Union and University, broader UPSU Constitutions and Bye-Laws.
- 6.3. If the Chair of a Media Society disputes a decision of the Vice President Activities and Development and the Director of Communication and Digital to prevent or remove the publication or broadcast of any content, the Chair of the Media Society may appeal to the UPSU Board of Trustees for a review of that decision. They can appeal by contacting the Chair of the Board.
- 6.4. It is for the Board of Trustees to decide what information it requires from whom to consider an appeal and whether an appeal should be heard in person or considered by correspondence only. Other than providing information on request, the Director of Communication and Digital and the Vice President of Activities and Development will not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter.
- 6.5. For the avoidance of doubt, if an appeal is submitted, the decision of the Vice President of Activities and Development, and Director of Communication and Digital shall stand and until the Board of Trustees may decide to overturn the decision.

7. Complaints

Complaints regarding Media Societies can fall into two separate areas, a complaint about the content published and broadcast, and a complaint regarding the behaviour of members of the Media Societies.

Complaints about content:

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- 7.1. All Student Media Societies must make all reasonable efforts to make clear the complaints procedure on their channels.
- 7.2. A complaint concerning any content that has been published or broadcast by a Media Society must be made in writing through the [UPSU Complaints Procedure](#) using the documents that form part of that procedure.
- 7.3. Wherever possible complaints will be dealt with and resolved at the informal stage.
- 7.4. On receipt of a complaint, the Director of Communication and Digital will advise the Chair of the Society concerned to address the issue.
- 7.5. The Chair of the Society will respond in writing to any complaint in line with UPSU's Complaints Procedure and will consult with the Director of Communication and Digital in preparing a response before responding.
- 7.6. If the Director of Communication and Digital and Vice President of Activities and Development upholds the complaint, they may offer the complainant either:
 - 7.6.1. A retraction of the piece and apology: or
 - 7.6.2. The opportunity to provide content setting out an alternative view, which should be given similar prominence to the content giving rise to the complaint.
- 7.7. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, or does not receive a response within the allocated timescale of submitting their complaint, they may evoke a Stage 2 Formal complaint of UPSU's Complaints Procedure and follow the procedure there on in.

Complaints about conduct:

- 7.8. A complaint concerning the conduct of members of a Media Society must follow the Members Disciplinary Bye-Law

8. Advertising

- 8.1. All advertising through the Media Societies must be approved by the Director of Communication and Digital before any agreements are made.
- 8.2. No Media Society shall sell advertising space to third parties of its own accord without the formal authorisation of the Director of Communication and Digital.
- 8.3. Any third party advertisers must be compliant with the UPSU Advertising Policy.

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- 8.4. Any requests to vary existing advertising or to incorporate additional advertisements must be authorised by the Director of Communication and Digital.
- 8.5. The Director of Communication and Digital will have administrative access to any Media Outlet platform where advertising is to be hosted.

9. Finance

- 9.1. The Media Societies are eligible to apply for funding through the process laid out for all UPSU Societies
- 9.2. Funding will only be given to and spent by all societies for the purpose of furthering their objectives

10. Copyright

- 10.1. All content, publications and broadcast produced by the Media Societies is exclusive copyright of UPSU. UPSU will not withhold the right for society individuals to use the content they have published or broadcast for personal use.
- 10.2. For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the trademarks, names, brands, designs and logos of the Media Societies.

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Appendix A: National Union of Journalists code of conduct

Source: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/about/nuj-code/>

This appendix may be amended by the lead staff member as required.

A journalist:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies.
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion.
5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means.
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest.
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work.
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information and takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained in the course of her/his duties before the information is public knowledge.
9. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
10. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed.
11. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about her/his welfare.
12. Avoids plagiarism.

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