

STUDENT MEDIA CODE

Version Control

Version 1 – Approved by Satisfaction, Engagement and Participation Sub Committee on 20th November 2017

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Student Media Code

This Code includes:

1. Introduction
2. Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards
3. Editorial Independence
4. High Risk Content
5. Plagiarism and Copyright
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7. Online content – websites and blogs
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10. Conduct and Discipline
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1. Introduction

The Union believes that effectively run groups within Student Media provide a vital means of reflecting the student voice. Each section also provide challenging and rewarding opportunities for members, enhancing the student experience and providing an opportunity for skills development.

The purpose of media groups can be summarised as follows:

- To produce student publications/programming that is originated by students for students.
- To act as a forum for student debate, reflecting as accurately as possible campus life and the views of Cardiff University Students' Union members.
- To act as a platform for members to gain skills and experience in the organisation and distribution of media publications and outlets.



- To produce, as accurately as possible, content which informs and entertains its audiences with truth and fairness at its forefront.

Student Media consists of:

- Gair Rhydd
- Quench
- Cardiff Union TV (CUTV)
- Xpress Radio

2. Code of conduct and ethical standards

Student media groups are subject to the scrutiny of the law but will also adhere to their relevant professional code of conduct including:

Print media:

IPSO

National Union of Journalists

Broadcast media:

Ofcom

Student Media Volunteers shall ensure they are familiar with and uphold the NUJ Code of Conduct:

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.



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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.

3. Editorial Independence

The relationship that exists between Student Media and the Students' Union is detailed within the Student Media and Students' Union Relationship Statement as can be seen in Appendix 1.

This can be summarised as:

- Student Media itself is not independent of the Students' Union
- The Union acts as publisher and as a result holds liability in relation to output
- The Union provides support to Student Media to ensure that volunteers understand the legal context in which they are placed



- The Union does not seek to exert editorial control, however, it must have the ability to protect itself from litigious action
- The Student Media Advisory Group will support editors and controllers in the production of content and may direct Student Media to withhold publication or broadcast until mitigating actions can be put in place.

4. High Risk Content

The following process must be followed by all editors, presenters or contributors.

Identifying high risk content

High risk content, is editorial content that it is reasonable to think could generate a response in terms of a complaint or the pursuit of legal recourse from a subject within the content. Content will include any output in print or broadcast format and shall include digital output such as websites and social media channels. The following (non exhaustive) list of topics or scenarios would be classed as high risk:

- Any content relating to ongoing police investigations, proceedings in court, or any reporting restrictions relating to a case.
- Any content relating to proscribed organisations or organisations that incite or promote hatred
- Any content that names or enables the identity of an individual or group and alleges inappropriate conduct
- Any content referencing the name of letting agents in relation to standards of provision or compliance with regulation
- Any content to include criticism of individuals within Cardiff University staff or management
- Any content naming or otherwise enabling the identification of individuals or members of a group when doing so may have an impact upon their wellbeing. This may be as the result of an extreme view they may hold or where they are involved in work that some may disagree with.
- Any content including celebrity “Bad News” stories, where an injunction may exist preventing content being published



This is NOT an exhaustive list and lead volunteers and editors should declare to the panel any content that it is reasonable to assume may cause offense or upset to an individual or group.

Care should be exercised with regard to coverage of party political content. As a registered Charity, the Union is not permitted to invest resources in party political campaigning activity. Commentary of party politics should be balanced and provide a student view of the topic being debated.

Where such content is identified, the process below should be followed. The process exists to protect contributors, editors or controllers and the Union from potential legal action as a result of either breaches of the law or resulting civil claims. Disregard or circumvention of this process will put individuals and the organisation at significant risk and would be treated as a disciplinary matter.

In order to initiate the process, the editor or controller should notify any member of the Media Advisory Group at the earliest opportunity.

Process for managing high risk content

Where content is identified as high risk either through its inclusion on the list above, or as a result of other concerns, the following process should be followed:

Action	Responsible Person	Timeline
Identify items that are a potential legal risk and consult Advisory Group	Editor/Controller	No later than a week prior to publication or broadcast
Draft of article/content sent to Advisory Group with supporting evidence that backs-up the content	Editor/Controller	Within 24 hours of article first being highlighted to panel
Advisory Group decides if legal advice is required	Advisory Group	Four days prior to publication – 10.00am
Editor/Controller to email alternative content ideas to Advisory Group	Editor/Controller	Four days prior to publication – 10.00am
Advisory Group seeks legal advice (if required)	Advisory Group	Four days prior to publication – end of day



Editor/Controller to send right of reply requests to parties to allow them to respond/comment on proposed content	Editor/Controller	Three days prior to publication – midday
Editor/Controller to have backup article in place	Editor/Controller	Three days prior to publication – end of day
Decision made by Advisory Group on whether content can run without amendment, with amendment, or whether backup content should be used	Advisory Group	Two days prior to publication – by midday
If final content can run, but with amendments, re-draft sent to Advisory Group	Editor/Controller	Two days prior to publication – end of day
Final sign-off of content by Advisory Group	Advisory Group	Day prior to publication
AI generated text permission to publish	Editor/Controller/Manager	No later than two weeks prior to publication or broadcast

Any individual member of the Advisory Group may be approached to seek informal advice prior to or during formulation of content. In this instance the group member may provide advice or guidance and give a steer as to whether the matter should be formally reported to the Advisory Group.

5. Plagiarism and Copyright

Student Media Groups will not permit acts of plagiarism and breaches of copyright by their members.

Use of images, audio, text and video from other sources.



Student Media Groups may only reproduce images with permission of the person/company that holds the copyright or those that are copyright free.

Use of images, audio, text and video by a Student Media Group.

By submitting a photo, text or video to a Student Media Group authors are agreeing to give an unlimited, perpetual, royalty free licence of any and all rights subsisting in the photo or video for use by the Union and all affiliated Student Media Groups for any and all purposes that the Union and the Student Media Groups may consider appropriate within the terms of this policy (including, without limitation, for use on websites and in published material, and for sale to the University and certain selected student groups.)

Financial penalties that arise from unauthorised reproduction of content shall be borne by the contributor and editor.

This guidance must be made clear to contributors upon engaging with Student Media Groups.

Use of AI in Journalism and Broadcasting.

AI generated text should not be included within an article or spoken by a broadcaster unless they have first sought permission from the Editor/Controller.

The Editor/Controller will not grant permission unless it is appropriate in all circumstances, and the journalist/broadcaster has taken steps to verify the material generated as accurate, and steps must be taken to ensure there is no breach of copyright.

Where permission is given to use AI generated text the journalist/broadcaster should acknowledge the source.”

Failure to follow the above procedure and someone uses generative AI and does not seek permission to use or acknowledge the source will result in appropriate disciplinary action, which may include a formal warning, required retraining, or other measures deemed necessary based on the severity of the breach.

6. Submission by authors to Cardiff Student Media

- The copyright of the article belongs to the relevant student publication or platform. The author(s) can use the article in other forums so long as the student publication or platform is acknowledged as the place of the original publication.
- The original publication cannot be removed or amended by the author unless to correct an inaccuracy.



- The student publication or platform will not remove or amend the original article just because the author's views have changed, but the article or broadcast at the discretion of the editor or manager may be tagged to reflect this change of view

7. Online content – websites and blogs

Where groups frequently publish copies of their publication or host blogs, their website must include the following disclaimer:

“The information and views provided in these web pages are not those of Cardiff University Students’ Union”

Furthermore, where groups regularly engage in debate through their webpage the following statements should be posted on the page as guidance to contributors:

“Please make contributions civil and tasteful and constructive. No disruptive, offensive or abusive behaviour. No unlawful or objectionable content. Unlawful, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, racially offensive or otherwise objectionable material is not acceptable.”

“Offensive content brought to the attention of the Editor/Station Manager will be dealt with at the discretion of the responsible person; this may include exercising the right to remove reported content.”

8. Managing relationships with the Union and University

Whilst Student Media holds editorial independence from both Cardiff University and Cardiff University Students’ Union, an effective working relationship is beneficial to both Student Media and the institutions. The organisations can provide support, advice and content as well as information relating to the University and broader higher education landscape. In light of this:

Student Media shall seek to ensure that:

- Right of reply is offered to either organisation in relation to content referencing either organisation
- Reasonable time be given to respond to media enquiries. Wherever possible this should allow 48 hours for a response



- Reporting of matters relating to either organisation is accurate and up to date

Cardiff University and Cardiff University Students' Union shall seek to ensure that:

- Media enquiries are responded to in a timely fashion
- Up to date information is provided

Enquiries to the University should be directed to:

communications@cardiff.ac.uk

The main point of contact for Cardiff University is:

Chris Jones

Head of Communications

02920 874731

Enquiries to the Union should be directed to:

SomL@cardiff.ac.uk

The main point of contact for the Students' Union is:

Laura Som

Head of Marketing and Communications

02920 781516

In relation to both the Union and University:

- All media enquiries should be directed to the contacts above. Staff members should not be approached directly for information or comment on editorial content.
- Individual members of staff shall not be named or identifiable in content
- Comments or response from the Students' Union or University should be attributed to a Union or University "spokesperson"
- All discussions – unless specifically discussed in advance as off the record – will be considered on the record and attributable to a spokesperson.



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- When Student Media volunteers are engaging with elected officers, specific clarity should be given when such a conversation is being used to source a content or a quote for editorial content and they are “on record”.

9. Reporting on Sensitive Matters

Student media channels are likely to report on sensitive topics around student wellbeing and mental health. When doing so the following guidance will be observed:

- Use of the Reporting Guidelines for Suicide produced by the Samaritans will be considered the base line in responsible journalism for such content
- Use of primary survey activity should be balanced and reflective of engagement by students
- All articles should provide a proportionate section of content that provides signposting to appropriate advice services.

10. Conduct and Discipline

Student Media volunteers have access to the Student Media Offices and studios under the following terms and conditions:

- The venue must be left secure when not occupied. We have had multiple instances of theft from the offices due to doors being left unlocked. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to ensure the facility is locked whenever not in use. The two doors onto the balcony, the main door and the store room door should all be locked when not occupied. Equipment stored in the office is not insured when or if left unsecured.
- The Media offices are accessible from 07:00 to 00:00 each day, during term time. Out of term time, these hours will be reduced. Members will only be permitted to remain in the Media Offices after this time where express permission has been granted by the Union in advance.
- No alcohol is permitted to be consumed in the office areas. Students under the influence of drink or other substances are not permitted to participate in activity within the offices. Anyone under the influence should be asked to leave.
- All volunteers should behave in a reasonable manner and refrain from behaviour that is likely to offend or upset other users of the office or building. Media volunteers must obey the instructions of all staff and security staff at all times.



- Equipment should be appropriately stored and secured when not in use. Equipment booking and sign out procedures must be followed by all volunteers and any missing, damaged or faulty items must be reported at the earliest opportunity.
- Media volunteers are asked to keep the office in a clean and tidy condition.

Should the above conditions be breached, the Union reserves the right to suspend or remove access to any or all facilities by individuals or groups.

11. Changes to the Code

This document will be approved by the Satisfaction, Engagement and Participation Sub Committee of the Board of Trustees of Cardiff University Students' Union.

The Union will seek to consult with Heads of Platforms of Student Media and members of the Advisory Group in relation to updates to this document.



Appendix 1

Student Media and Students' Union Relationship Statement

Student Media exists to provide:

- A voice to the student population
- A platform for debate
- A credible and valuable experience for volunteers
- Information and entertainment, whilst being true and fair

In order to facilitate these objectives, the Students' Union provides support for Newspaper, Magazine, Radio and Television production activities.

Relationship principles

Legal advice tells us:

Student Media is not independent of the Students' Union.

The Students' Union as an organisation acts as publisher and therefore all media content produced by Student Media and its volunteers is published by the Union. Student Media are a constituent part of the Students' Union. If it is accepted that any legal liability for media content is borne by the Students' Union, then in turn it is not possible to define Student Media as independent.

Editorial Independence

Whilst the advice above gives a clear steer that Student Media is not independent from the Students' Union, in order to fulfil the three objectives above, the Union does not wish to exert any editorial control over the content that is published or broadcast.

In producing interesting, challenging and cutting edge content there is a real risk of committing civil offences such as defamation. Similarly, the Union as a charity is governed by the Charity Commission who impose requirements and restrictions around the activity of charities. In both instances there is an opportunity for significant legal and financial implications should things go wrong. Both individuals and organisations involved in the production of content that results in civil or compliance action can be held liable.

The Union seeks to ensure it can provide protection to volunteers and itself from any resulting action. As a result, the Union and Student Media need to work together to ensure that such action is avoided.



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With Rights, come Responsibilities

In order for the Union to be able to provide editorial independence, there are responsibilities for volunteers and the Union that need to be understood and followed.

Student Media Responsibilities

- To make decisions and act in a manner that is consistent with best journalistic practice
- To identify high risk content and take appropriate action to minimise risk, following appropriate procedures
- To ensure content does not infringe upon the intellectual property rights of third parties

Union Responsibilities

- To provide appropriate training and support to volunteers to understand the media law
- To provide appropriate training and support to volunteers to undertake their roles effectively in line with policies and procedures in place
- To provide appropriate guidance and support to volunteers with regard to high risk topics
- To provide appropriate insurance cover for volunteers engaged in Student Media

Where responsibilities and actions are not being undertaken the Union may seek to take any of the following action:

- Suspend inclusion of high risk content
- Suspend publication, circulation or broadcast
- Suspend an individual's involvement in Student Media
- Suspend all media platform activity

Disregard of, or intentional circumvention of procedures in place to manage high risk content may result in disciplinary action against individuals.

