

Student Groups Web Platforms Guidance

This guidance is for student groups to use when setting up and running their web platforms. This guidance aims to provide student group leaders with information on how to:

- Facilitate and maintain positive and inclusive interactions on their platforms
- Respond to inappropriate behaviour on their web platforms

Web Platforms

Web Platforms Provided by the Students' Union

The Students' Union provides each student group with a mini site on the Students' Union's main website, www.uea.su

These mini sites are set up by the Students' Union upon a group's affiliation and the space remains active until a group is disaffiliated.

The mini site allows student groups to:

- Promote their events and activities
- Provide information about the purpose of the student group
- Hold democratic elections for committee positions
- Sell memberships (if applicable to the type of student group) and track memberships purchased
- Email members
- Sell event tickets and merchandise
- Create news articles

Web Platforms Created by the Student Group

Student groups may have additional online platforms to promote their activities and/or communicate with their members, such as:

- Email addresses
- External websites, is not recommended as you are already provided with a website platform it is allowed providing:
 - Clear rationale that the website platform provided, doesn't meet the needs of your requirements, e.g. live streaming etc. This would need to be approved by the
 - The student group provide the URL link clearly on their UEASU webpage
 - The student group do not administer memberships / products through the external website
 - The purpose of the external website does not overlap with the purpose of the UEASU student group webpage
 - The students group's UEASU webpage is maintained with up to date information about upcoming events and activities
- Social media accounts : Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and LinkedIn, Twitch,

- Group messaging forums such as: Facebook group chats, WhatsApp, Discord

Web Conduct

It is important to remember that any web platform for student groups is an official student group space, so behaviour that is 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 (including student leaders), should have an expectation of feeling safe. Here are some guidance on unacceptable behaviour and tips for preventing it.

Unacceptable Conduct

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

- Cyber Bullying/Stalking
- Trolling / Online Impersonation
- Excluding
- Sexual harassment
- Discriminatory comments and behaviour
- Abuse and unwanted attention
- Threatening or violent behaviour or language

Full information on UEA and UEASU's definition of online harassment via Never Ok campaigns is [detailed here](#). You can report incidences of unacceptable conduct through the Report and Support portal, which can be [found here](#).

Managing your Web Platforms

Here are some points we recommend groups follow to promote positive interactions on their web platforms and how to handle unacceptable conduct.

For mini sites provided by the Students' Union, external websites and email addresses created by student groups:

- Use these platforms as a professional space to inform members and prospective members about your student group and its activities and answer general enquiries.
- Only give access to the committee members who need admin access to these platforms.
- Remove admin access to those who no longer need it. Ensure no data can be accessible to previous admins. Also ensure passwords are updated.

For more interactive web platforms such as social media pages/groups and/or group chats:

- Assign platform leads and ensure these are not the only methods of communicating with your members as some may not utilise some platforms or are able to access them. Your

primary source of communication to members should always start with email from the uea.su website.

- Only give admin access to those who are assigned it. Whilst refreshing passwords at least annually.
- Include web platform handover in handover between old and new committees each year.
- Keep your groups and chats closed to paid members only (remember to add new members regularly). For any open public pages please utilise guidance above.
- Provide a statement to members upon joining that your web platforms are for discussion and communication around student group activities only and behaviour associated with the unacceptable conduct in this document is not tolerated.

Please note that Sports clubs are bound by UEA Sports Club Social Media Charter.

These could include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn
- Discord
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Twitch
- Whatsapp

If an incident of unacceptable conduct does occur on any of your web platforms, here is some advice on action you should take as a committee:

- Put a message out on the web platform where the incident has occurred, to state that the behaviour shown is not tolerated in your student group and kindly ask your members to keep the platform a safe space for students. Ensuring that all committee members are briefed on this.
- 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 student group web platform, referring back to the statement made at the beginning of there year where possible.
- If the situation has become unmanageable you can consider instigating a cooling off period and temporarily freeze the group for a period of time. Admins can then consider using this period to release any further statements on the platform, as necessary.
- Consider closing the group permanently

Report the incident to your Students' Union staff support and provide screenshots/evidence of the behaviour. The Students' Union will then be able to offer support with dealing any necessary further action or investigation as per relevant Students' Union procedure (if necessary).

- If the behaviour was posted online, remove the comments to revert your web platform back to a safe space for students (make sure you have collected any evidence you need for later reference before removing).
- After a cooling off period, re-open/ unfreeze the web platform for members to have access to posting again and remind all members that everyone is to move on from the previous conversations and remain respectful on your group's web platforms and at your events.
- Of course you also hold the right to close the group completely
- Keep your staff support at the Students' Union up to date with any further escalations or issues so they can provide you with the correct support.
- Should you feel that the behaviour is in breach of Never OK Guidance please report this activity via Report and Support, a member of the SU opportunities team or UEA Sport.

Online Cloud Storage

Student groups setting up cloud storage platforms such as but not exclusive to:

- Microsoft Onedrive
- Google Drives
- Drop Box

Student groups must be sure to follow robust general data protection regulations. They should always be security protected and only shared with committee members. Their primary use should be for handover such as committee role descriptions, logos and marketing assets and functional files for student group operation.

They should at not hold any personal data of members any longer than they should unless it is for the purpose of trip registrations or for a particular use agreed and consented to by that member e.g., a mailing list showing interest in the society. Once the need for this data ceases this must be deleted immediately.

By personal data we mean but not exhaustive of any contact details, or personal identifiers, such as nationality, disabilities, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religious beliefs or health

Where you may hold a list of names but no further identifiable/sensitive data, this can be stored in the drive, this may include registers to sessions or ticket holders for future events.

An audit of this data must be completed very year to ensure this data is deleted post its use expiring.

No data should ever be shared with any external party.

If these drives are not set up by the Union on your behalf, you must ensure you follow all online software guidelines and ensure the data is kept in line with GDPR training.

Specific consideration for WhatsApp groups

We are that many student groups will use a WhatsApp group to communicate with your members. We advise the following:

- Ensure that you abide by the general principles above for managing a web platform as above

- That these groups should be used for general communications of the student group rather than regular whole dialogue of all members
- Remember that not all members will be able to or engage with a WhatsApp group and shouldn't be the primary basis of communication.

Safety Considerations for Virtual Events

All events run by student groups should consider the following safety guidance when organising:

1. Use the best online approach for your event and consider the types of Software available:
 - Zoom
 - Microsoft Teams
 - Google Hangout
 - Facebook Rooms
 - House Party
 - Twitch
2. Ensure you control who can access the event,
 - Ensure you have registrations
 - Only share the link to the online event once an attendee is registered
 - Consider adding a password or other authentication requirement for attendees to access the event
3. Deter and manage disruptive activity:
 - Select a webinar/virtual meeting platform that includes security features.
 - Make sure that the settings for whatever platform you use are adjusted to account for security.
 - Depending on your event, consider disabling features that allow attendees to present their desktops or interject without being called upon. This can greatly reduce the ability of an inadvertent or cruel disruption.
 - The nature, subject matter, publicity, and size of your event may increase these risks. For example, a well-publicised political event might attract negative attention or people intent on sabotaging your event.
4. Set expectations for how attendees should act:
 - Share guidelines for behaviours attendees are expected to demonstrate.
 - Consider and communicate your policy on un-registered attendees, video recording, and disruption.
 - Explain each attendee's responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of the event.
 - Use caution and avoid sharing sensitive personal information on the individuals hosting the event and where the broadcast is being held, unless necessary.
5. A final few hints:
 - Carefully consider the subject matter of your event, how it is advertised, and where you will be "broadcasting" from.

- Limit personally identifiable information or other items that might embolden someone to try to disrupt your event during a live broadcast.
- Such incidents are rare. But, as virtual events continue to grow in popularity, these are some of the risks that event creators should consider before hosting their event. Check out [Zoom's event safety guide](#) and [Microsoft's event safety guide](#) for more resources.

Staying Safe Online Further reading:

For more information on how to stay safe online, you can check out these excellent resources:

- [Ask About Games](#) – A website with everything you need to know about video games!
- [WebWise](#) – An online course provided by the BBC to help you stay safe online.
- [ThinkUKnow](#) – A website created by UK police for parents, with information and tools to help teach children about online safety.

Support with Managing your Web Platforms and Online Events

We understand that it may be more difficult online to understand the effect of some messages. If you are ever unsure of whether you should take steps to manage behaviour shown on your web platforms, please contact your Students' Union staff support, who can offer informal support as well as investigate any serious behaviour misconduct as per relevant Students' Union procedure (if necessary).

You can contact your staff support through the relevant contact details below:

Societies – union.opportunities@uea.ac.uk

Sport Clubs - please contact your club coordinator for further information – should you not know your coordinator please email - studentsport@uea.ac.uk

Buddy Scheme – amy.rust@uea.ac.uk

Volunteer Groups – Please email your relevant staff member as a point of contact for your project or scheme

Student Services – <https://reportandsupport.uea.ac.uk/>