

# Student Media Policy

## Document Information

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# Student Media Policy

## 1. Student Media Definition and Context

- a. Student Media is media produced by the students of a university or college and is a central part of the student movement. Student Media can include online or physically published written, video, or audio content.
- b. Student Media provides participants the opportunity to gain experience and develop skills. It also provides value to students by keeping them entertained and informed about what is happening on their campus, locally and in the wider student movement.
- c. Student Media also plays a key democratic function – holding the University, the Students' Union and the National Union of Students (NUS) to account, raising awareness about what they do and supporting the democratic functions of these organisations.
- d. Successful Student Media is student led - the content, and the production of it, is accessible and reflects students' interests.

## 2. Policy Objectives

The conduct and behaviour of Student Media Members is regulated by:

- a. Strath Union's constitution & policies.
  - i. A specific example is that no songs containing derogatory or offensive language, and no songs relating to specific football teams should be in the Fusion radio music library. Offensive language is deemed to be anything that is derogatory, offensive or in breach of the Equality Act (2010) or Strath Union's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- b. Policies relating to societies including [The Societies Constitution](#), [External Speakers Policy](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#).
  - i. While the Code of Conduct states that volunteers must "always portray a positive image of the services and activities on offer [at Strath Union] when acting in that role", content produced by Student Media is a specific exception to this: Student Media members must be a positive ambassador of the Union in their conduct and behaviour, but the content produced can be critical when holding the Union to account.
  - j. Third parties leaving comments on a piece of content are considered users of Strath Union, and so must also abide by the Code of Conduct. Any comments that violate our code of conduct will be removed, and depending on the gravity of the offence, may be subject to further investigation and/or handling. This disclaimer will be made available wherever there is an option for comments to be left on a piece of content.
- c. The Student Media Societies' individual constitutions. Any changes to their individual constitutions must not contravene this or any other policies.
- d. Terms & conditions of any licences related to the type of media being produced, including [PRS](#) & [PPL](#) for the use and broadcasting of music.

There are additional codes of conduct produced by external bodies which Student Media is not governed by, but which should be followed as best practice:

- e. [National Union of Journalists \(NUJ\) Code of Conduct](#)
- f. [Independent Press Standards Organisation \(IPSO\) Editors Code of Practice](#)
- g. [Ofcom Broadcast code](#)
  - i. One exception is swearing - in Student Media swearing must be avoided where consumers do not have the option to turn the content off (eg. put the newspaper

down, turn off the radio), however the Media Society committees each year can decide if they will allow swearing in their content at other times. This does not include offensive or derogatory language and behaviour which is prohibited at all times in accordance with Strath Union policies.

The objective of this Policy is to:

- h. Clarify the editorial procedures, roles and responsibilities for publishing Student Media to mitigate risk to Student Media volunteers, Strath Union, and the University of Strathclyde
- i. Ensure that Student Media outlets are editorially independent from the Union, but that they operate within the current legal and policy context relevant to the production, publication and dissemination of all forms of media
- j. Ensure successful, vibrant and diverse Student Media at Strathclyde

### 3. Responsibilities and Expectations

Strath Union will provide:

- a. Funding
  - i. Costs which are essential to the running of the media outlet will be paid for by the Union from the Arts & Culture fund.
    - 1. This includes: essential training, licences, website hosting, broadcast servers & essential equipment maintenance.
    - 2. This does not include: stock content such as music, photos or videos, membership of national bodies, and conference or awards attendance.
  - ii. Media societies can apply for funding for any additional projects or costs from Societies Executive and/or the Alumni Fund, and are encouraged to raise funds for themselves (see 6. Advertising)
- b. Space
  - i. While the media suite may be used by staff, officers & external users, it is primarily for the use of the Student Media societies.
  - ii. All users of the space must abide by the risk assessment, and media space guidelines

Student Media Society committee members & members will:

- c. Abide by this policy, and all policies and conditions mentioned in this document
- d. Ensure committee members attend essential training
- e. Report any sensitive material to the Editorial Panel (5.b)
- f. Produce great content!

### 4. Editorial Standpoint

- a. Student Media at Strathclyde is independent from the Union in terms of editorial control and content. However, as the Student Media societies are part-funded by and organised under the Union, the Union is responsible for ensuring compliance with the current legal and policy context relevant to the production, publication, and dissemination of all forms of media and content - but only with regard to matters of potential libel, defamation, and sensitive material detailed below (5.b)

- b. Content can be political, but Student Media outlets should try to be balanced in their coverage of party-political issues where possible. When discussing political issues, members must state that political opinions are their own and do not represent the views of the Student Media outlet, Strath Union or the University of Strathclyde.
- c. Student Media outlets must ensure that published content reflects the interests of and provides value to Strathclyde students.
- d. Only society members who are registered through the website can publish content as part of the Student Media outlets. Members are responsible for the conduct of any guests producing content with them.
- e. As the societies are responsible for all content published, they own all content that is produced. It is at the discretion of the society committee to negotiate ownership with the member who has created it. Any income gained from content hosted on Student Media platforms will go into that media society's savings account with the Union (see section 6. Advertising). It is the discretion of the committee if the individual creator will receive any of the income.

## 5. Editorial Control

- a. All content, published and live, will be considered in the first instance by the President (or equivalent role) of the media society producing it, who has received appropriate training in media law. It is the responsibility of the President to refer any sensitive material, as detailed below, to the Union for consideration by the Editorial Panel, at least 3 working days in advance of publication or broadcast. For live broadcasts, producers should plan content to a full enough extent that it can be reviewed before broadcasting and any potential issues raised.
- b. The Editorial Panel will consider the proposed publication or broadcast of sensitive material which includes, but is not limited to:
  - i. Comments on the employment, capability, or performance of Union or University employees
  - ii. A judgement about or a view on an individual or organisation that is potentially open to legal challenge
  - iii. Might contravene an existing Union policy
  - iv. Is regarded as having the potential to be in breach of media law, including libel, defamation and slander
  - v. Is regarded as having been plagiarised or in breach of copyright
  - vi. May bring the Union or University into disrepute or constitute a breach of Charity Law
  - vii. May cause distress to individuals or unduly influence vulnerable people
- c. The Editorial Panel has the right to request edits to the content, delay the publication or refuse publication if the issues raised are not satisfactorily resolved.
- d. As the ultimate responsible body, Strath Union's Board of Trustees, taking the decision of the Panel into consideration, reserve the absolute right to refuse publication if necessary. The Board is the arbiter for any contentious issues that the editorial board is unable to adjudicate on.
- e. Content should be referred to a lawyer if a resolution can't be found and the content can't be retracted, or if the complainants are not happy with the resolution.
- f. If a piece of content or the conduct of a volunteer brings the Union or University into disrepute, the [Crisis and Public Communications Protocol](#) will be followed.

## 6. Advertising

Student media outlets may choose to advertise external companies as a source of income. This can either be organised by the committee or through Strath Union's Advertising & Sales Coordinator.

1. All advertisements through student media outlets must abide by all current Union policy and restrictions on advertising.
2. All income from advertising must be paid into the Media Society's savings account with the Union, not to an individual creator (see 4.e)
3. Any content containing an advertisement must be clearly distinguished from other content, in accordance with the [Advertising Standards Authority rules](#).
4. If arranging advertising through Strath Union's Advertising & Sales Coordinator:
  - i. Media societies will be able to make use of existing contacts and get the best rates, benefit from all contracts and invoicing being handled by the Union, and this will ensure that advertising is consistent across the Union.
  - ii. Media societies can decide what they offer advertisers.
  - iii. Any profit made from advertising will be subject to a deduction for the commission of Strath Union's Advertising & Sales Coordinator. The remaining profit will be deposited into the media society's savings account.

## 7. Insurance and Liability

- a. Insurance is arranged through Endsleigh Insurance Services Ltd. and cover is subject to adherence to this policy.
- b. In most instances Strath Union would be liable for any legal action taken with regards to a piece of content, however an individual may be personally liable if operating outwith Union policies and guidelines.

## 8. Complaints & Breach of Policy

- a. Complaints about a member's conduct or behaviour can be submitted using [Strath Union's complaints procedure](#). This will be handled through Strath Union's [Disciplinary Procedure](#). The member may be prevented from creating content through a Student Media outlet while the complaint is being investigated.
- b. Complaints about a piece of content should be sent to [strathunion.societies@strath.ac.uk](mailto:strathunion.societies@strath.ac.uk). The content will be un-published if possible, when the complaint is received, and while it is investigated by the Student Media Editorial Panel. The content may be re-published if the complaint is resolved.
- c. This policy, along with the complaints procedures outlined will be publicly available on the Strath Union website, and links to this should be made available wherever the content is consumed (eg. on the media outlets' websites)

# Appendix 1 - Student Media Editorial Panel Terms of Reference

## 1. Purpose of the Panel

Student Media at Strathclyde is independent from the Union in terms of editorial control and content. However, as the Student Media societies are part-funded by and organised under the Union, the Union is responsible for ensuring compliance with the current legal and policy context relevant to the production, publication, and dissemination of all forms of media and content - but only with regard to matters of potential libel, defamation, and sensitive material.

The individual student media committees are empowered to scrutinise their own content before publication, so the Editorial Panel is there as support for them, and as final sign off for situations where there are disputes.

## 2. Aims of the Panel

To use their professional judgement to undertake the responsibility and authority given by the Board of Trustees to:

- a. Promote a culture of accountability and transparency throughout the Union's student media operations
- b. Scrutinise, review, and consider the proposed publication of sensitive material, as described in the Student Media Policy (5.b)

## 3. Role of the Panel

- a. To provide advice and support to the committees of the Student Media societies.
- b. To advise the committees of any matter that threatens or carries a serious risk to the individual, the Union or the University, and of any actions necessary to mitigate such risk.
- c. To offer an ultimate port of call for any urgent or highly sensitive concerns raised by the student media committees in respect of the current legal, reputational, and policy context relevant to the production, publication and dissemination of all forms of media and content.
- d. To investigate complaints made against a piece of content, but not the conduct of a member.

## 4. Panel Membership

- a. The Vice President Community (chair)
- b. A staff member from the Student Engagement department who most directly supports the Student Media societies (clerk)
- c. An external Trustee of the Union
- d. A member of staff from the Union's communications department
- e. A committee member of each media society

The CEO or Deputy CEO may be invited to attend to address any matters that require legal, financial or governance input. For matters pertaining to the University of Strathclyde, a suitable representative (Director of Communications, Head of Marketing & Communications) may be invited to attend.

Members of the Editorial Panel are required to undertake Media Law training, unless already qualified. The Panel is able to take external advice from appropriately qualified persons, where necessary.

## 5. Panel Administration

- a. The panel will meet as and when issues arise - three working days notice will be given prior to a meeting, however, for time sensitive issues the panel may have to convene at short notice.
- b. Quorum is at least three panellists
- c. The Panel can meet virtually and/or communicate electronically to make a determination. Records of these discussions must be kept.
- d. Meetings of the Panel will be minuted by the Union.
- e. The Panel has the right to ask those 'in attendance' to leave, especially during presentations by, or discussions with, external advisors.
- f. The Panel will make the final decision on publication of content of a sensitive nature which must be adhered to by the student media committees and their members.
- g. Union staff will be responsible for liaising with the panel and other parties, and for communicating the outcomes of panel decisions.