

Western Sydney University Student Union

Student News and Publications Policy (Proposed Draft)

Section 1 Terms of Reference

1. Definitions outlined in the WSUSU Constitution and Regulations have the same meanings in this policy.
2. Student News and Publications Committee can be referred to as the SNAP Committee, or SNAP.
3. The SNAP Recruitment Committee shall form to appoint editorial positions, and shall be convened by the Publications Officer, a WSUSU Board Representative or Delegate, a Professional and/or Academic guest member who demonstrates expertise in the field of news and publications, at least one current student representative who is not already a member of the SNAP Committee, and any other guest members as determined by the Publications Officer and their Manager.¹

Section 2 Overview and Purpose

4. This document shall outline the relevant student publications policies of WSUSU and will be subject to the decision making of the relevant bodies of WSUSU.
5. This policy shall also outline the functions and responsibilities of the members of the SNAP Committee and the publications separately.
6. The purpose of the SNAP Committee is to:
 - a. Act as Publisher of various student publications,
 - b. Convene to set the direction of the various publications it publishes,
 - c. Give publishing approval to the various publications it publishes, and
 - d. Conduct other applicable business.
7. The purpose of the student publications published by the SNAP Committee is to express the voices of students of Western Sydney University (WSU) and reflect the diverse interests of those students.
8. The SNAP Committee is responsible for prioritising publishing news stories and media content, which either communicates the diverse opinions and thoughts of students at WSU, or expresses content that is objectively of high interest to the student community.

¹ NB The SNAP Recruitment Committee will form with a Student Managing Editor if and when that student role is formed and filled.

Section 3 Editorial Autonomy and SNAP Committee Guiding Principles

9. WSUSU recognises that editorial independence is required for student news and media, despite being the primary provider of revenue for the student publications.
10. To acknowledge the above statement, the SNAP and the publications of the SNAP are understood, by all relevant parties, to not truly or wholly be editorially independent and as such the resolution to retain editorial autonomy from WSUSU, its staff, and elected officers in relation to the principles outlined below.
11. Publications of the SNAP shall operate autonomously in their editorial decision-making processes, ensuring freedom from undue influence by WSUSU, its staff, elected student representatives, or external partner entities. Appointed for skill and experience in the field of publishing, selected support staff will provide editorial mentorship, advise editors, and employ risk management strategies to prevent the SNAP from disrepute, libel and other liabilities.
12. WSUSU shall provide financial, governance and administrative support to the student newspaper while respecting its editorial autonomy. The allocation of funding from WSUSU will not be contingent upon the editorial stance, content, or approach of the newspaper, ensuring that financial support does not compromise autonomy.
13. The governance structure of the SNAP shall include representation from elected student members, as indicated by this policy. These members will provide student perspective advice, guidance and oversight on operational matters but will not hold editorial roles or influence content decisions.
14. To ensure transparent governance and quality oversight the SNAP membership will include selected WSUSU staff to act as mentors, liaison members between the publications and WSUSU, and financial administration delegates. Support staff shall not interfere in editorial content or decisions that would severely compromise the editorial autonomy, unless the publication requires intervention due to liability risks that outweigh the importance of independence.
15. In ensuring adherence to ethical journalism, media law and ethical publishing practices, the SNAP, and all student journalists and content creators will publish with accuracy, fairness, and accountability by adhering to the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics, and the Student Code of Conduct, thus providing reasonably balanced stories.
16. The SNAP committee members shall prioritise representing the diverse voices of the student body and encourage critical perspectives, ensuring that all editorial decisions are made by the SNAP without external coercion.
17. Attached to this policy will be a set of clear guidelines embedded within the Publishing Guide, which will aim to manage potential conflicts of interest, and ensure that no individual or group within the association uses any student publications for personal, political, organisational, or otherwise capital gain.
18. The editorial team will remain accountable to the student body and adhere to an agreed code of conduct, maintaining transparency in operations and editorial

practices while safeguarding their independence.

19. The roles of WSUSU staff, elected committee members, appointed committee members and the editorial team shall be clearly defined and outlined in this policy to prevent overlap or confusion, ensuring operational and editorial boundaries are respected.
20. The SNAP shall retain the right to critique WSUSU and its operations, provided such critiques adhere to ethical journalism standards, and are grounded in factual reporting.
21. The SNAP shall execute its responsibilities with due diligence, fiscal and legal accountability as well as keeping the interests of the students of Western Sydney University at the foreground of the conception of every publication.
22. The Manager shall make available funding for the provision of any independent legal advice required by the SNAP. Expenditure is subject to the approval of the Manager (or delegate).
23. The SNAP may also wish to publish additional policies or guidelines they set for themselves, provided the policies do not contradict guidelines the SNAP Committee is obligated to abide by, for example the WSUSU Constitution and underpinning policies, and any relevant legislated ruling.

Section 4 Student News and Publications Guidelines

Student News and Publications (SNAP) Committee

24. There shall be a SNAP Committee which shall consist of the following voting members:
- a. Six (6) Editors, who shall be appointed by the SNAP Recruitment Committee, to the positions of;
 - i. Print Editor-in-Chief
 - ii. Print Editor
 - iii. Design Editor
 - iv. Digital Editor-in-Chief
 - v. Digital Editor
 - vi. Digital Assets Editor
 - b. The Publications Officer who shall chair, and
 - c. The Manager or nominee.
25. There shall be the following non-voting SNAP members:
- a. The Editors of additional publications which are established by the SNAP,
 - b. Any appointed Reporters, who may also be referred to as Correspondents, and
 - c. Up to two (2) student representatives appointed by the SRC's sub-committees.
26. In addition to the purpose of the SNAP outlined by this policy, the aims of the SNAP shall be:
- a. to inform students about news, events, activities, and matters of importance within the Western Sydney University community
 - b. to promote greater student participation in all forms of media to publish at the highest quality possible, and
 - c. to provide opportunities for students to gain, develop and hone skills in publishing, production, writing, editing and design.

27. The role of the SNAP Committee, a recognised body of the WSUSU, shall be to:
- a. To act as publisher of all publications of the SNAP;
 - b. Exercise editorial and content control over all publications of the Committee including the student newspaper, provided that such control shall be reasonable and restricted to matters which in the Committee's opinion:
 - i. May expose the Committee to any civil or criminal liability, including for defamation, contempt, infringement of copyright, unlawful discrimination or indecency, or
 - ii. Are discriminatory on the basis of sex, sexuality, race and ethnicity or disability, or
 - iii. Promote a candidate running in any student election at Western Sydney University.
 - c. To perform such other duties as may be determined from time to time by the SNAP.
28. The Editor(s) shall be solely responsible for the production of the print and digital publications of the SNAP, subject to any decision of the SNAP.
29. The SNAP shall publish a website, which shall
- a. be the official publication of the SNAP,
 - b. contain access to the historical record of historical print editions, and
 - c. act as the central hub of all publications published by the SNAP.
30. The SNAP shall normally publish on a weekly basis, digital publications across social media, multimedia and website news articles and other relevant content. Per the guidance of the SNAP Committee, the SNAP Publishing Guide will make reference to particular KPIs and shall be reviewed annually.
31. The SNAP shall publish at least once per quarter, or four (4) times a year, a Student Newspaper which shall be the primary print publication of the SNAP.
32. The SNAP will publish print and digital publications known as "W'SUP" stylised with an apostrophe embedded within the letter W, and shall only be referred to in all caps.

SNAP Standing Orders

- 3 3. The SNAP may conduct its business in any format agreed to by its members, including face-to-face or online meetings, or over email.
- 3 4. The SNAP shall meet each month of the calendar year, which shall include the following meetings:
 - a. A December handover, induction and planning meeting
 - b. A January annual strategic direction and planning meeting, and
 - c. A general SNAP meeting for each remaining month.
- 3 5. Monthly SNAP meetings shall take place face-to-face only, with hybrid online options available in extenuating circumstances.
- 3 6. Quorum for SNAP meetings shall be 50% + one (1). If a SNAP meeting does not meet quorum after 30 mins of the scheduled start time all business shall be postponed to a later date.
- 3 7. SNAP meeting agendas shall be made available, by the Publications Officer, to all members and attendees a minimum of five (5) business days before the meeting.
- 3 8. SNAP meeting minutes shall be made available five (5) business days following the meeting, and shall record all attendees, apologies, absences, delegated actions (with an action list), business of the committee, and record any abstentions, motions, or votes no.
- 3 9. SNAP student editors shall take minutes, rotating so each editor records minutes at approximately two (2) meetings per year.
- 4 0. Apologies shall be sent to the Publications Officer in writing with as much notice as reasonably possible.
- 4 1. SNAP meetings are to be held in closed session, unless requested by a member of the committee inviting a guest attendee and/or speaker. SNAP meeting guests must be arranged no less than six (6) business days prior to the meeting taking place.
- 4 2. Non-voting members, who shall have a standing SNAP meeting invite, may attend meetings as frequently as they deem necessary.
- 4 3. Non-voting members, who shall normally only observe meetings, can request an audience of the SNAP at generally scheduled meetings through the chair for no more than five (5) minutes per speaker.
- 4 4. All SNAP Committee members are required to complete appropriate training as identified by Publications Officer in consultation with the Manager. Training and professional development includes but is not limited to December induction and other training opportunities throughout the calendar year.
- 4 5. Training of student members of the committee outlined above shall include but are not limited to:
 - a. Chairing meetings, minute taking and meeting participation
 - b. Governance and processes
 - c. Media Law, copyright and fact checking

- d. Publishing and copy editing
 - e. Community engagement
 - f. Content production and planning
 - g. Public speaking and presenting
- 4.6. The Editors-in-Chief and Editors shall be appointed by the SNAP Recruitment Committee via a merit-based recruitment process supported by the Publications Officer and Manager.
- 4.7. Eligibility criteria for editors listed in the above clause will ordinarily require a candidate to be a currently enrolled student and include standard eligibility criteria for appointable roles requiring skills in media publication. Students of Western Sydney University who are able to demonstrate a leave of absence status, the desired skillset, and a demonstrated dedication to the student voice may be eligible at the discretion of the SNAP recruitment committee.
- 4.8. The office of any student member of the SNAP becomes vacant if the member:
- a. resigns the office by writing to the Publications Officer,
 - b. does not provide apologies for absences to two (2) consecutive scheduled SNAP Committee meetings,
 - c. does not attend three (3) consecutive scheduled SNAP Committee meetings,
 - d. does not attend assigned mandatory training within a reasonable timeframe, or does not attend assigned training without a reasonable explanation as determined by the Publications Officer and Manager,
 - e. is removed from office under this policy or any associated policies or procedures of WSUSU;
 - f. ceases to be eligible for appointment under this policy, or
 - g. willfully neglects to comply with requirements of their role or engages in willful acts of disreputable/unethical behaviour.
- 4.9. In the event of a casual vacancy of an office of a student member of the SNAP, a replacement member shall be appointed to fill that vacancy for the remainder of the term of the outgoing member in accordance with the relevant policies of WSUSU.
- 5.0. The SRC executive members shall have an opportunity to provide a report for each edition of the Student Newspaper. This report shall be published as received, with no changes unless agreed to by the SRC executive, and pending approval by the SNAP.²
- 5.1. This policy may be amended after a request approved by a majority of the SNAP Committee. Where a request is made by the SNAP Committee, the Committee shall prepare a written draft of the proposed amendments accompanied by an explanation of the purpose of these changes. The request shall be submitted to the WSUSU Board for approval.

² The SRC President and WSUSU Board Chair shall also have the opportunity assisted by the WSUSU staff to post regular updates on the WSUSU website. This clause is marked for possible removal.

Student Editorial team

- 5.2. The Editors-in-Chief and Editors, for the purposes of this section who shall be referred to as “the editors,” shall be available for office hours as determined by this policy, and in the SNAP Publishing Guide.
- 5.3. The majority of editors’ office hours shall be completed on one day per week, on campus ordinarily in the dedicated editors’ space on Monday of every week for no less than six (6) hours.
- 5.4. The student members shall not inhabit the student publications office on weekends that are adjacent to or include a public holiday i.e a public holiday that falls on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday.
- 5.5. Student members of the SNAP shall receive an honoraria subject to the conditions and criteria outlined in the SNAP Publishing Guide.
- 5.6. The role of the editors shall be to:
 - a. Lead the Reporters in their medium, by identifying and delegating stories and relevant content to Reporters to publish throughout the year.
 - b. Meet regularly with their correspondent group at least twice per month, ordinarily face to face in dedicated spaces, as per their Team Contracts, agreed upon at the beginning of their terms,
 - c. Form a running content plan that outlines generally what will be published and when across the calendar year, using planning resources provided and sectioning content per role requirements,
- 5.7. The editors are also responsible for:
 - a. Acting as a consultative student representative when called upon to speak on behalf of the experiences of student editors, and/or regarding the strategy and operations of the communications of WSUSU,
 - b. Fostering contributors by means of communication channels, ordinarily via email, and responses provided within two (2) business days,
 - c. Fact checking content,
 - d. Attending all SNAP and related meetings,
 - e. Disseminating publications as required,
 - f. Promoting the student publications with other means such as but not limited to attending main campus events, putting up posters on campus, supporting student contributors with creating art installations, and being available to meet with students who have enquiries about getting involved in the publications,
 - g. Preparing edited publishable content, informed by a content plan, which is digitally stored in the designated software, per publishing cycle, and
 - h. Personally, writing and creating content only if submissions are unavailable, or otherwise unpublishable, with consultation of the Publications Officer,

Student Publications Staff Member

58. WSUSU will be responsible for the employment of a staff member who shall provide Student Publications support no less than five (5) days per week, otherwise indicated as 1.0 FTE.
59. As outlined in the position description of the Student Publications Officer, their duties shall be to arrange and conduct the business of publications, subject to decisions of the SNAP, and the Manager, including:
- a. facilitating training for student editors, student committee members, and contributors to publications of the SNAP,
 - b. maintaining the website's cybersecurity
 - c. arrangements for the printing of publications,
 - d. obtaining and invoicing advertising in publications,
 - e. delivery of publications,
 - f. recording and dispatching subscriptions to publications, and
 - g. ensuring all record keeping is up to date.
60. The Publications Officer will also be responsible for:
- a. Assisting the editors to strategically and adaptably plan content that maps to their content planning,
 - b. Coaching editors on the balance between breaking news and planned content, and
 - c. Assisting the editors to identify breaking news that is relevant to students.

Section 5 Additional Publications

Other Publications of the SNAP



- 6.1. The SNAP Committee may establish and manage other media on various platforms in the name of the Committee, subject to the conditions in this policy and associated guidelines.
- 6.2. Additional publications will be edited either by
 - a. a separate editorial team containing at least one Editor-in-Chief and two Editors appointed by the SNAP, or self-appointed
 - b. a separate editorial team elected and/or appointed by WSUSU, or
 - c. autonomous student societies and collectives.
- 6.3. Additional publications edited by additional editors may only be published by the SNAP if the editorial team present to the SNAP their terms of reference and publications charter, outlining the following but not limited to;
 - a. Identified students in which roles,
 - b. Managing Editor/Editor-in-Chief role responsibilities,
 - c. Editor role responsibilities,
 - d. Historic publications, including dates and mode of publication,
 - e. Financial support required (i.e budget), and
 - f. Current flatplans and/or publication schedules.
- 6.4. The SNAP will retain final publications approval, in line with this policy, over all other publications created under this section.
- 6.5. The SNAP will recognise the autonomy of student groups such as collectives for example and make publishing support accessible within the capacity available as deemed reasonable by the SNAP committee.

Supported Publications

- 6.6. In addition to the student led publications under the SNAP, WSUSU will also provide supported publications with varying levels of student editorial and content contribution.
- 6.7. Supported publications will welcome input and involvement of the editors and will be as student centric and student led as possible, but generally will be initiatives of WSUSU to provide additional student news, publications and media with the best interest of Western Sydney Uni students.
- 6.8. Supported publications that may be released periodically for example but not limited to:
 - a. Books and ebooks
 - b. Student electronic and/or print newsletters
 - c. Digital media such as Podcasts and Vods
 - d. Analogue media
 - e. Social media
 - f. Magazines
 - g. Year books
 - h. Conference proceedings
 - i. Student Diaries/Planners, and
 - j. Peer reviewed Journals.
- 6.9. Publications that are not supported by WSUSU and are published with complete editorial independence that are published by affiliated bodies to WSUSU such as student clubs and collectives are to be understood against this disclaimer that the views expressed are explicitly not the views of WSUSU, its board, the SRC, the SNAP committee or employees, unless expressly stated. WSUSU holds no responsibility for the accuracy of any of the views or information contained within those publications and as such any complaints should be made directly to the editors of such publications and/or with the appropriate governing, or conflict resolution bodies.

Section 6 Social Media Guidelines

SNAP Social Media

- 70. WSUSU's Social Media Regulations and Guidelines will apply to any and all social media presence on behalf of the SNAP Committee.
- 71. These guidelines apply to all persons who are involved with the activities of the SNAP Committee, whether they are elected representatives, student editors, or constituents, and including anyone posting to or reacting with online publications and communication platforms of WSUSU and/or the SNAP Committee.
- 72. All student leaders are required to adhere to these social media guidelines at all times when using social media related to the business of the SNAP, its business, its sub-committees/working groups, participants, services, events, constituents, members and reputation. Failure to comply with adherence to the guidelines may result in termination.
- 73. Each student leader in a formal, volunteer, or casual employee capacity will be required to complete Social Media and Cyber Security training for the effective and sound distribution of copy and content including;
 - a. Publications of the SNAP,
 - b. Public and private forums, particularly those of the SRC and SRC sub-committees,
 - c. WSUSU's bodies not otherwise defined, and
 - d. Any live and/or recorded correspondence when acting in an official capacity.
- 74. Any student leader must be confirmed as completed the Social Media and Cyber Security training before being authorised by the delegated officer of WSUSU to engage in social media on behalf of any bodies of WSUSU.

Social Media Usage

- 75. All student leaders publishing to social media understand that as a part of the SNAP Committee and WSUSU's community they are an extension of the public image of the aforementioned organisations and bodies, and are therefore obligated to uphold the reputation and mission of said organisations and bodies.
- 76. As such the boundaries between when student leaders are representing themselves and when representing the relevant body of WSUSU can be blurred, which becomes more of an issue as one's profile or position is increased. Therefore it is important that student leaders represent both themselves and the relevant body they are a member of appropriately online at all times.
- 77. Student leaders must not use any of the branding, imagery or intellectual property of WSUSU and/or assets of committees of WSUSU on personal social media without prior approval of the delegated officer.

78. WSUSU's intellectual property includes but is not limited to:

- a. Logos,
- b. Imagery which has been posted on WSUSU's publications and communication platforms.

79. Where permission has been granted to create and/or administer an official social media presence for WSUSU's publications and communication channels, student leaders must adhere to the relevant Brand Kit and Branding Guidelines.

DRAFT

Document Control					
Accountable Delegates					
Responsible Officer					
Contact		e.g. <i>media@wsusu.westernsydney.edu.au</i>			
Supporting Information					
Supporting Documents		WSUSU Constitution WSUSU Regulations Position descriptions – xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxxx SNAP Committee Publishing Guide Student Code of Conduct (Western Sydney University)			
Related Documents		MEEA Code of Practice			
Definitions and Acronyms					
Student		Western Sydney University Student			
SNAP		Student News and Publications Committee			
SRC		Student Representative Committee (WSUSU)			
WSU or Western Sydney Uni		Western Sydney University			
Document History					
Version	Approved by	Approval date	Author	Sections modified	Amendment details
1.0.0		2025			WIP