

Student Media Policy

Approval Date	12 th December 2019
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Review Frequency	Three Years

Review History		
Date	Name	Comments
December 2019	R Dalton	

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Background

In August 2015, National Union of Students released a Student Media Guide, in collaboration with the National Union of Journalists and Endsleigh, giving key advice to Students' Unions about the issues and potential risks relating to student media, from defamation to complaints or disputes. This advice was updated in August 2018 (Appendix 1).

This guidance outlined measures that SUs could take to ensure that they had procedural structures in places for dealing with issues that could arise from student media. These measures must clarify the level of control and dependence between the students' union and student media, and must promote independence for student journalists. They must also clarify issues around funding, editorial control, conduct and behaviour, complaints and disputes.

Liverpool Guild's Student Media Policy and Code of Conduct was approved by the Trustee Board in March 2016, as a response to this guidance.

In 2019, after significant consultation with the three main student media societies, it was decided to create one student media society and brand – Liverpool Guild Student Media. The Student Media Policy and Code of Conduct has been updated for October 2019.

1. Overview of Liverpool Guild Student Media

- 1.1. Liverpool Guild of Students will provide for a student-led media society, called Liverpool Guild Student Media. This society may produce content for the following mediums:
 - a. an online newspaper;
 - b. a radio station;
 - c. a printed newspaper;
 - d. a creative writing magazine;
 - e. a YouTube channel.
- 1.2. The purpose of Liverpool Guild Student Media is to benefit students at the University of Liverpool by:
 - a. Reporting and commenting on matters that are affecting students, and are of interest to them, in a fair, accurate, critical manner, whilst complying with national standards of reporting;
 - b. 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 & awareness in Liverpool;
 - c. Informing students of current affairs including activities and campaigns inside the University of Liverpool and the Guild;
 - d. Providing scrutiny of the University and the Guild, as well as raising awareness and supporting the governance and democratic functions of these organisations;
 - e. Providing a platform for students to express and communicate their views, as well as developing and giving opportunities for students to obtain skills in broadcasting, journalism, and publishing;

- f. Providing an excellent standard of content, and recognising and championing outstanding content produced by students.
- 1.3. Each medium will have a Chair(s), who shall be the person(s) responsible for its activities and content; these Chairs will sit as members of the Core Committee. The Chairs of Liverpool Guild Student Media are:
 - a. Liverpool Guild Student Media Publishing Chair(s)
 - b. Liverpool Guild Student Media Radio Chair
 - c. Liverpool Guild Student Media TV Chair
 - 1.4. Liverpool Guild Student Media will be supported in the day-to-day running of the society by other committee roles; these roles will sit as members of the Core Committee. These positions include:
 - a. Treasurer
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Social Secretary
 - d. Marketing Officer
 - 1.5. The Core Committee above will be supported by an elected committee of Content Editors, who will produce and commission content from contributing members. The Content Editors are:
 - a. Publishing Content Editor: Campus News & Politics
 - b. Publishing Content Editor: External News & Politics
 - c. Publishing Content Editor: Arts & Culture
 - d. Publishing Content Editor: Music
 - e. Publishing Content Editor: Sport
 - f. Publishing Content Editor: Food & Drink
 - g. Publishing Content Editor: Comment
 - h. Radio Content Editor: Campus News & Politics
 - i. Radio Content Editor: External News & Politics
 - j. Radio Content Editor: Arts & Culture
 - k. Radio Content Editor: Music
 - l. Radio Content Editor: Sport
 - m. Radio Content Editor: Food & Drink
 - n. Radio Content Editor: Comment
 - o. TV Content Editor: Campus News & Politics
 - p. TV Content Editor: External News & Politics
 - q. TV Content Editor: Arts & Culture
 - r. TV Content Editor: Music
 - s. TV Content Editor: Sport
 - t. TV Content Editor: Food & Drink
 - u. TV Content Editor: Comment

- 1.6. These voluntary roles may be reviewed on an annual basis by the Student Media Advisory Group to ensure that they sufficiently meet the requirements of the society
- 1.7. The Liverpool Guild Student Media Committee will not need to complete a registration form on an annual basis but must provide full details of their committee as requested.

2. Editorial Independence and Responsibilities

- 2.1. No societies are independent of the Guild, including Liverpool Guild Student Media. The Guild is legally responsible for all societies and their activities. Therefore, the Guild acts as a publisher and broadcaster and all media content produced by volunteers, for the Guild and for Liverpool Guild Student Media, is published by the Guild.
- 2.2. Liverpool Guild Student Media has the right to editorial independence in their published and broadcasted content, which is the right to print or broadcast content as the Chairs see fit. The right to editorial independence of Liverpool Guild Student Media is subject to the following provisions:
 - a. Publications and broadcasts by Liverpool Guild Student Media must make clear that the views expressed in all content are those of the contributor and not necessarily the views of the Guild. The following measures must therefore be adhered to:
 - i. Briefings will be provided for those hosting radio shows by the Guild, which outline that any views expressed must clearly be identifiable as one's own and not that of Liverpool Guild of Students, and that they must adhere to this Policy and the Student Media Code of Conduct
 - ii. Opinion must not be presented as news. Appropriate examples of opinion reporting include 'vox pop' interviews, Letters to the Editor, and opinion articles clearly marked as such. In published Opinion pieces, these must be clearly noted as Opinion, both in print (by featuring in the Opinion Section) and online (by having 'Opinion' in the title and a statement, as part of the article, which states 'Opinion pieces are the view of the author and in no way reflect the views of Liverpool Guild Student Media or Liverpool Guild of Students.')
 - b. If any publication alleges wrongdoing, incompetence, or makes other significant allegations, those concerned must be given an appropriate and timely opportunity to respond;
 - c. Student Officers must be given reasonable time to provide comment in response to requests from Liverpool Guild Student Media.
 - d. Every effort must be made to seek a balance of opinion for published material. However, providing all students are 'free to respond' and specific opinions have not been sought or coached, then there is no requirement to publish a balance of opinion if no opposing balance is available;
 - e. Liverpool Guild Student Media publications must include a variety of pluralistic views, reflecting the diverse community of students at the University of Liverpool;
 - f. All content must be produced in accordance with the Student Media Code of Conduct;

- g. All facts used in content must be accurate and verifiable;
 - h. Coverage of any Elections (including General, Local, Council, and Guild elections), Preferenda, Summit (and proposed ideas) and other democratic Guild events must be balanced, impartial, accurate and fair. All coverage must be produced in accordance the Guild's Guidance on Charity Law & Political Neutrality (Appendix 2);
 - i. The Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer are responsible overall for the conduct of the Guild's elections and preferenda and therefore reserves the right to remove or stop the publication or broadcast of any content on the grounds that it is biased, partial or otherwise prejudicial to the fair conduct of an election or preferendum;
 - j. The Chairs of Liverpool Guild Student Media must give due consideration and weight to any comments made by the Guild on any content that is proposed to be published;
 - k. Content must be produced in a manner compatible with the Guild's Staff-Student Protocol
- 2.3. The policies of the Guild apply to all parts of the Guild, including the media content produced by the Guild and Liverpool Guild Student Media. These include our Equality and Diversity Policy, our Zero Tolerance to Homophobia and Sexual Harassment Policy, our Data Protection and Information Security Policy and the University's Policy and Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.
- 2.4. Students involved in Liverpool Guild Student Media have the right to challenge Guild policies as any member does, through the Guild's democratic processes;
- 2.5. The Trustees of the Guild reserve the right to remove, stop or request the amendment of a publication or broadcast of any content on the grounds that it is either:
- a. Defamatory,
 - b. Illegal,
 - c. Not in compliance with this Code of Conduct, or
 - d. Against the Articles of Association, Constitution or Policies of the Guild

3. Content Review and Publication Process

- 3.1. Liverpool Guild Student Media's Content Review and Publication Process is centred on ensuring content is accurate, relevant, and legal.
- 3.2. All content for printed publication must be sent to the Societies Manager at least seven working days before going to print for review.
- 3.3. If online content is identified as acceptable by the Content Editors or Core Committee, this will then be published online by either a Content Editor or Core Committee.
- 3.4. Online content will be reviewed post-publication intermittently by the Guild's Societies Manager to ensure that it complies with this Policy and the Student Media Code of Conduct. Any content that is found not to comply will be escalated following the Escalation Process below

- 3.5. Comments on online articles must be moderated by Content Editors and Core Committee post-publication and any concerns about comments that have been made should be escalated following the Escalation Process or Complaints Process below

4. Escalation and Appeals Process

- 4.1. All content must be escalated, prior to publication, if any of the Content Editors or Core Committee answer yes to the below questions. It's important to note that with any content that meets the below criteria, it does not mean that the content will not be published, but that it must be escalated for further discussion, checking, and possible development.
- a. Are there any potential defamation issues?
 - b. Is it party political?
 - c. Does it suggest any illegal activity?
 - d. Does it relate to a crime?
 - e. Does it cover sexual misconduct?
 - f. Does it use offensive language (in relation to representation, equality, and liberation) or does it deal with stereotypes of groups?
 - g. Is the topic or content controversial?
 - h. Is there anything that requires additional fact checking, right to reply, or a response?
 - i. Do you have any concerns in relation to media law?
 - j. Is there any anything in it that concerns you or that you would like to double check?
- 4.2. If online content does require escalation, a Core Committee Member must send the content, prior to publication, to the Societies Manager. They will complete an initial assessment of the content and, if they agree that the content requires escalation, they will escalate it to the Deputy Director of Membership Services and the Director of Membership Services
- 4.3. For content for printed publication, the Societies Manager will complete an initial assessment of the content and, if they assess that the content requires escalation, they will escalate it to the Deputy Director of Membership Services and the Director of Membership Services.
- 4.4. For all content that has been escalated:
- a. The Deputy Director of Membership Services and the Director of Membership Services will review the content and will make a decision about whether or not it should be published; appropriate legal advice may be sought to aid this decision. The Guild Officers will be informed of any decision that has been made regarding escalated content.

- b. If the content can be published, an email confirmation will be sent to the society within 7 working days from when the content was originally submitted to the Societies Manager, alongside any measures that need to be put in place to reduce any risks associated with the content.
- c. If the content cannot be published, an email confirmation will be sent to the society within 7 working days from when the content was originally submitted to the Societies Manager, which outlines the reasons as to why the content cannot be published.
- d. All decisions will be recorded, dated and signed by the Guild.
- e. An appeal against a decision must be made directly to the Board of Trustees.

5. Complaints Process

- 5.1. Liverpool Guild Student Media must clearly link to the [Guild's Complaints Procedure on their website](#)
- 5.2. If a complaint is made directly to individual committee members, Liverpool Guild Student Media must not respond directly to this complaint. They must remove the content that is being referred to immediately and send a copy of the content and the complaint to the Director of Membership Services within 24 hours.

6. Copyright

- 6.1. All content, publications and broadcast produced by Liverpool Guild Student Media is exclusive copyright of the Guild. The Guild will not withhold the right for society individuals to use the content they have published or broadcast for personal use.
- 6.2. For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the website, marketing assets, social media accounts, trademarks, names, brands, designs and logos of Liverpool Guild Student Media.
- 6.3. Content Editors and Chairs are responsible for ensuring images and music used are published in line with the copyright requirements of the copyright holder.

7. Licensing

- 7.1. The Guild will hold the appropriate licences for broadcasting.
- 7.2. This licence is reviewed and renewed annually in September.

8. Training

- 8.1. All Core Committee and relevant staff must attend all compulsory training, to be organised by the Guild. This will include Media Law and Defamation Training. This must be completed before they start their role. The Core Committee must pass on what has been learnt at this training to the Content Editors, who will also be invited to attend the training.
- 8.2. No one will be able to broadcast or upload any content until they have undertaken Media Law and Defamation Training and any other specific operational training as required by the Guild.
- 8.3. A wider training package will also be offered to Liverpool Guild Student Media throughout the year.

- 8.4. A full and comprehensive handover must be given, supported by the Guild, between the outgoing and incoming Core Committee of Liverpool Guild Student Media when they finish their elected year.

9. Advertising

- 9.1. The Guild will endeavour to provide advertisements, both internally and through helping to secure external advertisements, to be included in the broadcasts and publications of Liverpool Guild Student Media.
- 9.2. The Guild shall have complete discretion as to the choice of advertisements that are provided to Liverpool Guild Student Media.
- 9.3. All income raised from advertising with Liverpool Guild Student Media will be passed on to the society.
- 9.4. Liverpool Guild Student Media must not produce or sell advertising of its own accord without the authorisation of the Director of Membership Services.
- 9.5. Any requests to vary existing advertising or incorporate additional advertisement must be authorised by the Director of Membership Services.

10. Finance

- 10.1. The Guild will provide the Liverpool Guild Student Media Society with an annual budget, to be administered by the Societies Manager, to cover some annual costs for the society, including print editions, training, website hosting and software licences.
- 10.2. This budget will be set, and approved, by the Board of Trustees, on an annual basis.
- 10.3. Liverpool Guild Student Media may receive additional income through membership fees, advertising and sponsorship.
- 10.4. All income may only be spent for the purpose of furthering Liverpool Guild Student Media's objectives and in line with the Guild's Finance Manual.
- 10.5. As Liverpool Guild Student Media is already funded in part by the Guild, the society is not eligible to apply for funding through the Spend It process, laid out for other Guild societies.
- 10.6. Funding for specific training and resources may be requested, where necessary, at Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group meetings.

11. Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group

- 11.1. The Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group will be composed of the Liverpool Guild Student Media Core Committee, a Guild Officer and the Guild's Societies Manager. If relevant, other society members, Guild staff and Officers may also be invited.
- 11.2. All members of the group must make every effort to be in attendance at every meeting
- 11.3. Meetings of the Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group will be organised and minuted by the Guild's Societies Manager.
- 11.4. Meetings of the Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group will be open for any student to observe, and meeting dates will be published on the Guild website.
- 11.5. The purpose of the Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group is:
 - a. To support short-term and long-term objectives for Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group, as set by the Guild;

- b. To discuss issues and topics of shared concern including finance, memberships, inclusivity and standards;
 - c. To coordinate joint activity between Liverpool Guild Student Media and the Guild;
 - d. To review the available committee positions for annual election;
 - e. To discuss any further training requirements;
 - f. To discuss any upcoming Guild events, elections, campaigns or relevant activity.
- 11.6. The Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group will meet at least twice each term, with the date and location to be organised by the Guild's Societies Manager.

12. Student Media Code of Conduct

- 12.1. This Code of Conduct applies to Liverpool Guild Student Media, the Committee, the Content Editors and all students involved with the society, and all content produced by the society, at all times.
- 12.2. Complaints may be made against any content published by Liverpool Guild Student Media for breaching this Code of Conduct. Complaints will be heard in accordance with the [Guild's Complaints Procedure](#).
- 12.3. Individuals must be aware of [University's Conduct and Discipline Procedures](#) and the [University's Social Media Compliance Policy](#)
- 12.4. The [NUJ Code of Conduct](#) must be adhered to at all times.
- 12.5. For those involved with printed and online publications, [IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice](#) must be followed at all times.
- 12.6. For those involved with TV and Radio, [Ofcom's Guidance for TV and Radio Broadcasters](#) must be followed at all times.
- 12.7. When reporting suicide, the [Samaritans' Media Guidelines](#) must be referred to.
- 12.8. Content must be produced in a manner compatible with the Guild's Staff-Student Protocol (Appendix 3).
- 12.9. Different social media platforms also have their own terms and conditions and policies surrounding content which can be posted on their outlets, and publications must familiarise themselves with these rules, so as to avoid content or users being removed.
- 12.10. Members of the Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group may suggest changes to this Code of Conduct, subject to approval by the Group, and then the Board of Trustees.
- 12.11. Amendments to the Code of Conduct will be communicated to the Liverpool Guild Student Media Advisory Group.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: [NUS' Student Media Guide](#)

Appendix 2: [Liverpool Guild's Guidance on Charity Law and Political Neutrality](#)

Appendix 3: [Liverpool Guild's Staff-Student Protocol](#)

Appendix 4: [Liverpool Guild's Student Media Risk Assessment](#)