



Student Media Code

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1. Introduction

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

The purpose of Student Media groups can be summarised as follows:

- To produce student publications/programming that is organised by students for students.
- To act as a forum for student debate, reflecting as accurately as possible student life and the views of Undeb Aberystwyth members.
- To act as a platform for members to gain skills and experience in the organisation and distribution of media publications and outlets.
- To provide, as accurately as possible, content which informs and entertains its audiences with truth and fairness at its forefront. At all times in compliance with national standards of reporting.

Volunteering projects that fall under the branch of 'Student Media' include:

- Mouth of the Ystwyth (Student Newspaper)
- Tidal Waves (Student Radio)

From this point on "Student Media" will consists of the above volunteering projects.

Each Student Media group will also abide by the affiliation requirements and expectations of student-led volunteering projects, including being up to date and in compliance with all rules and regulations concerning Undeb Aber and the Student Group Bye-laws. This can be summarised as:

- Having at minimum a Head Project Leader, and at least one Project Leader
- A complete set of core documents
- Recruit and retain new and existing student volunteers
- Ensure health and safety of volunteers and the overall project
- Oversee and maintain a range of student group assets
- Support a culture of inclusiveness, respect and understanding

For a full overview of the expectations of Student-led Volunteering Projects please see [here](#)



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The Head Project Leader shall be the person responsible for its groups activities and content. The second project leader will act as a support to the Head, stepping in to take on the duties of the Head only when absent. Other project roles can be added where required and with the agreement of the Students' Union Volunteering Coordinator.

Throughout this document where an apparent discrepancy occurs this should be raised with the Students' Union Volunteering Coordinator who will review the situation and advise amendments where necessary in accordance with Union processes and Section 12 of this code.

Terms of Reference

- **Union/Students' Union:** Undeb Aberystwyth
- **University:** Aberystwyth University
- **Head of Student Media group:** the head project leaders who are responsible for the activities and content of their individual Student Media group
- **Volunteer(s):** all individuals engaging with Student Media groups, from the Heads of Student Media groups and project leaders, to content contributors, to those offering operational support
- **Student Media Advisory Group/Advisory Group:** those individuals listed in Appendix 1 who are responsible for supporting and advising the Student Media groups

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 (NUJ)

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 their 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 their 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 their 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, religion, 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 their own work or of the medium by which they are employed.
11. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about their 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 Heads of Student Media in the production of content and may direct the Student Media Group to withhold publication or broadcast until mitigating actions can be put in place



4. Advertising

In cases of advertising individual student media groups are able to approach and be approached by potential advertisers. A standard Sponsorship Agreement Form should be overseen by the Head of the Student Media Group, and completed with the potential advertiser outlining the advertising agreement. Project leads should liaise with the Students' Union Media, Sales and Events Coordinator at all times in relation to advertising. No Student Media outlet will produce or sell advertising of its own accord without the authorisation of the Students' Union Media, Sales and Events Coordinator.

The Students' Union shall have complete discretion as to the choice of advertisements that are distributed by the Student Media group (e.g. any of the organisations on the Students Union veto list). Any requests to vary existing advertising or incorporate additional advertisements must be authorised by the Student Union's Head of Communications and Engagement. All revenues from the sale or other provision of advertisements shall accrue directly to the Volunteering budget within the Students' Union, and may be used where relevant, to support the Student Media annual budget.

5. Bilingualism and Translation

All Student Media groups are expected to follow the Unions' [Bilingual Policy](#) in accordance with all other Union Student groups.

Additionally, any output will need to be bilingual. To facilitate this the Students' Union will offer Student Media groups a translation service as required. The group should give a minimum of 5 working days for full translation. Where appropriate a Student Media Group is able to provide pre-translated material for proofreading the Union Translator. For this the group should give a minimum of 2 working days for completion.

The times given above are estimates, the student group should liaise with the Union Translator as required to get an accurate estimate of the time needed for translation.

Where a piece of material is going through the risk management process outlined below the Student Media Group should liaise closely with the Union Translator to ensure prompt translation before distribution.

6. High Risk Content

The following process must be followed by all volunteers...

Identifying high risk content

High risk content, is editorial content that 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 Union acts as publisher of all content of Student Media groups and therefore reserve the right to remove or stop the publication or broadcast of any content on the grounds that it is either:

- Defamatory
- Illegal
- Not in compliance with this document
- Against any of the policies or governing documents of the Students' Union and its associated student groups

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 Aberystwyth University staff or management
- Any content naming or otherwise enabling the identification of individual 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, project leaders 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 on party politics should be balanced and provide a student view of the topic being debated.

Where such content is identified as High Risk, the process below should be followed. The process exists to protect volunteers 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 Head of Student Media group should notify any member of the 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 Individual	Timeline
Identify items that are a potential risk and consult the Advisory Group	Head of Student Media group	No later than a week prior to publication or broadcast
Draft of article/content sent to Advisory Group with supporting evidence that back-up the content	Head of Student Media group	Within 24 hours of article first being highlighted to Advisory Group
Advisory Group decides if legal advice is required	Advisory Group	Four days prior to publications – 10am
Head of Student Media group to email alternative content ideas to Advisory Group	Head of Student Media group	Four days prior to publication – 10am
Advisory Group seeks legal advice (if required)	Advisory Group	Three days prior to publication – 12pm
Head of Student Media group to have backup article/content in place (and consider translation needs)	Head of Student Media group	Three days prior to publication – 2pm
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 – 12pm
If final content can run, but with amendments, re-draft sent to Advisory Group (and check translation changes)	Head of Student Media group	Two days prior to publication – end of day
Final sign-off of content by Advisory Group	Advisory Group	Day prior to publication

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

7. Content Complaints and Appeals

A complaint concerning any content that has been published or broadcast by a Student Media group should in the first instance be made in writing to the Head of Student Media group.

All Student Media groups must make reasonable efforts to advertise their complaints procedure.





If the Head of Student Media group upholds the complaints, they may offer the complainant either:

- A retraction and apology, or
- The opportunity to an alternative view, which should be given reasonably similar prominence to the content giving rise to the complaint.

In this instance anything published would still be expected to follow the guidance and processes outlined in this document

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, or does not receive a response, then they may appeal via the Students' Union [Student Complaints Form](#) within 14 days of the article being published.

The decision of the Students' Union will be final in both cases, and may not be appealed further.

8. 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 right 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 Student Media groups may consider appropriate within the terms of this policy (including, without limitations, 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 relevant volunteer(s), project leaders and Head of Student Media group that produced the content.

This guidance must be made clear to volunteers upon engaging with Student Media groups.

9. Online Content

Where groups host their content, it must include the following disclaimer:

"The views and opinions expressed in this content are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Undeb Aberystwyth"

Furthermore, where groups regularly engage in debate the following statements should be posted as guidance to contributors:





"Please make contributions civil and tasteful and constructive. No disruptive, offensive or abusive behaviour. No unlawful or objectionable content is permitted. 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 Head of Student Media group will be dealt with at the discretion of the Head of Student Media group and relevant project leaders; this may include exercising the right to remove reported content where content breaches Union/University policies of conduct."

Student Media groups are expected to follow the guidance outlined in the Unions ['Student Groups Web Platforms Guidance'](#).

10. Managing relationships with the Union and University

Whilst Student Media holds editorial independence from both Aberystwyth University and Aberystwyth 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

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

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

Enquiries to the University should be directed to: communications@aber.ac.uk // 01970 622946

Enquiries to the Union should be directed to: union.marketing@aber.ac.uk // 01970 621700

The main point of contact for the Students' Union is:
Eleri Wyn & Cleo Stanford
Head of Communications and Engagement

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



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

11. Reporting on Sensitive Matters

Where appropriate NUJ has guidelines for ethical journalism and help with reporting specific issues, such as:

- mental health, mental illness and suicide
- race, age, LGBT and violence against women
- legal briefings on a range of issues including surveillance and defamation
- data protection and journalism – a guide for the media.

The NUJ code of conduct for ethical journalism: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/about-us/rules-and-guidance/code-of-conduct.html>

NUJ guidelines on reporting are available in the resources section of the NUJ website: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/learn/resources.html>

Where appropriate all articles should provide a proportionate section of content that provides signposting to appropriate advice services following consultation with the Student's Union Advisor.

12. Changes to the Code

This document will be approved by the Trustee Board.

The Union will seek consult with relevant Union and University staff, volunteer project leaders, and others deemed necessary in relation to updates to this document.

The document is expected to be reviewed at a minimum every three years. Within this period proposed changes should be made to the Volunteering Coordinator who will consult with the Student Media Advisory Group before approving via the Trustee Board.

Next review date: 16/01/2026



Updated: 16/05/2025



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. This may also include accompanying platforms (e.g. a website) to facilitate such activities.

The Student Media Advisory Group will be headed by the Students' Union Volunteering Coordinator and will consist of the following individuals:

- Volunteering Coordinator [Union]
- Student Opportunities Officer [Union]
- Head of Communications and Engagement [Union]
- Head of Student Opportunities [Union]
- Individual from the University Communications & Public Affairs Team
- Individual with experience in Media Law

Relationship principles

Legal advice tells us:

Student Media is not independent of the Students' Union

The Students' Union as an organisation acts as a 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 Student Media is not independent from the Students' Union, in order to fulfil the 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 actions 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.





Key Responsibilities

In order for the Union to be able to provide editorial independence to Student Media, 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
- Attend all required training (e.g. Media Law) before publishing any content

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.

Resolution of disputes between Student Media groups and the Students' Union

The rights of the Union/Advisory Group to remove or prevent the publication of any content on the grounds mentioned above shall be exercised jointly by the Head of Student Opportunities and Student Opportunities Officer only.

If there is a dispute between the Union/Advisory Group and the Head of Student Media group on a decision to exercise these rights, then the Head of Student Media group may appeal to the Board of Trustees to review this decision.

When the Board of Trustees considers any appeal, the Head of Student Opportunities and Student Opportunities Officer shall not take part in the discussion or vote on the matter.

For the avoidance of doubt, if such as appeal is made, the decision of the Head of Student Opportunities and Student Opportunities Officer shall stand valid and shall not be questioned until and unless the Board overturns the decision.

