

## STUDENT MEDIA POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

UMSU is committed to the production and dissemination of student media.

UMSU believes that effectively run Student Media provides a vital means of reflecting the student voice. Media Groups also provide challenging and rewarding opportunities for students, enhancing the student experience and providing an opportunity for skills development.

Student Media is media produced by students. Student Media can include printed newspapers or magazines, online content, television output or radio productions.

The purposes of Student Media are:

- To produce student publications/programming that is originated by students for students.
- To act as a forum for student debate, reflecting as accurately as possible campus life and the views of students at the University of Melbourne, generally.
- To act as a platform for students to gain skills and experience in the organisation and distribution of media publications and outlets.
- To produce, as accurately as possible, content which informs and entertains its audiences with truth and fairness at its forefront

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to student representatives and staff employed to work with and for UMSU in relation to the activities of the UMSU Media Department and all other Departments that publish editorial material.

The objectives of this Policy are:

1. To ensure successful, vibrant and diverse Student Media at the University of Melbourne;
2. To ensure Student Media is editorially independent from UMSU but operates within the current legal and policy context relevant to the production, publication and dissemination of all forms of media and content, and;
3. To provide a framework to ensure the protection of UMSU's interests as an Incorporated Association, and to resolve disputes and complaints that may arise as a result of the production of Student Media.

Successful Student Media:

1. Includes varied and pluralistic news that appeals to a variety of audiences.
2. Reflects student's' interests.
3. Provides a platform for the expression of independent student opinion and the reporting of news of relevance to students.

4. Should be at the forefront of media campaigns for students. That may mean supporting UMSU campaigns or it may mean campaigning for UMSU action when none is forthcoming.
5. Promotes participation in, and engagement with, the programs, services and affairs of UMSU;
6. Promotes the fact of UMSU elections and student participation those elections.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all UMSU staff, elected student office bearers and other elected student representatives.

This policy regulates the roles and functions of:

- The Media Officers
- Media Department Volunteers, when performing functions consistent with their Volunteer role
- Student Representative Department volunteers and contributors when engaged in the production of Student Media
- Contributors to the Media Department and other Departments involved in Student Union Media when engaged in activities relevant to this Policy and in relation to content they have generated
- The General Secretary
- UMSU Staff

The term Media Department is used to describe the Media Officers, Media Department Volunteers and Contributors to the Media Department

## CONTENT AND EDITORIAL POLICY

Student Media is independent from UMSU in terms of editorial control and content.

However, as the Media Department and other Student Representative Departments operate as part of UMSU the legal onus is on UMSU to ensure compliance with current legal and policy context relevant to the production, publication and dissemination of all forms of media and content.

UMSU, via the General Secretary, has overall control of all Student Media content, but only with regard to matters of potential:

1. Defamation;
2. Contravention of the UMSU Constitution or UMSU Policy; and
3. Breach of UMSU's legal obligations
4. Other risk that may result from harmful inaccuracies

The conduct and behaviour of Media Officers, Media Volunteers, and Student Office Bearers is regulated by the UMSU Constitution and relevant UMSU Regulations and Policy.

This Policy does not relate to the role of the President or other Student Office Bearers when acting as spokespeople, or making comment, on behalf of UMSU. Student Media cannot be, or be seen to be, making representations on behalf of UMSU, other than in a manner that is consistent with the UMSU Constitution.

## **STUDENT MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students engaged in Student Media, including Student Representative Departments and the Media Department should adhere to the Code of Conduct for Journalists as devised and amended by the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance and will:

- At all times uphold and defend the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of students to be informed;
- Strive to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair;
- Do their utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies;
- Differentiate between fact and opinion;
- Obtain 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;
- Do nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest;
- Protect the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of their work;
- Resist 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;
- Produce no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation;
- 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;
- Always seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about their welfare; and
- Avoid plagiarism.

Student journalists should also be aware of their legal and ethical responsibilities including specific regulations for broadcasters, print and online (or across different media platforms) where appropriate. They should also be made aware, that in their capacity as a contributor to Student Media, that compliance with this Policy is critical to the UMSU's vision for Student Media and in protecting UMSU's interests as a publisher of Student Media.

The Media Officers, Student Office Bearers and UMSU staff are responsible for ensuring that training is provided to Volunteers and Contributors to ensure compliance with this Code of Conduct.

## **COMPLAINTS OR DISPUTES**

Where there is an alleged breach of this policy, all information must be treated confidentially, to the greatest extent possible, by all parties involved.

Complaints about or regarding the operation of Media Department, or another Student Representative Department, or that relate to a matter outlined in the Student Media Code of Conduct are to be dealt with via the Media Officers, or the relevant Student Office Bearer, in the first instance.

Media Officers and Student Office Bearers will address complaints in a manner that is consistent with the process as established in Schedule 1 – Grievances and Disputes Panel.

UMSU shall convene an informal Complaints and Disputes Panel to hear and make determinations on complaints or disputes at any time which they may arise. This panel may only have provisional membership.

UMSU has an obligation to hear and resolve disputes between members of the Association in relation to the Association's published Student Media.

In all other circumstances complaints or disputes will be resolved under processes established in the UMSU:

- Constitution; or
- Acceptable Conduct Policy.

Matters involving students may be subject to relevant University Statutes and Policies.

Where the Media Officers, or a Student Office bearer, and the General Secretary disagree on UMSU's potential legal liability arising from the proposed publication or broadcast of Student Media, the matter will be resolved on the basis of advice provided by the UMSU Legal Service.

## SCHEDULES

### 1. Schedule 1 –Complaints & Disputes Panel

#### a. Framework

UMSU has an obligation to hear and resolve complaints and disputes in relation to the application of this Policy.

Anyone who believes that this Policy has been breached should notify the General Secretary in writing outlining the basis of the alleged breach and the remedial action sought.

Where the General Secretary is the subject of a complaint or a dispute then notice should be provided to the President.

Upon receipt of a complaint or notice of a dispute UMSU will convene a Complaints and Dispute Panel to hear and make determinations on complaints or disputes at any time which they may arise. A panel will be convened in response to each separate complaint or dispute.

In determining whether to uphold or dismiss a complaint, the panel must apply accepted principles of natural justice, including the provision of a fair and timely hearing. Notification of any meetings must align with established protocol in the Constitution. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that members of the Complaints and Disputes Panel are provided with advice and support relevant to the resolution of complaints and disputes.

Reasons for decision must be provided to Students' Council for noting.

#### b. Membership of the Panel

The Grievances and Dispute Panel comprise three voting members of Students' Council appointed by the General Secretary.

The General Secretary is obliged to identify potential Panel members at the beginning of each term through a written expression of interest. Membership may only comprise of members with whom had expressed interest in being co-opted.

Where the General Secretary is the subject of a complaint or a dispute then appointment should be administered by the President.

The Panel will elect a Chair who will be responsible for communicating with the parties and convening meetings.

#### c. Powers of the Panel

Upon resolution of dispute, the panel may require the publication concerned to promptly publish the decision, issue a retraction, or take other actions as deemed necessary to resolve the complaint or dispute.

## **2. Schedule 2 – Press Council Principles**

In a democratic society, all people have the right to freedom of expression and to be informed. These rights cannot be secured unless the press is free to publish facts and opinions without fear or favour.

Freedom of the press, however, carries responsibilities to the public. Liberty does not mean license, and due regard must be given to other important freedoms, rights and values which are in the public interest.

Accordingly, the Press Council has laid down the following General Principles to which all publisher members are committed by the Council's Constitution.

The General Principles Publications are free to publish as they wish by reporting facts and expressing opinions, provided they take reasonable steps to comply with the following Principles and the Council's other Standards of Practice.

### **a. Accuracy and clarity**

- i. Ensure that factual material in news reports and elsewhere is accurate and not misleading, and is distinguishable from other material such as opinion.
- ii. Provide a correction or other adequate remedial action if published material is significantly inaccurate or misleading.

### **b. Fairness and balance**

- iii. Ensure that factual material is presented with reasonable fairness and balance, and that writers' expressions of opinion are not based on significantly inaccurate factual material or omission of key facts.
- iv. Ensure that where material refers adversely to a person, a fair opportunity is given for subsequent publication of a reply if that is reasonably necessary to address a possible breach of General Principle 3.

### **c. Privacy and avoidance of harm**

- v. Avoid intruding on a person's reasonable expectations of privacy, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.
- vi. Avoid causing or contributing materially to substantial offence, distress or prejudice, or a substantial risk to health or safety, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.

**d. Integrity and transparency**

- vii. Avoid publishing material which has been gathered by deceptive or unfair means, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.
- viii. Ensure that conflicts of interests are avoided or adequately disclosed, and that they do not influence published material.