

**Students'
Union**
Bath Spa

BATH SPA STUDENTS' UNION

Communications Policy

1. Introduction - Why have a Communications Policy?

The Student's Union is a membership organisation, working on behalf of the 8000 students at the University. Our role is to ensure that every single student is supported and encouraged to make the most of their University experience. Effective communications are pivotal to ensuring the Union can fulfil its role, whether we are promoting events or opportunities, seeking views on the issues that matter to students or ensuring that students have all the essential information to support their time at Bath Spa University.

This policy aims to set out how we will communicate with our members and also key partners we work with. It aims to establish clear standards to how we will communicate and how we will overcome issues we face to achieve this.

Quite simply, we want all students to have the best possible information at the right time in the most accessible means to them and for all our partners to have information on the work of the Union and how they can work with us.

Our approach to communications supports the five themes of our Strategic Plan:

To be an open, engaging, welcoming and ethically run organisation, by

- Greeting every visitor, every member and every enquiry in a friendly, welcoming and efficient manner
- Embracing any feedback and publish our responses on our You said, We did web page
- Having a clear commitment to issues such as environmental sustainability and equalities by making our policies available on line

Being an effective voice for students, by

- Seeking comments on issues facing students through a variety of channels –online surveys, face to face feedback, suggestions cards
- Publishing Student Council and School Rep meetings
- Feeding back from meetings and on key issues via the website and social media so students stay up to date on the things that matter to them
- Sharing information from the University, NUS and other partners

Giving Bath Spa students the best possible student experience, by

- Having effective marketing campaigns to promote key events or opportunities for students to be involved in
- Providing up to date, relevant information on our website
- Having a strong SU brand that supports our reputation as the organisation students can trust to deliver
- Ensuring partners understand how they can work with us and support them to work to our standards
- Ensuring all Bath Spa students know where to find information they need
- Ensure information is targeted, relevant and timely

- Support clubs and societies to effectively promote ways for students to get involved or find useful information

Improving our facilities, by

- Ensuring our front of house staff understand great customer service
- Effectively marketing the facilities and services here
- Consulting with students on ways to improve, via feedback forms, informal comments and mystery shopping

Being a well managed and sustainable Students' Union, by

- Publishing all our meetings papers on our website
- Ensuring our communications standards are consistent across the whole Union

2. How do we communicate?

We communicate constantly via a number of channels, including:

- through our website
- through our email newsletters to students
- via traditional methods such as posters, leaflets and booklets
- via the Union's social media platforms (such as Twitter and Facebook)
- in person whether face to face, by phone or email or letter
- through surveys – online, in person or via feedback forms

3. Many Voices – One Union: our Commitment to Equalities

We recognise putting equalities at the heart of our business isn't just the right thing to do, it is fundamental part of our mission to be relevant and fair to ALL our members. It also makes good financial sense to ensure our services meet the needs of ALL our members.

We strongly believe that the Union is stronger and more vibrant because of the diversity of our members. We will always reach out and listen to feedback from students. Most importantly we will take action to improve how we communicate to ensure our commitment to equality of opportunity is a reality.

Where we make information available in different formats in response to feedback we will do so without compromising the integrity of the original information.

The Branding and Style Guidelines on page 7 detail our minimum standards to ensure information is as accessible as possible.

4. Who is responsible?

The Union has a small Marketing & Communications team who co-ordinate our approach. Every member of the team is responsible for ensuring high standards are maintained and effective communication is at the heart of what we do. The Union's communications are the responsibility of:

- Every member of staff is responsible for ensuring the highest possible standards of customer care are maintained at all times
- Every Department Manager is responsible for ensuring communications platforms (eg printed materials or webpages) relevant to their area are developed to a high standard and up to date. Each must work closely with the Marketing and Communications Manager to plan promotional campaigns and materials.
- Every Sabbatical and Student Officer is responsible for ensuring students are supported to access information, actively encouraged to share their views and to make the most of activities and opportunities on offer
- Every Trustee is responsible for ensuring the Union's approach to communications is relevant to its members, maintains high standards and continually challenges itself to ensure it remains relevant
- Every Academic, Housing & Liberation Rep is responsible for ensuring they actively engage with students they represent and that they maintain consistent standards of communication
- Every Club and Society committee is responsible for actively promoting membership of their club and society and opportunities for all students to be involved, ensuring online information and messages are up to date and follow the Union's branding and style guidelines
- Every Spa Life rep is responsible for ensuring that editorial standards and freedoms are maintained whilst upholding the reputation of the Union. Spalife are responsible for encouraging all students to make the most of their time at the University through innovative broadcasts and publications.

5. Challenges

The Students' Union recognises that change is constant and the willingness and ability to understand and respond to change is fundamental to a successful approach to communications.

In particular the Union has identified 3 key challenges:

Responding to the changing demographic profile of our students by

- Understanding the most popular and appropriate social networking platforms used by different nationalities
- Ensuring our website information contains information of particular relevance to international students or home students undertaking part of their studies abroad
- Making sure we follow our own style guide, ensuring information is succinct, relevant and accessible

Responding to a multi campus / Global Arts network by

Working with the University to introduce use of the new Enquiry Management System to target information to groups of students at different campuses and on different courses, thus ensuring information is timely and relevant

Ensuring consistency

The Union will ensure that all staff and officers responsible for creating publicity materials or web content are given training appropriate to their role. This may include internal training on this Communications Plan and the style guidelines within, media awareness training or technical training via our website provider.

The Union encourages the development of materials and content by all staff, student representatives and volunteers. This is an essential part of ensuring we remain relevant to our students and are responsive to their changing needs.

However, the Union has to balance the constant change in our people with the need to ensure consistency in all our communications. It is also essential that the Union's publicity does not contravene any legal requirements and does not place the Union at risk of reputational damage. It would be very costly and difficult to train every elected representative and staff member each year so the Union will take the following alternative steps:

1. Access to approve content on the website and social media pages will only be given to the following officers and staff members of the Union, once training has been completed:
 - Sabbatical Officers
 - Chief Executive
 - Department Heads
 - Clubs & Societies officer, Student Advisor, Representation & Academic Advice co-ordinator & Bar Supervisor
2. Any staff member, Representative or Officer must submit any proposed content to the most appropriate person from the above list of people to be placed on any of the Union webpages or social media platforms. A response should be received within 3 working days. Contributors must ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the editorial process to take place and any amendments to proposed content to be considered.
3. Training on the use of the style guide will be included in training for all Elected Reps and Officers and Club and Society committees. All publicity materials must follow the style guidelines and be approved by the Marketing & Communications Manager before being distributed.
4. The Union's website has a reporting facility to ensure any issues can be effectively and quickly addressed.
5. SpaLife will ensure effective editorial controls are in place.

6. Branding & Style guidelines

Promotion Essentials

All publicity for events by the Union, its Clubs, Societies or SpaLife must clearly display the Union logo following the Branding and Style Guidelines below to ensure promotional information is accessible for all students.

In addition they must include the following statement: Bath Spa University Students' Union is a Registered Charity No: 1139037

All fundraising events must clearly state that any profits generated will be used by the Union and clearly state what they will be used for. Any fundraising activities for other charitable causes must follow the guidelines in the fundraising guide available on the Union website at: <http://www.bathspasu.co.uk/opps/rag/fundraisingguide/>

All publicity materials must be approved by the Marketing and Communications Manager or appropriate Departmental Head before they can be displayed or disseminated.

Where a club or society wishes to create a website this must link through to the Union website and must follow the Union's brand guidelines. The Marketing & Communications Manager must have full administration rights in order to address any issues which arise immediately.

Branding

The Union's logo is a core part of its public image and was designed to represent the Union across to its members, partners and wider community. When designing posters, web or social media pages the Union branding guidelines must be followed.

In particular the size, position and colour of the logo must consistent on all publicity. Guidelines can be found on the Union's website at:

<http://www.bathspasu.co.uk/about/howwework/policies/>

Style Guidelines

Ensuring our information is easy to read is essential. In order to make sure our publications are accessible we will:

1. Always use a plain font style such as Arial or Calibre
2. Use minimum size 12 font on all publications and a minimum of size 16 font for anything produced in large print
3. Keep our text concise and to the point, avoiding jargon where we can
4. Publish as many documents and as much information online, thus enabling students with access requirements to alter the size and colour on screen
5. We will try to avoid enlarging documents with a photocopier to avoid blurring
6. We will use A4 paper format unless content or purpose dictates otherwise

7. Text such as page numbers, labels, superscripts is ideally the same size as the body text
8. We will not use italics, underlining or large blocks of capital letters
9. We will use adequate line spacing and space between paragraphs
10. Text will be aligned on the left, except in exceptional circumstances
11. Text will run horizontally
12. Columns avoided or reduced in number if appropriate
13. Good contrast between text and background colours
14. No information conveyed solely through colour, images or diagrams
15. No text overlapping images (other than exceptional cases)
16. We will use non-glossy paper, of sufficient weight to avoid show-through
17. Subtitles should be used on videos made by the Union

7. Events & Campaigns calendar

The calendar on the following page at Annexe 1 highlights the key annual events and campaigns the Union runs each year. The colours denote the department leading each event or campaign.

Approved Board of Trustees on 27th October 2015

Review date: October 2017

Annex 1: Events & Campaigns Calendar

- Bar & Entertainments
- Campaigns
- Clubs & Societies
- Promotions
- Democracy & Representation

SEPTEMBER Students Arrive Freshers Week Activities Fair C&S Taster Sessions Ents Committee Monthly	OCTOBER Halloween Stoptober Course / Housing Reps Recruitment Best Bar None Black History Month National Coming Out Day	NOVEMBER Welfare Campaigns Children in Need Course / Housing Reps Results Bath Spa's Got Talent	DECEMBER Students Leave Xmas Break Snowball Xmas Meals
JANUARY Students Back Summer Ball Planning Gym Promo (Reduced Rates) Free Taster Sessions C&S Refreshers Week Dry January Elections - Nominations Open Battle of the Bands	FEBRUARY Welfare Campaigns (Equality) FairTrade Fortnight FairTrade Fortnight Green Week Volunteering Week LGBT History Month	MARCH Elections Take Me Out Battle of the Comedians Comic / Sports Relief Bath Half Marathon International Women's Day	APRIL Associate Membership Promotion Freshers Angels Recruitment Teaching Awards
MAY Summer Ball Welfare Campaigns - Mental Health AGM SU Awards	JUNE Students Leave Sabbs Handover	JULY Graduation	AUGUST A'Level Results New academic year promotion Student Guide