

**THE STUDENTS'
UNION**
AT UWE

TONE OF VOICE

July 2017 v.1.1

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Introduction

“Tone of voice isn't what we say but how we say it. It's the language we use, the way we construct sentences, the sound of our words and the personality we communicate. It is to writing what logo, colour and typeface are to branding.”

– *Smashing Magazine*

Just as important as a visual brand, a clear and consistent tone of voice is another way to establish our identity as an organisation.

No matter what you're writing for or who you're writing to, this guide is here to help. You can use this to understand our brand and how that shapes your writing. We don't want to all sound the same – you should find your voice within our brand whilst delivering a consistent tone of voice for the organisation as a whole.

Our brand

VISION

Where we are going:

We will be recognised as a leading Students' Union that all our students are proud of.

What we mean:

Our vision is aspirational, it is where we want to be, and generally it is a long term goal that doesn't have a set deadline. It is something we should be constantly striving for.

MISSION

Why we are here:

We're here to make a positive impact on the life of every student at UWE Bristol.

What we mean:

Our mission is a declaration of our core purpose and will remain unchanged. It shapes what is important, centres the students in our reason for being and states our direction. If our mission is the cause then our vision is an effect.

VALUES

We are:

- Student led
- Inclusive
- Creative and fun
- Open to change
- Relentlessly ambitious

What we mean:

Values are important beliefs shared by the organisation on what is good and desirable. Just like a person, The Students' Union's values shape our behaviour and personality and serve as guidelines in all situations (not just how we write).

PERSONALITY

How we come across:

- Supportive
- Confident
- Inspiring
- Open and transparent
- Positive
- Approachable

What we mean:

Our personality is a set of human characteristics attributed to our brand that defines how we come across. If values shape what we say and do, then personality shapes how we say things.

Personality

SUPPORTIVE

Friendly

Encouraging

Helpful

More

- Celebrate student achievements
- Useful information
- Think about your audience

Less

- Doing work for students
- Mollycoddling

Good example

If you're looking for accommodation for next year – Thursday 26 January should be in your diary.

There will be a whole host of accommodation providers and lots of accommodation experts on hand, ready, willing and able to answer all of your housing queries – from contracts to tenants' rights, gas safety and funds available.

Bad example

Don't miss out on finding somewhere to live next year. You'll need to come the Accommodation Fair. The Advice Centre will be here to help you every step of the way.

Personality

CONFIDENT

Assertive

Courageous

Bold

More

- Be more certain, say “we will do this, we are good at this”

Less

- Doubt. Avoid words like “could”, “should” and “want”

Good example

Welcome to UWE Bristol. The Students' Union is here to help you get the most out of your time at university.

Over the next few weeks, you will find out everything available to you throughout your university experience.

From trying out new things with our Give It A Go programme to making new friends at our events; we have loads to offer.

Bad example

We would like to support you while you're here. We want to show you some of the things we do and you might like to get involved in.

You could maybe join a sports team or a society, we have special interest, academic, national faith and identity societies, you can volunteer with the green team or do fundraising with UWE RAG, you can also become a student rep, sign up to JobShop, visit our Advice Centre and come to our events.

Personality

INSPIRING

Motivating

Leading

Empowering

More

- Promote a response, include a call to action
- Lead by example
- Motivating Students to Join In, Speak Up, Be More

Less

- Information overload
- Avoid being boring, get your audience as excited as you are

Good example

Shape the future of The Students' Union, stand in The Leadership Race. Find out more: inserturlhere.co.uk

Bad example

The Students' Union elections are where you can stand to represent your fellow students to the university.

You can gain valuable work experience and earn over £19,000 a year while you do it. You can also go for a part time volunteer role to represent a particular group of students.

If you don't want to stand you should vote and decide who you would like to represent you next year.

Personality

OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

Accessible

- Keep it simple and easy to understand

Honest

- To the point

Clear

Less

- Rambling
- Complicated vocabulary
- Manipulative – want students to do something?
Be honest

Good example

Are you an International Student? Make yourself at home! The Students' Union is here for you and want you to feel as welcome as possible.

At the international student orientation day, you will find out everything you need to know about building a life at university.

From international societies, to sports, to representation, to volunteering – there is plenty to get involved in.

Bad example

If you're an international student you need to come to the international student orientation day to learn more about being a student at UWE.

Personality

POSITIVE

Optimistic

Exciting

Fun

More

- Focus on positive aspects of what you're saying
- Use positive vocabulary

Less

- Negative or indifferent
- Avoid words like “don't” or “no”

Good example

We are super excited about the Official UWE Summer Festival this year. It's going to be bigger and better than ever with awesome acts, fancy food and of course, you!

Buy your tickets here:
inserturlhere.co.uk

Bad example

The Summer Festival. Don't miss out. Tickets: inserturlhere.co.uk

Personality

APPROACHABLE

Receptive

Relatable

Direct

More

- Talk to people directly, use words like “you”
- Encourage feedback
- Create conversations

Less

- Dependent on your audience, avoid being too formal
- Avoid attempting to be down with the kids.
- Jargon
- Slang

Good example

What do you think The Students' Union should be working on next? Get in touch – we want to hear from you.

Bad example

The Students' Union is setting its strategic plan for 2020. Student feedback is essential to this process. Tell us what you believe we should set as our aims and objectives.

Bad example

Yo Yo! The SU needs your help. You gotta give us bare feedback, so we know how to make next year lit so you don't need to facepalm. It's gonna be sick

The writing process

Once you have written your text, you can fill out a proofreading request form. You can upload the text, create an unapproved news item, or link to the document on S: Drive.

Your text must be proofread if:

- it is an official document
- it is to be printed
- it is going to a large number of students (over 1,000)

1. Planning

Think about who you are writing for, what you need to tell them, and what you want them to do. Planning can help focussing your content and mind maps are a great way to organise your thoughts.

Make sure you put the important information first, don't bury it three paragraphs in.

2. Writing

Use your plan to guide you and don't worry about getting it right first time. A first draft doesn't have to be perfect but it has got to be written. Don't overload on words, large blocks of text are unattractive to readers – keep it simple and succinct.

3. Editing

The editor's job is to make sure the content is fit for purpose, ensuring the message is clear, with the audience in mind. If necessary, you can do this step yourself – just think about how your writing can demonstrate our personality traits and values.

4. Proofreading

Grammatical errors make us look unprofessional. You can submit your content to be proofread using the [ticketing system](#).

5. Repeat

The editing and proofreading steps can be repeated until you are happy with the content.

6. Reviewing, publishing and issuing

Once you have the final draft it can be published online or sent to design.

Our name

THE STUDENTS' UNION AT UWE

This is our full name. The “The” should always be included and capitalised. The apostrophe should always come after the “s” because it is the plural possessive (There are many students and the union belongs to them). The “at UWE” is only necessary when speaking outside the context of the university or when also speaking about other student unions.

THE SU AT UWE

This is only acceptable to use on Twitter or where there is a character limit. In all other cases use our full name.

Editorial guidelines

Please note: This document is about our house style so that we can write consistently; it is not a grammar dictionary.

We use standard English grammar and spellings. If you are unsure about any grammar feel free to ask.

ABBREVIATIONS

Please use abbreviations in the following formats:

UWE – not U.W.E

Mrs

Ltd

etc.

PhD

Dr

MSc

BA(Hons) – no space between BA and Bracket, capitalise H

ext

Do not abbreviate weekdays or months:

January – not Jan

Monday – not Mon

ACRONYMS

Only use acronyms that are widely understood by people outside the context of The Students' Union.

However, in longer text use the full name followed by brackets in the first instance, then the acronym from then on – for example The Students' Union Meeting (SUM).

ADDRESS

Our address is:

The Students' Union at UWE
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol
BS34 8QZ

It should always be written like this. However, if you need to save space you can write it all on one or more lines with the parts of the address separated by a comma.

AMPERSAND – &

Use “and” instead of the ampersand in most cases unless it is part of a company name or in the titles and for design purposes.

Editorial guidelines

APOSTROPHE

An apostrophe is used to show a missing letter or a possessive. You don't need an apostrophe for plurals of abbreviations.

CDs – not CD's

2000s – not 2000's

BULLET POINTS

Start with a capital letter, do not end with a full stop

– This is a bullet point

CAPITALISATION

Apart from at the start of sentences (obviously) only use capitals for proper nouns – when naming a person, place or organisation; course names and job titles are included too.

DATES

Write in the format of day (in full), date (number without st, rd, or th), month (in full), then the four-digit year.

Friday 20 May 2016

Editorial guidelines

EMAIL

Use email not e-mail. When writing email addresses don't capitalise them.

josephine.alford@uwe.ac.uk

FONTS

Headings and Titles

Always capitalised and either Alternate Gothic No. 2 or Arial Narrow Bold if not available.

General Text

News Gothic BT Roman, or Arial Regular if not available

ITALICS

Only use italics for the titles of publications, plays or films.

NUMBERS

Write numbers one to ten in full, and numbers 11 and over in figures. If the number is at the start of a sentence it needs to be written in full.

Use a comma to separate numbers over 1,000.

ALTERNATE GOTHIC NO. 2

ARIAL NARROW BOLD

News Gothic BT Roman

Arial Regular

Editorial guidelines

PERCENTAGES

Always use % rather than writing per cent in full.

PHONE NUMBERS

Write The Students' Union phone numbers as: 0117 32 82577.

PUNCTUATION

Exclamation marks

Exclamation marks are unnecessary - let your content speak for itself.

Quotation marks

Use double quotation marks, if the quote goes beyond the end of a paragraph don't close the quote at the end of the first paragraph.

TIMES

Use the 24-hour clock and don't use am or pm.

18:00 – not 6:00 pm

Editorial guidelines

WEBSITES

When referencing a web address, avoid using the www. at the beginning.

thestudentsunion.co.uk

Resources

CONTACT US

If you have any questions, please contact Marketing:

– 0117 32 83493

– sumarketing@uwe.ac.uk

AVAILABLE ASSETS

You can access a range of brand assets including logos, stationery and templates by visiting:

thestudentsunion.co.uk/brand