

Sports Union “How to write a press release”

SU Newsletter

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This document is to help all those involved in the Sports Union to write a press release to promote what has happened or what they have done and get recognition for that. The SU Newsletter is published every month so send these stories in at any time throughout the year and they will be published.

Title Use a title that sums up your news with no ambiguity.

e.g. “SU Ambassadors travel 1000 miles for Penumbra”

Newsrooms receive so many press releases every day that editors need to know immediately if your email has the potential to interest them. As such, the title should communicate the essence of the story and fit into the subject box. Only an effective title will entice an editor to even open your email.

It’s tempting to create a flashy title – but don’t. It will only make journalists laugh *at* you, not *with* you. Neither is it a good idea to use exclamation marks because the story in its own right should be strong enough to create an impact. Using punctuation in attempt to catch attention will only create the impression that you don’t understand news value.

e.g. “They do run-run run, for who run-run-run?!”

Paragraph One The first paragraph should sum up your story in no more than two sentences. As such, it will probably be a slightly elaborated version of your title.

E.g. Sports Union Ambassadors from Heriot Watt University recently travelled 1000 miles to raise funds for Penumbra.

Paragraph Two The second paragraph should include details of the story you’ve highlighted in paragraph one.

E.g. The 1000 miles travelled took place on Heriot Watt Campus on 14th–18th October. The 25 ambassadors travelled the 1000 miles in only 5 days, which raised the grand total of £750.

Subsequent Paragraphs If there’s more detail to your story, then you can elaborate with further paragraphs. For example, you might want to go into the history of the event, why the event was chosen, or why your club chose to support a particular charity.

E.g. This is the first of many annual events of its kind that the SU Ambassadors have held.

Over the year, active challenges have proven to be a hugely effective way to draw attention to the cause. This year has been no exception.

The members chose to support Penumbra because mental health affects students too and with university being a new stage in their lives, this may make it difficult for them to seek help. Also exercise can help those with mental health issues to free their minds.

Quotes Always end your press release with at least one quote, but no more than three.

Usually this will include quotes from the event organiser, any VIPs present and a relevant external opinion. Using our example event, this might involve the SU Charities Officer, a participating SU Ambassador and a representative from Penumbra.

Always include the speaker's full name and connection to your event.

Remember that quotes are a great way to inject a more human, qualitative appraisal of the event so use this opportunity, as it's not appropriate elsewhere in the press release.

Avoid the temptation to include clichés, or sentences that don't really add anything to the account of your event.

It's perfectly acceptable to draft a quote on behalf of someone else, but **never issue the quote before securing the approval of the person it has been attributed to.**

Make sure the quote is appropriate to the person it's been attributed to. Think carefully about their perspective and what they might want to say which nobody else can.

E.g. SU Charities officer, Sally Larry, said:

"A lot of planning goes into this sort of event so I'm delighted that it was so successful.

We're really grateful to everyone who took part, as well as everyone who supported them and donated.

This is an incredible amount of money to have risen and I know it's going to a very worthwhile cause."

SU Ambassador, member of the athletics club, James. G. Henderson, who took part in the 1000 miles challenge, said:

"Of all the challenges I've done, this has to be up there with the best. It's a unique event with a positive atmosphere.

I was really thrilled that so many people supported us and donated to Penumbra. That makes a huge difference in the last 10 miles on the last day of the challenge when the tiredness is kicking in! It was better than any energy drink!"

Fundraising Director, Lorraine Smith, from Penumbra, said:

"We're very grateful to the Heriot Watt Sports Union Ambassadors for organising such a fantastic event to raise money for Penumbra.

Living with a mental illness is difficult, but there are things we can do to make patients more comfortable and help them live their lives to the full.

The SU Ambassador's donation will go towards buddy schemes for our patients so they have a friend to do fun activities with and talk to."

Standing Items It may sound like stating the obvious, but it's important to clearly identify where your news article has finished by typing "ENDS" on the line below the last line of the text. This will clearly distinguish the text you "d like to go public, from the notes for newsroom use.

Always end your press release with release with a contact name and number, so if a reporter needs more information, they know who to call.

Finally, include a section entitled "Notes to editors" at the bottom. Use this to bullet point standard information about your club. This can include any sort of information that isn't directly relevant to the story, but may provide a reporter with a little bit of context.

E.g. Notes to Editors

- The SU Ambassadors have existed for four years.*
- The number of SU Ambassadors for 2013/14 is currently has 38*
- Anyone interested in being an SU Ambassador should email the SU President on SUPresident@hw.ac.uk*

Where to send your press release The Executive Officers on the Promotions Forum will manage the SU Newsletter email account so please send all your press releases to SportsUnionNews@hw.ac.uk throughout the whole semester. The SU Newsletter is released at the end of every month but if we have press release we may start doing them more frequently so please send in your information.
