

SPA

STUDENT
PUBLICATION
ASSOCIATION



Speakers' Policy on Diversity



Speakers' Policy on Diversity

2024/25

Background:

The Student Publication Association (SPA) believes that a diverse media industry is important for everyone. Journalism should reflect the people it serves in order to ensure important stories are not missed and that the needs of audiences are accurately met. We also believe, as an organisation which exists to help the journalists of tomorrow, that it is our job to lead by example.

Statistics* from 2023 show that 87 per cent of journalists in the United Kingdom come from white ethnic groups, more than two-thirds of journalists are based in London or the South East of England, and just 11 percent are working-class, compared to some 60 percent of the population. Women remain absent in high-level positions, alongside the continuously overlooked voices of the LGBTQ+ and disabled communities in the media.

*Source: <https://www.nctj.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Diversity-in-journalism-2023-4WEB.pdf>

Our Pledge:

When organising events, namely our national conference SPANC, we pledge to set ambitious and achievable targets to increase representation. We will invite journalists from a range of backgrounds to ensure all voices are elevated and to play our part in making the industry more representative. We pledge that:

- We will have gender parity in our overall speaker lineup, as well as amongst our keynote speakers.
- All speaker panels will be gender-balanced.
- A meaningful number of speakers at our events will identify as BAME, and it is our intention that panels will include at least one speaker who identifies as BAME.
- When putting together any conference or events programme, we will actively work to increase the representation of working class, disabled, LGBTQIA+, and other underserved minority voices.

Implementation:

The SPA is a student-led charity, headed up by an Executive Committee voted in at the AGM, with a team of project and regional officers brought onboard by the Executive Committee. It is the Executive Committee who will have primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the speakers' policy on diversity.

The Trustee Board, made up of industry professionals, exists to ensure the best interests of the charity are met. Members of the board will guide the work of the Executive Committee to help them meet the pledges outlined in the speakers' policy on diversity. The board shall carry overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented.

Accountability:

The SPA recognises there are certain circumstances where this speakers' policy on diversity, specifically the stated pledges, may not be met despite the best efforts of the charity's team.

In such circumstances where an SPA event fails to meet the charity's prescribed speakers' policy on diversity, the SPA Trustee Board and Executive Committee will require a written explanation from the organisers of said event outlining why the policy was not met, what steps will be taken to rectify any fallout, and how the organisers will learn lessons to do better in future. This shall occur within seven days of the event taking place. Sufficient examples, clearly showing that all reasonable steps were taken to meet the policy must be provided as part of the aforementioned written explanation.

The SPA Trustee Board reserves the right to postpone or cancel events organised by the Executive Committee, or other members of the SPA team, if they fail to meet the charity's speakers' policy on diversity. It shall be the responsibility of the chair and organising officer to inform the SPA membership why an event has been postponed or cancelled.

Adoption:

This particular version of the policy, entitled 'Speakers' Policy on Diversity 2024/25,' was adopted by the 2024/25 SPA Executive Committee and Trustee Board on 06/01/2025.

All members of the Executive and Trustee Board in post on date of adoption, have agreed to adhere to this policy and oversee its implementation for the coming year at all SPA events.