

MEDIA & PRESS POLICY & GUIDELINES

Document Owner: CEO

Introduction

1. This document is designed for employees and volunteers who may be contacted by media or press organisations on account of their role at the University of Northampton Students' Union. The document provides guidance on the Union's media and press policy and guidelines to follow should you be contacted.
2. This policy covers all external news media including broadcast, electronic and print. This does not exclude student media outlets or University of Northampton media and communications.
3. The Union expects all members of Students' Union staff and all volunteers to read and follow the guidelines set out below. Employees and volunteers should also note that they have a legal responsibility to accurately and fairly represent the Union in any public space, and are expected to uphold the integrity of the organisation.
4. If you have any queries about the policy, please contact your line manager or service coordinator as appropriate in the first instance.

Purpose of Policy

5. The purpose of this policy and set of guidelines is to:
 - 5.1. Provide support and guidance for employees and volunteers who might receive media enquiries
 - 5.2. Ensure information disclosed by the Students' Union (or its affiliated groups) is timely, accurate, comprehensive, authoritative and relevant
 - 5.3. Protect the Union and its community;
 - 5.4. Create consistency and coherence across Union media activities.

Principal Media Contact

6. The **Marketing & Communications Manager** is the University of Northampton Students' Union's principal media contact. This department has expertise in media relations and will determine the best method by which to provide information.
7. The **Marketing & Communications Manager** will convey the official Students' Union position on news items, issues of significance or situations that are particularly controversial or sensitive in nature.
8. Depending on the news item, a Sabbatical Officer, student volunteer or member of staff may be asked to be a spokesperson on a particular issue due to their knowledge, experience or expertise. In such instances, **the Marketing & Communications Manager** will work with that designated spokesperson to prepare them for the media interview as needed. Preparation may include developing talking points as well as training and interview practise.
9. Please note this policy does not prevent or hinder your right to provide comment as a private individual, but does seek to clarify that any statement made to the media on behalf of the Students' Union or any of its affiliated groups will be coordinated **by the Marketing & Communications Manager**. Should you wish to make such a private statement, you should ensure your role at the Students' Union does not form part of the narrative.

Guidelines for Talking with the Media

10. A reporter, producer or other news media may contact you for a number of reasons, for example:
 - 10.1. To get information about the Students' Union
 - 10.2. To get information about a recent unexpected event such as thefts or arrests, accidents or injuries; customer or employee complaints, regulatory actions; etc.
 - 10.3. To get information or comment about an action or event that could impact students, new products, changes in government or University policies.
 - 10.4. To get general information on a topical story in your community such as changes in local governmental officials or policies, problems or issues specific to the community you serve, etc.
11. Refer all media enquiries to **the Marketing & Communications Manager**. Please do not say you are not allowed to talk to a reporter or have to get permission to do so. Instead, tell the reporter: "The Students' Union policy is to refer all media enquiries to **the Marketing & Communications Manager**."
12. Whenever taking a call from the media, the same courtesy and professionalism in which we would like to be interacted with should be displayed. Please act quickly when approached by the media to ensure that the reporter's deadline is met. This is important because the way this call is handled may be the reporter's first impression of the Students' Union and that first impression may shape the story published or the news segment broadcast.
13. Please remember to contact **the Marketing & Communications Manager** if and when you have been approached by the media. Even though you have referred the media, **the Marketing & Communications Manager** may need your help to prepare a response. Do not let a reporter compel you to answer questions on the spot. It is always beneficial to prepare in advance in order to provide accurate and relevant information.

Guidelines for Photographs and Film

14. A similar process as described above will be used when someone from the media is requesting permission to take photographs or to film inside our facilities. Refer the caller to the **Marketing & Communications Manager**.
15. It is a breach of this policy to provide access to any Students' Union venue or University of Northampton Students' Union Services Ltd venue for the purposes of photography or filming without approval from **this department**.
16. Approval will be determined based on a number of criteria including:
 - 16.1. What does the Students' Union have to gain from the photo and filming?
 - 16.2. How much disruption will this cause to operations?
 - 16.3. Does the facility look "picture perfect?"
17. Where granted:
 - 17.1. The media outlet will be provided a permissions form, this provides clear instruction to any restrictions on their activity and the nature of the activity for which permission has been provided.
 - 17.2. Appropriate signage will be displayed in the venue alerting students to the photography or filming.
 - 17.3. The Students' Union will ensure photo or filming consents are obtained as appropriate for the media outlet.
18. A reporter or camera crew may show up unannounced. When dealing with reporters and camera crews who may show up unannounced, staff and volunteers should act with the same courtesy and professionalism as we would expect. Contact **the Marketing & Communications Manager** immediately and let them know which news source is there. They will contact the camera crew's news room or the print photographer's editor for clarification.

19. If you are in doubt as to the authority of any photographer, film crew or media outlet to be in any Students' Union venue or event do not hesitate to ask to see their appropriate Media Permission Form or bring to the attention of a member of Students' Union staff.
20. We cannot prevent the filming or photographing of common areas outside of our venues which we do not operate. Examples would include public footpaths, courtyards and walk ways. We cannot prevent filming or photography on University grounds, but permission must similarly be obtained from the University's Marketing Department.
21. The following guidelines should be used when television camera crews or print photographers show up unannounced outside any venue or event.
 - 21.1. Although we cannot prevent the media from photographing or filming the exterior of our venues, we will contact their news room and/or editors for clarification.
 - 21.2. The media cannot enter our venues to photograph or film without permission.
 - 21.3. The media cannot block the entrance to our venues or prevent people from entering our venue or conducting business as usual.
 - 21.4. We can inform the media if our members complain about the inconvenience caused.
 - 21.5. Be courteous and friendly, remember everything you say and do may be observed and reported by the media representative who is reporting.

Guidelines for Seeking Media Coverage

22. In circumstances in which you believe you have a positive news story to share with the public, contact **the Marketing & Communications Manager. It is the only department authorised to distribute Students' Union press releases, pitch coverage of Students' Union events or hold media events.**
23. Do not call a reporter directly without first consulting **the Marketing & Communications Manager.** The department will work with you to gather information and determine if and how the media should be contacted. Similar measures used by editors and reporters will be considered to determine if your story is newsworthy. Some news items may be more appropriate for internal publicity or University communications.

REVIEW

24. This policy will be reviewed annually by the CEO at a meeting of MT, as per the Document History attached.

DOCUMENT HISTORY – MEDIA & PRESS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Date of this revision: 29/8/18

Date of next revision: 29/8/19

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
07/07/13	n/a	First issue	
29/8/18	18/1/16	Revised to reflect dissolution of the Marketing & Communications Department	

Owner

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Approvals

Approval will be made at MT.