



Speakers' Policy on Diversity



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2026/27

Background:

The Student Publication Association (SPA) believes that a diverse media industry is important for everyone. Journalism should reflect the people it serves in order to ensure important stories are not missed and that the needs of audiences are accurately met. We also believe, as an organisation which exists to help the journalists of tomorrow, that it is our job to lead by example.

Statistics* from 2025 show that 86 per cent of journalists in the United Kingdom come from white ethnic groups, and journalism remains geographically concentrated in London and metropolitan areas. Just seven per cent of journalists are working-class, compared to some 20 per cent of the population, women remain underrepresented at senior levels, with men holding 53 per cent of editor roles, and the voices of LGBTQ+ and disabled communities continue to be overlooked in the media.

*Source: <https://www.nctj.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Diversity-in-Journalism-2025.pdf>

Our Pledge:

When organising events, namely our national conference SPANC, we pledge to set ambitious and achievable targets to increase representation. We will invite journalists from a range of backgrounds to ensure all voices are elevated and to play our part in making the industry more representative. We pledge that:

- We will have gender parity in our overall speaker lineup, as well as amongst our keynote speakers.
- All speaker panels will be gender-balanced.
- We will actively work to ensure speakers from ethnic minority backgrounds are meaningfully represented across our events, with the intention that every panel includes at least one speaker from an ethnic minority background.
- When putting together any conference or events programme, we will actively work to increase the representation of working class, disabled, neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+, and other underserved minority voices.

Implementation:

The SPA is a student-led charity, headed by an Executive Committee elected at the AGM, with project and regional officers it appoints. The Representation Officer holds primary responsibility for implementing this policy, including monitoring diversity across events and advocating for underrepresented perspectives, working closely with the Executive Committee, who hold day-to-day responsibility for meeting these pledges when organising SPANC and other events.

The Trustee Board, made up of industry professionals, safeguards the charity's best interests and supports the Executive Committee in meeting the pledges outlined in this policy. The Board carries overall responsibility for the policy's implementation.

Accountability:

The SPA recognises there are certain circumstances where this speakers' policy on diversity, specifically the stated pledges, may not be met despite the best efforts of the charity's team.

Where an SPA event fails to meet this policy, organisers must provide a written explanation within seven days, copied to the Representation Officer, Executive Committee, and Trustee Board. This should set out why the policy was not met, what steps will be taken to address the shortfall, and what lessons will be carried forward, supported by sufficient evidence that all reasonable steps were taken to meet the policy.

The SPA Trustee Board reserves the right to postpone or cancel events organised by the Executive Committee, or other members of the SPA team, if they fail to meet the charity's speakers' policy on diversity. It shall be the responsibility of the chair and organising officer to inform the SPA membership why an event has been postponed or cancelled.

Adoption:

This particular version of the policy, entitled 'Speakers' Policy on Diversity 2026/27,' was adopted by the full 2026/27 SPA team on 31/07/2026.

All members of the SPA team in post on date of adoption have agreed to adhere to this policy and oversee its implementation for the coming year at all SPA events.