
Online Platforms Guidance

This is guidance for clubs and societies to use when they are setting up and running web platforms, aiming to provide committees members with information on how to:

- Facilitate and maintain inclusive and positive interactions on their online platforms
- Responding to inappropriate behaviour on their online platforms

Web Platforms

Web Platforms provided by the Students' Union

The Students' Union provides each club and society with a mini site on the Students' Union main website, and this can be found using this link:

https://www.worcsu.com/sports_activities/

These mini sites are set up for each club and society once they have been approved by the Union's Executive Committee and remains open until it folds.

The mini site allows societies and sports clubs to:

- Promote its events and activities
- Provide information about the purpose of the club or society
- Hold democratic elections for committee positions
- Sell memberships and track memberships that have been purchased
- Email members of the club or society
- Sell event tickets and clothing associated with the club or society
- Create news articles about events or activities the club or society has run
- Show members the committee and how best to contact them
- Promote and provide links to social media pages

Social Media Pages

We understand that social media pages are now essential for clubs and societies to recruit members and keep them informed of events and activities that are going on. We would suggest setting up an Instagram and Facebook page to help promote your club or society.

Some things to remember when setting up and running these pages:

- Only add people who are current students at the University. It is also good practice to remove any student who have graduated from your group/pages.
- Make sure what you are posting is appropriate. Your club or society is affiliated with the Students' Union so therefore you mustn't post anything that you wouldn't also put on your official mini site. You are representatives of the Students' Union and the University of Worcester and are subject to the Union's Code of Conduct.
- Make sure you are posting regularly. Social media sites are often full of different content so to make sure your club or societies page/group stands out then you must post things regularly.
- Make sure you engage with the official Students' Union pages. Getting 'shoutouts' or being 'tagged' in a post is a great way of boosting your online profile.

Please note that setting up a club or society 'snapchat' is forbidden by the Students' Union as we cannot monitor the content that is being put out from the student groups.

Online Conduct

It is important to remember that any online platform for a club or society is classed as a student group space, so any behaviour that would be unacceptable at an event, is equally as unacceptable on any of your web platforms.

All users interacting with the Students' Union, or a representative of the Students' Union should have an expectation of feeling safe. Below is some guidance on unacceptable behaviour and some tips for preventing it.

Unacceptable Conduct

Worcester Students' Union has a zero-tolerance approach to conduct that could legitimately be perceived by its recipients as:

- Sexual harassment
- Discriminatory comments and behaviour
- Abuse and unwanted attention
- Threatening or violent behaviour or language
- Bullying

You can access the Students' Union Code of Conduct which includes Societies, Sports Clubs, Student-Led Services and Networks here:

<https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/documents/>

Students registered with the University of Worcester should note that they are also subject to the University's Student Disciplinary Procedures and the Union reserves the right to refer students to this process where it feels necessary and appropriate.

Managing Your Online Platforms

To help you get started we have put together some hints, tips and examples of best practice which you can find in the list below. We recommend groups follow these to promote positive interactions on their web platforms. We have also included information on how to handle unacceptable conduct.

For mini sites that are provided by the Students' Union:

- Use this platform as a professional space to inform members and prospective members about your club or society and what activities you run.
- Try to use this space to answer general enquires that you think prospective members might have
- Include information on when and where you meet and how to contact you.
- Ensure it is always up to date. This makes it easier for students and helps the Union to answer queries about your club or society.
- We will only give access to the relevant committee members who have had their GDPR training
- Use the messaging feature to contact your members regularly. This is the only guaranteed way of contacting your paid members. Every year we have members ask for refunds because they have never heard from their club or society.

For more interactive platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and group chats:

- Only give access to those committee members who need it
- Include a web platform handover for incoming committees at the end of each academic year
- Keep group chats closed for paid members only
- Provide a statement to members upon joining that the online platform is for discussion and communication around your club or society activities and any behaviour that goes against the Students' Union's Code of Conduct will not be tolerated

If an incident of unacceptable behaviour does take place on one of your online platforms, here is some advice on action you should take as a committee:

- Put a message out on the online platform where the incident has occurred, to state that the behaviour shown is not tolerated in your club or society and kindly ask your members to keep your online platform a safe space for all students.

- In addition to this, or if the behaviour continues, consider direct messaging the person (or people) to let them know that their comments are not acceptable on the club or society online platform, referring to the Students' Unions Code of Conduct where possible.
- Remove the unacceptable comments from your online platform to return the space to a safe space for all students.

If the behaviour continues or, as a committee, you feel that the incident was severe enough then report the behaviour to one of the Elected Officers or a Member of Core Staff at the Students' Union, providing screenshots or photographic evidence. The Students' Union will then be able to provide and offer any support or further action if it is required.

Support with Managing Your Online Platforms

We understand that it may be difficult to manage your online platforms and the effects of some messages or comments that are posted on there. If you are ever unsure of whether you should take steps to manage behaviour shown on your online platforms, please contact a member of staff at the Students' Union, who can offer informal support as well as investigate any serious behaviour misconduct as per the Students' Unions Code of Conduct.

You can contact the following people for support:

- Jack Lambert - Vice President Student Activities (jack.lambert@worc.ac.uk)
- Sophie Smith - Student Activities Manager (sophie.smith2@worc.ac.uk)
- Hannah Heskin - Student Groups Assistant (hannah.heskin@worc.ac.uk)
- Barney Blake - BUCS Sport Administrator (b.blake@worc.ac.uk)