

# Student Media Code of Practice

Members of Student Media Outlets are required to abide by the Student Media Code of Practice which ensures members comply with journalism and media law. Upon joining a Student Media Outlet, as a standard member, associate member or any other type of membership, you are required to agree to the Code.

Only paid members, standard, associate or otherwise, can produce or publish content as part of the Student Media Outlet. Only specified members of the Outlet will be able to publish content to ensure proper proof reading and accountability. Please see the Editorial Process for more information.

By taking part in a Student Media Outlet as a contributor, commentator, broadcaster, interviewee, or member you are agreeing to this Code.

## Editorial Process

Student Media Outlets must follow the editorial process when producing content. The content which is produced must be approved and uploaded by the relevant person as determined by the editorial process. For live broadcasts, producers should plan content to a full enough extent where it can be proofread as a written piece, these should be regularly reviewed by the relevant person. Podcasts or other should be reviewed the same as written content.

Content produced by associate members, must be checked by Principal Officers. If an associate member is taking part in a live broadcast, an [external speaker form](#) must be completed.

All content which is being printed should be sent to [su-studentmedia@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:su-studentmedia@qmul.ac.uk) as per the editorial process.

## Obtaining Information

It is important information which is used, it obtained fairly and ethically. No content should include information gained by illegitimate or illegal access. It should not breach any confidentiality; if information from a personal conversation is to be used; it must be made clear at the start of the conversation that any information disclosed is on the record.

If information is gained in a confidential setting which is worthy of publication, the journalist should seek to gain the information in a legitimate follow up question.

The only exception to the above guidance is where information gained illegitimately is important enough that a failure to report it would be against the aims/objectives of the Student Group or unfair on the student population. A decision on this should be made with the Outlet and Executive Officers before publication.

## Opinion Content

Opinion pieces are popular in journalism but where opinion-based content it should be clearly identified. Where possible, alternative points of view should be included in an opinion piece, if they are not it should be made clear using an editor's note such as below:

*"The opinions in this article are solely the authors own. They do not reflect opinions held by the Outlet, Queen Mary Students' Union or Queen Mary, University of London."*

Where an opinion is woven into factual content, a clear distinction must be made between facts and opinion.

**NB: Defamation can still occur in opinion pieces and this should be considered in line with the editorial process**

## The Law

### Copyright

All Outlets are required to follow copyright law. . Material protected by copyright includes literary, dramatic, artistic, musical works, sound recordings, photography, film, broadcast or typographical arrangement (layouts).

### Defamation

All Outlets are required to abide by the Defamation Act 2013; information on this in relation to the Students' Union.

Malicious Falsehood is similar to defamation but is the reckless publishing of statements that are not defamatory. These can still affect an individual's livelihood.

### Right of reply

Where an Outlet makes a comment about an individual, company, organisation or other which is negative or critical, the right of reply must be offered.

### Privacy

Everyone is entitled to respect for their private life, this is detailed in Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights. Intrusions into an individual's private life without consent must be justified by public interest, for example. Permission should be sought when reporting on a person's private life.

### Contempt of Court

Contempt of Court is a law which protects a person's right to a fair trial; a breach is a serious criminal offence. Content which has a substantial risk of serious prejudice or serious impediment to active proceedings will breach contempt; any content which can prevent witness testimony or the jury reaching a true verdict is contempt. Once an arrest warrant has been issued, or arrest has been made, contempt can occur. This can be backdated to previous content on the issue. Content should avoid identification of those involved, assumptions of guilt or character assassination.

Contempt is also committed by disobeying a court order, such as an injunction.

### Victims, Children and Vulnerable People

Victims of sexual offenses are given anonymity as soon as they report the offence, to any third party not just the authorities. Anonymity lasts for the victim's lifetime, regardless of the outcome of criminal proceedings. Anonymity can be lifted if an adult victim gives written consent.

## Independent Press Standards Organisation: Editors Code Of Practice

### Context

Queen Mary Students' Union Student Media Outlets are required to follow the Independent Press Standards Organisation Editors Code of Practice. These are sets of rules which Outlets are required to follow, and members agree to follow when purchasing a membership to an Outlet.

### Contents

The IPSO Editors Code of Practice can be accessed [here](#). Sections of the Code are linked below:

1. [Accuracy](#)
2. [Privacy](#)
3. [Harassment](#)

4. [Intrusion into grief or shock](#)
5. [Reporting Suicide](#)
6. [Children](#)
7. [Children in sex cases](#)
8. [Hospitals](#)
9. [Reporting of Crime](#)
10. [Clandestine devices and subterfuge](#)
11. [Victims of sexual assault](#)
12. [Discrimination](#)
13. [Financial journalism](#)
14. [Confidential sources](#)
15. [Witness payments in criminal trials](#)
16. [Payments to criminals](#)
17. [The Public Interest](#)

## Ofcom Broadcasting Code

### Context

Ofcom is the regulator for communication services in the UK. Queen Mary Students' Union's Student Media Outlets which are broadcasting (including podcasts) are required to abide with the Ofcom Broadcasting Code. Like the IPSO Editors Code of Practice, these are sets of rules which Outlets are required to follow, and members agree to follow when purchasing a membership to an Outlet.

### Contents

The Ofcom Broadcasting Code can be accessed [here](#). Guidance on using the Code can be accessed [here](#).

Listed below are the activities which are prohibited by the Ofcom Broadcasting Code:

- The inappropriate use of strong language;
- The inadvertent inclusion of strong language in song lyrics (English and foreign language), film clips, poetry readings, extracts from literature or other;
- Broadcast of derogatory or libellous comments;
- Failure to achieve impartiality;
- Misleading audiences;
- Any content which contravenes any Students' Union policy.

Any questions regarding any part of the Code should be directed to [su-studentmedia@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:su-studentmedia@qmul.ac.uk)