

## STUDENT MEDIA GUIDANCE

### Social Media: Creating your own photo and video content

There are many online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, etc. available nowadays to help you with moderating the image and reputation of your club or society. It is important to understand that social media platforms are just tools that are designed in order to build online communities and make the communication processes easier. Therefore, creating the account on social media is not enough. Managing communication channels in the most efficient way is the most challenging task.

The human brain processes visuals 60,000x faster than text, so high-quality photo and video content is essential for efficient promotion.

There are three major types of visual content that can be created for your digital presence:

#### 1) Infographics

Infographics are a great way to visually present long information or statistics, which allows you to get creative with colours and design using various charts and graphs. While creating the infographics, you may want to pay attention to the next points:

- Keep it simple
- Visualise – use visual elements such as images, icons etc.
- Make it easy to view: use clear fonts, make sure that dimensions of the final image are correct and the text is readable
- Check your facts and figures, citing the sources

## 2) Photography

Eye-catching and creative photos are one of the easiest ways to attract attention and to deliver the right message. You don't need to have an expensive camera to create a good quality image; there are many tools available to make your photo look nice. To take an outstanding picture on your phone:

- Spend some extra time setting up the shot. Focus on the subject, and crop picture to frame it correctly.
- Avoid zooming in: doing so can make the photo appear grainy, blurry, or pixelated. Instead, try to get closer to your subject.
- Try to make sure there is an idea behind the shot.
- When taking a group photo: take multiple shots (best way to avoid the problems of not everyone looking just right), make sure peoples' faces are not covered, think about lighting and shadows.

- Don't be scared to edit:

Editing is easy and can be done from your phone.

Step 1. Straighten and crop the picture.

Step 2. Adjust exposure

Step 3. Use colour grading or filters if needed, i.e. your Instagram feed will have a better visual representation if you use 1-2 filters consistently or make an accent on a particular colour, such as your logo/brand colour. This will also help you to create associations, so when people are scrolling through their feeds they will be thinking about your club/society when seeing a particular colour.

For advanced editing, you can use Lightroom or Photoshop.

- Remember about image dimensions: each social media has its own suggested templates stating the sizes for images, which are constantly changing. Make sure to keep a track of the changes and avoid weird image cropping or low-quality images.

### 3) Video

There are two main types of videos you can create for your social media: 'as-you-go' video (suitable for Instagram Stories, for example) and properly scripted, edited video, which may be more time-consuming.

Both of these videos will look better if you prepare the script in advance, as well as thinking through the main points for each message you would like to get delivered to your audience. Even 15-second videos require practice! Make sure to moderate the language (formal/informal) when writing the script, and adjust it according to your audience.

Tip: 85% of videos on Facebook videos are watched on mute. Video subtitles can help you to boost your video shares by 15%.

Video length depends on your chosen platform. However, keep in mind that people have a short attention span, and the first 5-10 seconds of the video should already seem intriguing/interesting.

The most frequently used platforms are YouTube, which can be shared directly to social media, and Instagram/Instagram Stories/IGTV

**Software you can use for advanced video editing includes Premiere Pro, Sony Vegas, Adobe After Effects.**

## Preparation for media appearances

Being invited to appear on TV or radio is a fantastic opportunity for you to showcase everything that's great about your club or society, Aston Students' Union and the wider University. These chances don't come along very often, so you need prepare properly in order to make the most of your time in the spotlight.

### Do your homework before you go 'live'.

Ask the producer about potential topics that could be covered to make sure you are clear about your subject. Carefully think through the key messages you would like to deliver. The time goes quickly when you're live or recording, so try to concentrate on three main points. To stand out, start your answers with the "why" behind the question, instead of "what".

*i.e. "What does your society do?"*

*"If you are a new student, you might be interested in expanding your professional network but you might not be able to do it alone. Our society holds many career-related events throughout the year to provide students with insight into different businesses and to help students identify their potential career path."*

### Practice

If it is your first time, you may feel really nervous. To avoid any uncomfortable and embarrassing situations, practice before you record or go live. Think your answers through and record yourself talking using smartphone or tablet. This will help you to notice any speech patterns or physical movements that you may want to get rid of before the TV/Radio appearance.

It is better to look silly all alone at home rather than in front of an audience.

## Your appearance

Here are some top tips from the TV professionals:

- Wear something comfortable and smart, this is not the day to experiment! Baggy clothes may look unprofessional on camera. Make sure you dress conservatively so the audience will be focused on your message rather than your fashion.
- Wear bright colours. Avoid black and white, which drains colour from your skin. Go for complimentary tones.
- Avoid busy patterns. A solid-colour garment always looks better.
- Dress from head to toe. Director may make a last-minute decision to interview you in a different location. If you don't like the way your shoes look with your outfit, you may regret it.
- Makeup is very important on HD television, even for men. Make sure to bring some makeup products with you in case the studio staff cannot help you. Translucent powder will help you to take the shine off your forehead and cheeks.
- Don't wear noisy excessive jewellery that may distract viewers.
- Empty all your pockets. Small details are noticeable on television.
- Do not wear anything too short as you may be sitting on a low sofa/seat. Cross your legs at the ankles rather than knees.

## Language and tone of voice

Make sure your language and tone are appropriate for the type of radio/TV program you are invited to. Some of them will allow you to speak in a more casual tone, whilst others will require you to stay professional and business-oriented using formal language.

Stay calm, speak and breathe steadily, so you have time to think about your answers. This will help you to avoid awkward sounds like “ums” and “ahs”.

Avoid interrupting the presenter or other guests, your turn will come.

Use your sense of humour, but don't get over-confident. Remember that the camera and microphones will be on throughout the program. If it is live, producers will not be able to edit out anything that you did not want to be said.

Most importantly, smile and be yourself!

## University and SU Representation

When you are representing Aston you will meet a lot of new contacts and most likely be asked about the University and Students' Union. It may be useful for you to know some key messages about Aston University, so you can choose from the following depending on who you are talking to: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/opendays/undergraduate/10reasons/>

Read the brochures about Aston University and Aston SU before TV/Radio appearances, so that you are updated on facts about both organisations:

Aston University: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/about>

Aston Students' Union: [https://www.astonsu.com/your\\_su/aboutasu/](https://www.astonsu.com/your_su/aboutasu/)

Do not mention anything that you are not sure about.

Be yourself and feel free to share your own experiences!

**NOTE:** Please, keep in mind GDPR.

Unless photos/videos are for commercial use, or if they are going to be published online instantly, permission is NOT required to photograph adults/children in public places. Posting photos on club or society social media accounts doesn't count as a commercial use.

If photos of people are intended to be published immediately, clubs or societies MUST either get people's permission or blank out all faces. Permission can be given verbally, clubs and societies just need to be clear on what they will be doing with the photo/video. All pictures/videos taken in public places that contain faces of people who did NOT agree to be photographed can be published a few hours later, but not immediately in case an individual doesn't want anyone to know where they are.

If clubs or societies are contacted by someone who appears in a photo that was not published straight away, asking for it to be taken down, the club or society has no obligation to do that. In the UK, nobody can be forced to delete pictures like this, as people should accept they may appear in photographs that are taken in public places.

NEVER share any personal details (name, address, email address, phone number, etc.) of other people without their permission.