

STUDENT PUBLICATION ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION (September 2015)

- 1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**
 - 1.1 Definitions**
 - 1.1.1 The name of the organisation is the Student Publication Association (the 'SPA').
 - 1.1.2 A "publication" shall be defined as a newspaper, magazine, or other regularly published journalistic work, including websites that consists primarily of written content.
 - 1.1.3 A "student publication" shall be defined as a publication that is produced primarily by students in further or higher education.
 - 1.2 Objectives**
 - 1.2.1 The purpose of the SPA is to support, promote and defend student publications throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.
 - 1.2.2 The SPA shall provide student publications by:
 - a) Providing assistance, advice and training.
 - b) Facilitating communication and cooperation between publications.
 - c) Enacting policies such as its members determine.
 - 1.2.3 The SPA shall promote student publications by:
 - a) Advocating on their behalf.
 - b) Celebrating their work and achievements.
 - c) Championing student journalism in all forms.
 - 1.2.4 The SPA shall defend student publications by:
 - a) Assisting publications involved in disputes, such as with their students' unions or universities.
 - b) Actively working to prevent censorship, intimidation or other infringements on the freedoms of the press, speech and information.
- 2. MEMBERSHIP AND OBLIGATIONS**
 - 2.1 Conditions of Membership**
 - 2.1.1 Membership of the SPA shall be open to any student publication based in and operating within the United Kingdom, and to individuals who are part of a student publication that is not a member of the SPA, provided that:
 - a) The publication or individual is in good standing with the SPA.
 - b) The publication or individual has paid any membership fees required by the SPA.
 - 2.1.2 Membership fees shall be set by the Executive Committee and reviewed annually.
 - 2.1.3 Members are expected to:
 - a) Support and uphold the aims and spirit of the SPA.
 - b) Take an active interest in the SPA and participate as much as possible.
 - 2.1.4 Any member shall not bring the SPA into disrepute.
 - 2.1.5 Membership expires one calendar year after approval.
 - 2.2 Publication Membership**
 - 2.2.1 Membership of the SPA shall be open to any student publication subject to the Conditions of Membership
 - 2.2.2 A public list of Member Publications shall be maintained by the Membership and Communications Officer.
 - 2.2.3 Member Publications may resign their membership at any time by writing to the Membership and Communications Officer.
 - 2.2.4 Publications which break the Conditions of Membership may have their membership terminated by a unanimous (100%) vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority (50% + 1 vote) of Member Publications.
 - 2.3 Individual Membership**
 - 2.3.1 Individuals who participate in a Member Publication shall automatically be Individual Members of the SPA.
 - 2.3.2 Individual Membership of the SPA shall also be open to individuals who are part of a student publication that is not a member of the SPA, subject to the Conditions of Membership.
 - 2.3.3 An internal list of Individual Members who are not part of a Member Publication shall be maintained by the Membership and Communications Officer.
 - 2.3.4 Individual Members may resign their membership at any time by writing to the Membership and Communications Officer.
 - 2.3.5 Individual Membership expires one year after the individual ceases to be part of a student publication.
 - 2.3.6 Individual Members who breach the Conditions of Membership may have their membership terminated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of Member

Publications at a General Meeting (see Section 4).

2.3.7 Individual Members may not cast a vote in the elections for Executive Officer.

2.4 Executive Officers

2.4.1 There shall be five elected Executive Officers, who are responsible for overseeing and managing the SPA.

2.4.2 The Executive Committee shall comprise the five Executive Officers.

2.4.3 The Executive Officer positions shall be:

2.4.3.1 Chair

2.4.3.2 Development Officer

2.4.3.3 Membership and Communications Officer

2.4.3.4 Marketing and Events Officer

2.4.3.5 Digital Media Officer

2.4.4 An Executive Officer may resign their position at any time by writing to the Chair.

2.4.4.1 Vacant positions on the Executive Committee may be temporarily filled by co-option, at the direction of the remaining Executive Officers, until the next General Meeting.

2.4.5 The Chair may resign their position at any time by writing to the Membership and Communications Officer.

2.4.5.1 If the position of Chair is vacant, the remaining Executive Officers must choose from among themselves someone to temporarily fill the position until the next General Meeting.

2.4.6 Executive Officers who fail to carry out their responsibilities may be removed from their role by a majority vote of Member Publications at a General Meeting (see Section 4).

2.4.7 Every Executive Officer shall be responsible for:

2.4.7.1 Attending General and Executive Committee Meetings.

2.4.7.2 Presenting a report of their activities at every National Conference.

2.4.7.3 Communicating their activities to the SPA's members.

2.4.7.4 Representing the SPA in a professional manner.

2.4.7.5 Upholding and working towards the aims of the SPA.

2.4.7.6 Adhering to any policies enacted by the SPA.

2.4.7.7 Providing a comprehensive handover for their successor.

2.4.7.8 Managing any positions that report to them, and being ultimately responsible for those positions.

2.5 Chair

The individual responsibilities of the Chair are:

2.5.1 To be the public face and spokesperson for the SPA.

2.5.2 To oversee and support the other Executive Officers.

2.5.3 To organise and chair General and Executive Committee Meetings.

2.5.4 To be responsible for overseeing any SPA campaigns or lobbying.

2.5.5 To be ultimately responsible for the SPA's financial affairs.

2.6 Development Officer

The individual responsibilities of the Development Officer are:

2.6.1 To be responsible for developing the SPA so that it better meets its aims (see Section 1).

2.6.2 To offer support, advice and training to new and existing student publications.

2.6.3 To work with the Membership and Communications Officer to recruit new Member Publications to the SPA.

2.6.4 To recruit, train and oversee the SPA's Regional Officers.

2.6.5 To update and maintain the constitution and governance of the SPA.

2.7 Membership and Communications Officer

The individual responsibilities of the Membership and Communications Officer are:

2.7.1 To develop and maintain two-way communications with SPA members.

2.7.2 To organise and release a monthly newsletter to SPA members on behalf of the Executive Committee, detailing at least:

The activities of the SPA.

The activities of the Executive Officers.

Notable activities of SPA members.

Upcoming SPA events.

2.7.3 To be responsible for recruiting new Member Publications to the SPA.

2.7.4 To process membership applications.

2.7.5 To maintain the public list of Member Publications (see Article 5).

2.7.6 To maintain the internal list of Individual Members who belong to a publication that is not an SPA member (see Article 5).

2.7.7 To record and make publicly available the minutes of all General and Executive Committee Meetings.

2.8 Marketing and Events Officer

The individual responsibilities of the Marketing and Events Officer are:

2.8.1 To organise and oversee all events, including venue booking, speakers and workshops, attendee registration, and ticket sales.

2.8.2 To organise and oversee the annual SPA National Conference, including submissions, judging and prizes for the Awards.

2.8.3 To manage event sponsorship and budgets in conjunction with the Chair.

2.8.4 To support SPA members in matters of sponsorship, advertising and marketing.

2.8.5 To secure advertising, sponsorship and donations for the SPA.

2.8.6 To raise the profile of the SPA and advertise its activities through press and public relations activities.

2.9 Digital Media Officer

The individual responsibilities of the Digital Media Officer are:

- 2.9.1 To manage the SPA's online and social media presence.
- 2.9.2 To ensure the SPA website is kept up to date.
- 2.9.3 To provide technical support for Member Publications.

2.10 Finance Officers

- 2.10.1 Two executive officers will additionally be appointed as financial officers.
- 2.10.2 One of these officers must be the Chair, with the second appointed by a majority decision of the executive committee.
- 2.10.2.1 Where the Chair cannot legally be appointed as finance officer, the executive committee will appoint a second member from the executive committee.
- 2.10.3 These two officers will be responsible for maintaining and managing the SPA's financial affairs.
- 2.10.4 Both financial officers must be signatories on any bank account(s) held by the SPA.
- 2.10.5 Additional financial officers may be appointed by the executive committee if required.
- 2.10.6 The Chair will ultimately hold all responsibility for the SPA's financial affairs.
- 2.10.7 Both financial officers must be legally able to be financially responsible.
- 2.10.8 Both financial officers must not have a financial conflict of interest.

2.11 Gifts

- 2.11.1 An Executive Officer must register any gifts received by external parties with the Chair.
- 2.11.2 An Executive Officer must return a gift if the current market value exceeds £50.
- 2.11.3 An Executive Officer must return a gift if the Chair deems that the acceptance of a gift would bring the SPA into disrepute.

2.12 Regional Officers

- 2.12.1 There shall be eight Regional Officers, who are each responsible for organising events and communicating with student publications in a particular geographical region.
- 2.12.2 Regional Officers shall be appointed by an open submission from members, followed by a vote of the Executive Committee. ~~recommended for appointment by the Development Officer and approved by a vote of the Executive Committee.~~
- 2.12.3 Regional Officers must either be part of a publication based within their region, or live for most of the year within their region.

- 2.12.4 Regional Officers must be members of the SPA.
- 2.12.5 There shall be one Regional Officer for each of the following regions:
 - 2.12.5.1 Northern England
 - 2.12.5.2 The Midlands
 - 2.12.5.3 Southeast England
 - 2.12.5.4 Southwest England
 - 2.12.5.5 London
 - 2.12.5.6 Scotland
 - 2.12.5.7 Wales
 - 2.12.5.8 Northern Ireland
 - 2.12.5.9 (Republic of) Ireland
- 2.12.6 Disputes over regions shall be settled by the Executive Committee.
- 2.12.7 Every Regional Officer shall be responsible for:
 - 2.12.7.1 Attending General Meetings.
 - 2.12.7.2 Communicating their activities to the Member Publications in their region.
 - 2.12.7.3 Representing the SPA in a professional manner.
 - 2.12.7.4 Upholding and working towards the aims of the SPA (see Section 1).
 - 2.12.7.5 Adhering to any policies enacted by the SPA.
 - 2.12.7.6 Working with the Development Officer to provide a comprehensive handover for their successor.
 - 2.12.7.7 Working with the Development Officer to train Member Publications within their region.
 - 2.12.7.8 Working with the Membership and Communications Officer to recruit new Member Publications from their region.
 - 2.12.7.9 Working with the Marketing and Events Officer to organise events, including workshops, within their region.
- 2.12.8 Regional Officers shall report to the Development Officer.
- 2.12.9 A Regional Officer may resign their position at any time by writing to the Development Officer.
- 2.12.10 Regional Officers who fail to carry out their responsibilities may be removed from their role by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of Member Publications from their region at a General Meeting (see Section 4).

3. MEETINGS

3.1 National Conference (SPANC)

- 3.1.1 The SPA shall hold an annual National Conference to which all SPA members shall be invited.
- 3.1.2 National Conferences shall be held no more than 14 months apart.
- 3.1.3 The purpose of the National Conference shall be:
 - 3.1.3.1 To host the Annual General Meeting.
 - 3.1.3.2 To host an Awards ceremony for SPA members.
 - 3.1.3.3 To host talks and workshops.
 - 3.1.3.4 To encourage communication and cooperation between SPA members.

- 3.1.4 The SPA National Conference (SPANC) will be chosen by an open tender process.
- 3.1.5 The Executive Committee will elect a National Conference host publication based solely on the submitted bids.
- 3.1.6 Member publications who wish to host SPANC must put together a bid in line with requirements as specified by a majority of the Executive Committee.
- 3.1.7 The window for bid applications from member publications must be one calendar month.
- 3.1.8 The window for bid applications must not be earlier than eight calendar months of the proposed date of SPANC.
- 3.1.9 The Executive Committee must make a decision within 20 working days of the closing of the bid window.
- 3.1.10 Any Executive Committee member who registers a conflict of interest must recuse themselves from voting in the tender decision meeting.
- 3.1.11 If the Executive Committee is reduced by two or more officers due to conflict of interest, the remaining officers may elect a regional officer to be co-opted into the National Conference tender decision meeting.
- 3.1.12 The vote on the SPANC tender decision must use the alternative voting method.
- 3.2 Awards Ceremony**
- 3.2.1 The Awards Ceremony will recognise the best of student journalism around the country.
- 3.2.2 The award submissions window must be at least one calendar month, but no more than three months.
- 3.2.3 Submissions must not have been previously published anytime before thirteen months prior to the Awards Ceremony.
- 3.2.4 The award judges will be recruited by a nominated Executive Committee member.
- 3.2.5 The award judge's decision is final.
- 3.2.6 The categories will be chosen by simple majority of the Executive Committee.
- 3.2.7 The categories may be altered annually by simple majority of the Executive Committee.
- 3.3 General Meetings**
- 3.3.1 A minimum of one month's notice must be given for a General Meeting of the SPA.
- 3.3.2 The agenda for the General Meeting must be announced at least three weeks prior to the Meeting.
- 3.3.3 General Meetings may be called by the Chair, by a majority of the Executive Committee, or by a petition from at least three Member Publications delivered to the Executive Committee.
- 3.3.4 General Meetings shall be open to all members of the SPA.
- 3.3.5 The purpose of a General Meeting shall be:
- 3.3.5.1 To hold elections for vacant positions on the Executive Committee.
- 3.3.5.2 To allow SPA members to discuss and vote on policy motions and constitutional amendments.
- 3.3.5.3 To discuss and vote on dismissals of Officers or termination of membership.
- 3.3.6 For matters requiring a vote, each Member Publication shall have one vote. Delegates from that publication shall decide how the publication is to vote.
- 3.3.7 The chair's vote breaks any tie.
- 3.3.8 The quorum for a General Meeting shall be representation from 40 per cent of Member Publications.
- 3.3.9 The minutes of the Meeting shall be recorded by the Membership and Communications Officer.
- 3.4 Annual General Meeting**
- 3.4.1 An Annual General Meeting (the 'AGM') shall be held during the National Conference each year.
- 3.4.2 The purpose of the AGM, in addition to the purpose of any General Meeting, shall be:
- 3.4.2.1 To hold elections for the Executive Committee (see Article 12).
- 3.4.2.2 To hear reports from the Executive Officers of their activities since the last AGM.
- 3.4.3 The minutes of the Meeting shall be recorded by the Membership and Communications Officer.
- 3.5 Executive Committee Meetings**
- 3.5.1 A minimum of one week's notice must be given for an Executive Committee Meeting.
- 3.5.2 Executive Committee Meetings may be called by the Chair, or by any Executive Officer writing to the Chair.
- 3.5.3 Executive Committee Meetings shall be held as frequently as the Executive Committee sees fit.
- 3.5.4 SPA members not on the Executive Committee may attend Executive Committee Meetings, without voting rights, at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3.5.5 For matters requiring a vote, each Executive Officer shall have one vote.
- 3.5.6 The chair's vote breaks any tie.

- 3.5.7 The quorum for an Executive Committee Meeting shall be a majority of the Executive Officers.
- 3.5.8 The minutes of the Meeting shall be recorded by the Membership and Communications Officer.

4 ELECTIONS AND DISMISSAL

4.1 Elections

- 4.1.1 At the AGM during the National Conference, the Executive Officer positions shall be open for election.
- 4.1.2 The Chair shall appoint a Returning Officer, who may not be a serving member of the Executive Committee or a candidate for any position, to oversee the elections.
- 4.1.3 The Returning Officer may not cast a vote or otherwise be involved in the voting process.
- 4.1.4 Any member of the SPA is eligible to stand for a position.
- 4.1.5 Candidates may stand from the floor, and candidates who are unsuccessful may stand for another position.
- 4.1.6 Re-Open Nominations ('RON') is a candidate for all positions.
 - 4.1.6.1 If RON wins, or if no candidates stand for a position, the position shall be left vacant and another election shall be held to fill it at the next General Meeting.
 - 4.1.6.2 Vacant positions may be temporarily filled by co-option, at the direction of the Executive Committee, until the next General Meeting.
- 4.1.7 The results of the elections, including vote counts, shall be recorded by the Membership and Communications Officer and included in the minutes of the AGM.

4.2 Election Procedure (In chronological order)

- 4.2.1 Each candidate for the position shall make a speech outlining their experience and policies. The time allowed for the speeches shall be set by the Returning Officer.
- 4.2.2 The Returning Officer shall then moderate questions from the floor. Questions may be aimed at all candidates or at an individual candidate.
- 4.2.3 Each candidate shall then make a closing statement. The time allowed for the statements shall be set by the Returning Officer.
- 4.2.4 The candidates shall then leave the room while voting takes place.
- 4.2.5 Each Member Publication present at the AGM may cast one vote. Delegates from each publication must choose an individual from their publication to cast the publication's vote.
- 4.2.6 If the casting individual is running in an election, they may nominate a proxy to vote in their place.
 - 4.2.6.1 The proxy must be from the same member publication.

- 4.2.6.2 Where a casting individual is the only representative of a member publication, the casting individual may nominate any of the outgoing Executive Officers to act as proxy.
- 4.2.7 Voting shall be, where resources allow, by secret ballot by a show of hands and votes shall be counted by the Returning Officer.
- 4.2.8 The candidates shall re-enter the room and the winning candidate shall be announced.

4.3 Dismissal

- 4.3.1 Executive Officers may be dismissed from their position by a majority vote of Member Publications at a General Meeting.
- 4.3.2 The Executive Officer shall be given the opportunity to make a statement prior to the vote.
- 4.3.3 Regional Officers may be dismissed from their position by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of Member Publications from that Officer's region.
- 4.3.4 The Regional Officer shall be given the opportunity to make a statement prior to any vote.
- 4.3.5 The grounds for dismissal must involve a breach of the Officer's responsibilities (see Section 2).

4.4 Termination of Membership

- 4.4.1 Member Publications may have their membership terminated by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of Member Publications at a General Meeting.
- 4.4.2 A representative of the publication shall be given the opportunity to make a statement prior to any vote.
- 4.4.3 Individual Members may have their membership terminated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of Member Publications at a General Meeting.
- 4.4.4 The individual shall be given the opportunity to make a statement prior to any vote.
- 4.4.5 If the membership of an Executive or Regional Officer is terminated, that individual also ceases to hold their Officer position.
- 4.4.6 The grounds for termination of membership must involve a breach of the Conditions of Membership (see Section 2).

5 POLICY & CONSTITUTION

5.1 Policy

- 5.1.1 The SPA may adopt policies –aims or statements of intent – that it shall be bound by and work towards.
- 5.1.2 Any SPA member may propose to adopt or discard a policy.
- 5.1.3 A seconder to any proposal is required
 - 5.1.3.1 The seconder may be an individual at the same, or a different member publication.
- 5.1.4 Proposals to adopt or discard policies must be delivered to the Chair in writing.
- 5.1.5 The proposals will then be debated and voted on at:
 - 5.1.5.1 The next General Meeting, if one is scheduled within one calendar month of the proposals submission
 - 5.1.5.1.1 Where a simple majority of Member Publications present at the General Meeting must vote in favour to adopt a policy.
 - 5.1.5.2 A meeting of the Executive Committee, if there is not a General Meeting scheduled within one calendar month of the proposals submission
 - 5.1.5.2.1 Where a simple majority of Executive Officers present at the Executive Committee meeting must vote in favour to adopt a policy.
- 5.1.6 Adopted policies automatically lapse after three years and must be proposed anew.

5.2 Constitution

- 5.2.1 Any SPA member may propose amendments to this Constitution.
- 5.2.2 Proposals for amendments to this Constitution, or for its dissolution, must be delivered to the Chair in writing.
- 5.2.3 The proposals will then be debated and voted on at:
 - 5.2.3.1 A General Meeting, if one is scheduled within one calendar month of the proposals submission
 - 5.2.3.1.1 Where a simple majority of Member Publications present at the General Meeting must vote in favour to adopt a constitutional amendment.
 - 5.2.3.2 A meeting of the Executive Committee, if there is not a General Meeting scheduled within one calendar month of the proposals submission
 - 5.2.3.2.1 Where a simple majority of Executive Officers present at the Executive Committee meeting must vote in favour to adopt a constitutional amendment.
- 5.2.4 Disputes over interpretations of the Constitution shall be settled by:
 - 5.2.4.1 A vote of Member Publications, if a General Meeting is scheduled within one calendar month.
 - 5.2.4.1.1 There is no appeal to a vote of Member Publications.

- 5.2.4.2 The Development Officer, if a General Meeting is not scheduled with one calendar month .
 - 5.2.4.2.1 An appeal for disputes interpreted by the Development Officer can be lodged with the Chair, whose decision will be final.

6 FINANCE

6.1 Finance

- 6.1.1 The Chair shall be ultimately accountable for the SPA's financial affairs.
- 6.1.2 Any SPA member may request details of the SPA's finances by writing to the Chair.
- 6.1.3 Any money obtained by the SPA shall be used only for the SPA's stated purposes and objectives.