

Marketing your student group



**Committee Training
2022/23 Handbook**

leicesterunion.com





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Introduction

Marketing your Student Group effectively can assist in elevating your Student Group's visibility and popularity, increasing your member size and boosting attendance at your events. It can be something you put online or things you do on campus.

After completing this module, if you have any questions the Activities & Volunteering Department is here to assist you 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. You can get in touch with the whole team at unionactivities@le.ac.uk.

Who is responsible?

If your Student Group does not have a Committee Member directly responsible for the marketing and publicity of your activities it is the responsibility of **all Committee Members** to ensure that your Student Group is well publicised.

Handbook Overview

This handbook will help you navigate the following:

- Creating a Brand
- Creating Content on a range of platforms
- Safe Social Media Practices
- Student Group Marketing Examples
- Resources

For more information, check out our Student Group Training page [here](#).

Resources

In this module, the following resources will be mentioned:

- [Canva](#)
Free graphic design website with 100's of templates to utilise from Presentations to Posters.
- [Hootsuite](#) & [TweetDeck](#)
Software which enables you to schedule all your social media posts across multiple platforms.
- [Print Services](#)
University of Leicester Print Services team



Creating a Brand

Some Student Groups choose to develop a brand for their committee to utilise throughout the academic year. A brand can be beneficial to a Student Group, assisting them in being easily spotted on campus, both in their physical and digital image.

Here are a few things you could consider when creating your brand.

Audience

Consider who the audience for your Student Group's brand is – are you looking at engaging those interested in sports, the arts or something else? This may impact how you present your Student Group and the tone of voice you use.

Platform

Creating a brand can be daunting at times, especially if you have not had any experience in graphic design before. To assist, we recommend using [Canva](https://www.canva.com), a free platform with a range of stock images, fonts and illustrations that your Student Group can utilise.

Templates

Creating templates for posters/Facebook events/leaflets etc. means that any member of your committee can create content for an upcoming event.



Frequently Asked Questions – Quick Guide

How can we practice successful Student Group Marketing in our committee?

There are a number of different ways to ensure that your Committee Members are utilising social media or your group's web page to the best of its ability.

- When planning an event, mind map the different ways of promotion your Student Group could utilise and think about the best way to present the information
- Don't just promote your event few days before it happen, even you are missing some information, you can advertise it days before it happens
- Discuss and analysis what marketing strategies your group would like to have that will best fit your goal and audience
- Look at other Student Groups' social media to get inspiration on how to engage with your members – this can include universities that are not just Leicester!



Creating Content

Advertising on Students' Union Platforms

Unfortunately, due to the number of Student Group events that happen every week we are unable to advertise all Student Group events on the main Leicester Students' Union social media channels. However, make sure to tag the Activities & Volunteering Department at @union_activities and we are likely to add you to our social media stories!

Social Media

Student Groups are increasingly using social media to advertise their events. See below for some tips on how to utilise platforms that groups regularly use:

- Facebook
 - Having a **Facebook Page** means prospective members can give a non-committal 'Like' to follow your group before they decide to join. It's also a good way to promote widespread events
 - Having a **Facebook Group** for your members to receive more detailed information, for example, posting information about a members-only social or detailed information about a trip you are going on.
 - We do not recommend prioritising Facebook as many students no longer use this platform.
- Twitter
 - Use your Student Group logo as your icon so it is easy to identify, with 'Leicester' or 'UoL' in its handle
- Instagram
 - Instagram has proven to be the most popular platform for Student Groups in recent years and is most frequently used for interaction by the Students' Union
 - Utilise different features such as polls/questions/votes and stories to engage your membership. For example, asking prospective members if they have any questions about your group.



- Try to use the same (or very similar) usernames for each platform and have them assigned to your distribution email address (su-[yourstudentgroupname]@le.ac.uk) as this means that future committees can generate a new password if needed.
- Follow and tag other Student Groups to make them aware of your Student Group's activity, especially if it is a collaboration event

Please Note: It is important to talk to your members about the best way to advertise your events to them.

Students' Union Website

The Students' Union website (www.leicesterunion.com) is a great way to advertise your Student Group events to the wider student community. Do not be afraid to take inspiration from other Student Groups on how you can utilise the website! Features include:

- What's On Page
- Student Group Page
- Newsletters

Please Note: For more information on the Admin panel for the Students' Union website, please visit our [Understanding the Students' Union Website](#) module.

Posters/Leaflets

Physical materials (such as posters and leaflets) are often used by Student Groups to promote their events.

When creating physical materials to promote your Student Group's events, ensure that:

- The date/time/location of the event is clearly labelled
- Your Student Group's logos, branding etc. is clearly evidenced
- Any images you use are not distorted
- That the colours you utilise are easy to read and complement each other (for example, although black text on a red background stands out from the crowd, it is very hard to read)



for most people). For more information on making your marketing inclusive, please see the section below.

Please Note: To reduce your **environmental impact**, the Activities & Volunteering team recommend moving away from one-off physical promotional material and instead focussing on digital promotion. If this isn't possible, aim to use recycled/recyclable materials, and put a line of text on your design to say 'please recycle this flyer' or similar.

Your Student Group could also look at purchasing a roller-banner which can be used to promote your Student Group at many events.

Merchandise

Selling merchandise can be a great way to get your Student Group's image across campus and to create a sense of community. Think about reaching out to companies across Leicester to get a range of quotes along with consulting with your members to see how much they are willing to pay.

Please Note: Make sure to take orders from members **before** placing an order for your merchandise. This can be done by setting up a 'Product' on the Students' Union Website. See the [Understanding the Students' Union Website](#) module for more information.

Verbal

If your Student Group has a particular tie to an academic department, you could ask if you could do a lecture shout out for an event you wish to hold. This can prove helpful when hosting a trip or large-scale event where you have also invited non-members.



Safe Social Media Practices

When marketing your Student Group on any platform, but most notably on social media, it's important that you utilise safe practices to protect yourself and your Student Group.

Think Before You Post

For example, before you post anything, consider how a post/picture/video could impact others, and whether it's in line with the Students' Union and University ethos. If you have any doubts or concerns, talk to other Committee Members or do not post it at all. Remember, once you have posted, your content is public and can never truly be deleted. People can take a screenshot or download content within seconds.

Please Note: Remember that **everything your Student Group posts will be held to account**. If you are found to be posting content which is not in line with the Students' Union's/University guidelines, your Student Group can face suspension and/or disaffiliation.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As a Committee Member, it is your duty to abide by GDPR and to protect the information of your members. For more information, please see our GDPR guidance in the [Your Time on Committee](#) module.

Creating Community Rules

If your Student Group chooses to create a digital networking space on Discord or something similar, ensure that you create community rules to create a safe space for all. For guidance, please contact the Activities & Volunteering team at unionactivities@le.ac.uk.

Ensuring your Digital Communication is Inclusive and Accessible

Alternative Text

Alternative text aims to assist prospective members who may use Screen Readers in accessing media content. Some sites have this option built in, as seen in the Students' Union's website (seen in Picture 1: Alternative Text on the Students' Union's website) however for others we would recommend including a caption below your image.

When writing alternative texts you should:

- Accurately but succinctly describe the image content using proper punctuation and spellings with no abbreviations
- Ensure that any text in the image is noted in the Alternative Text box, as the screen reader cannot pick it up.
- Not include the term 'IMAGE OF' or 'PHOTO OF' as that appears like 'Image: Image Of...', so it duplicates. Instead, just go straight into description.
- Links for screen reader users should not use the words 'Visit Us' / 'Click here' instead the highlighted hyperlinks in text or Alternative captions should be like 'Buy Tickets on our Website' as it outlines the destination of a hyperlink.

Picture 1: 'Alternative Text' on the Students' Union's website

Image

Browse 20180627_102438.jpg Select image

Remove image

Thumbnail resizing Stretch

Alternate text ✓

Image caption

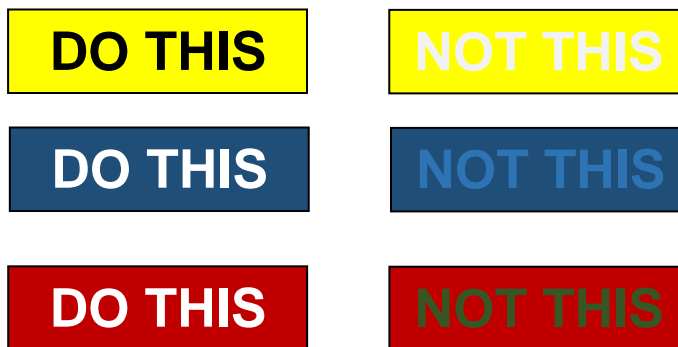
Body

Shown if the user has images disabled or the image fails to load. It should describe the picture briefly in words.

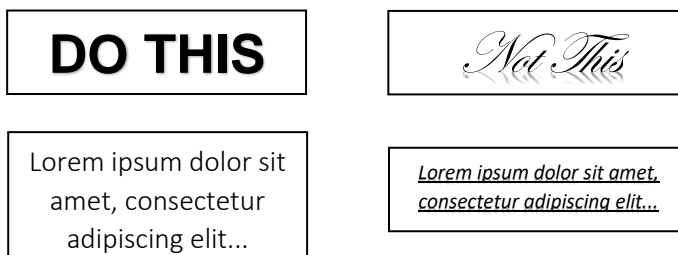
Use of Colours and Fonts

You must ensure that all of the text in your Student Group marketing is easy to read. Here are some simple guidelines that will help your Student Group get its message across in a clear and accessible way. As well as making your Student Group more open and welcoming for everyone, following these rules will generally improve your marketing and you will get more engagement as a result.

We would strongly advise against using colours that are too similar, e.g. white text on a yellow background. Please find examples of this below.



You should also use clear, easy to read fonts that are a good size. Make sure that the letters and words themselves are not too close together or too far apart, as this can cause difficulties for people to read. Please find examples of these below.



In addition, you can also:

- Use simple colours
- Use simple sentences and bullets
- Build simple and consistent layouts
- Provide transcripts for video

For more information about **Dos and don'ts on designing for accessibility**, you can visit:

<https://accessibility.blog.gov.uk/2016/09/02/dos-and-donts-on-designing-for-accessibility/>



Digital Blackface

What is Digital Blackface?

In the Early 19th Century, minstrel shows were developed and began being performed. In these, the casts were mostly made up of white people in dark make-up or black face for the purpose of portraying black people in minstrel shows. The content of these performances often showed black people in an over-exaggerated and derogatory way, designed to be laughed at by White people.

Blackface as a practice both predates and outdates minstrel shows however the practice of “blackening up” to exaggerate emotion still exists today – just in the form of how we present ourselves online.

GIFS and reaction images are as much a part of our online conversation as words are and with that has come a rise in black people being used as reactions gifs and images across all corners of the internet, a lot of the time by people who aren’t black themselves.

Being online gives people the opportunity to change who they are and put across a different persona to the one they hold in real life – a consequence of this has become using gifs of black people for an emotional reaction that the user themselves may not be able to completely embody. In using a black person in a gif for that reaction and that exaggeration, as a costume, digital blackface is committed.

These moments can come from anywhere and with just a GIF, the context of the situation is lost. A very popular gif showing Kimberly Wilkins, a black woman, saying “Ain’t nobody got time for that” is from a clip after she had escaped a fire in her apartment complex. These highly traumatic situations, where black pain is at the forefront, are being watered down for public consumption to be laughed at.

Outside of trauma situations, these situations come from black people living their lives, in the same way other races do, but in a way that has again taken a natural expression which isn’t intended to be funny, and made it okay to laugh at. Black people just existing isn’t inherently deliberately funny so what is there to laugh at – the connotation there being that black people exist to make other laugh which is the same premise that minstrel shows were built on in the early 19th Century.



How is this relevant to Student Groups?

GIF's and memes can be used on social media as a good way to catch people's attention. When you're looking for a GIF or meme it's important to ask yourself the following:

- What emotion are you trying to put across?
- Who are you trying to engage with the post?
- What are you trying to find your GIF of choice?

As relevant as it is in student groups, this is also something to think about in your personal interactions with people as well. Although it may not seem like overt racism, digital blackface has the potential to be as damaging as physical blackface while being much harder to identify and call out because online we're only the people we put across for others to see. However we are in control over our own behaviour and this is what will be vital to stopping digital blackface becoming more of an issue than it already is.

All student groups should be **responsible for building an inclusive environment** and be considerate of the feelings of students from all backgrounds.

Where can I learn more?

- Teen Vogue: We Need to Talk About Digital Blackface in Reaction GIFS
<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/digital-blackface-reaction-gifs>
- Wired: TikTok and the Evolution of Digital Blackface
<https://www.wired.com/story/tiktok-evolution-digital-blackface/>
- BBC: Is it OK to use Black emojis and GIFS
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-40931479>
- Women's Health: What is Digital Blackface? Experts Explain Why the Social Media Practise is Problematic
<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a33278412/digital-blackface/>



Making your Experience Transferable

Throughout your time on committee, you will gain skills that may be useful when writing applications past your time on committee. Have a look below for some ideas on skills that directly relate to Student Group Marketing.

These have been taken from the Careers Development Service's '[Transferable Skills Framework](#)', designed to help students review skill sets that are desirable to employers.

- **Improving**
 - Did your social media not have engagement in previous years but has increased this year? Have you rebranded your Student Group? Think about why you decided to change these areas of your Student Group marketing and how you achieved your goals.
- **Communication**
 - Effective communication is crucial to successful Student Group Marketing – think about your tone of voice and how you adapted to your audience.

When applying these skills in your applications, remember to use strong examples that you can back up verbally along with how the group acted as a whole and your individual role.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive and for further support, the Activities & Volunteering Department would strongly encourage you to visit the [Careers Development Service](#) website and look through their resources or book an appointment.



Changelog

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