

**Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / 14 July 2021**

***Felix* Policy Update**

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Purpose: To update the *Felix* Policy in line with last term's review and other related changes.

Section 1: Background

Last term, we conducted a review of *Felix*, including a survey, several focus groups and committee meetings, and one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders. Our conclusions, including a 22-page final report, were tabled at the Board in March.

To reflect changes which have been agreed under that review, it is necessary to amend the Board's *Felix* Policy. Changes to the *Felix* constitution, places where our policy has diverged from actual practice in recent years, and some instances where the policy is slightly too prescriptive reinforce the need for amendment.

Our recommended wording comprises section 2 of this paper; the most recent copy from 2017-18 is available with tracked changes in section 3, so trustees can see what has been amended.

In the coming year, it would be advisable to produce a separate, clear, Media Charter. Doing so may necessitate further changes to this policy.

Section 2: Revised Policy

Felix Policy

Introduction

1. This policy sets out: the expectations made by Imperial College Union (the Union) regarding the publication of *Felix*; the role of the Union in the publication of *Felix*; and the nature of the position of Editor.
2. *Felix* is the student publication of the Union. It covers both the weekly print edition, the *Felix* website, and social media pages.

Felix (CSP)

3. In addition to being the student publication of the Union, *Felix* is a student society. *Felix* (CSP) refers to the societal aspect of *Felix* and does not include the running of the publication.
4. *Felix* (CSP) is governed by its constitution and the decisions of the Clubs, Societies and Projects Board (CSPB), the same as any other CSP.
5. Other than the remuneration of the Editor, printing costs, operational costs, and print advertising income, *Felix* shall operate like every other CSP.
6. Committee positions with *Felix* (CSP) are laid out in the *Felix* constitution.

Governance

8. The Editor shall be responsible to the Union for all content published. In relation to defamation, the Editor shall comply with relevant Union policies and any Union Media Charter, and with all relevant UK laws.
9. *Felix*, as a Union publication, is required to comply with the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) Editors' Code of Practice.
10. The Union recognises that, under the Statutes of Imperial College London (the College), the Union is to be "treated solely as an integral part of the College." As such, both the College and the Union may be held responsible for the content of *Felix*.
11. The Board is ultimately responsible for the content of *Felix*, and is thus ultimately liable for its content and would have ultimate responsibility for removing content. The Board will only exercise this responsibility if failing to do so would leave the Union open to unacceptable risk, for example if material about a specific individual member of staff is set to be published for which the Board could be held liable. The Board will not normally be involved in the day-to-day operations of the paper
12. The College and the Union shall be available to offer advice to the Editor, should the Editor believe that any of the forthcoming content in *Felix* carries a legal risk, for example of potential

defamation. The Editor is then responsible for omitting or editing that material, if necessary, following discussion with the College. On its part, the College shall also reserve the right to ask the Editor to omit, edit, or retract that material if it believes any content in *Felix* has the potential to be defamatory.

13. Outside of these circumstances, *Felix* will retain editorial independence from the Union and the College. It shall be free to operate and report on events as the Editor, supported by their committee and editorial team, sees fit, provided such reporting complies with the IPSO code, and is not acting against the wider interests of the students. This may or may not coincide with the interests or attitudes of the College or the Union.

14. At the start of each year, the Board shall nominate an Officer Trustee to act as Supervising Trustee for *Felix*. This OT will act as a lead conduit between the Board and *Felix*, in collaboration with the relevant member of Union staff.

15. The Editor shall present a termly written report to Union Council and shall be available to answer questions about its contents.

16. The Editor shall be elected by a cross campus ballot subject, as set down in the governing documents of the Union

17. Complaints relating to *Felix* should be dealt with in line with the Union's bye-laws.

Felix Editor Expectations

18. The Editor shall oversee and manage all aspects of the running, production and dissemination of *Felix*.

19. The Editor is responsible in their role as a sabbatical officer to the Managing Director without prejudice to the Editor's operational and editorial independence.

20. The Editor is responsible for seeking advice from relevant personnel within the College (for example its legal team) should the Editor believe that any of the forthcoming content in *Felix* risks contravening UK law, and is responsible for omitting or editing material based on advice received. The Editor is also responsible for responding to College should College indicate to the Editor that any *Felix* material has the potential to be defamatory.

21. Should defamatory material be published in *Felix*, the Managing Director should be contacted, and arrange its removal.

22. The Editor should ensure the production of a high-quality publication, within the content framework set out in this policy

23. The Union, as the employer, shall be responsible for the provision of any training and support as needed on an individual basis for the production of a quality newspaper using the facilities as provided by the Union to the Editor. This may include training to support them in their role as the leader of a large diverse team of contributors.

24. *Felix* shall ensure all its published content abides by relevant Union Policies.

25. All students, from all campuses, must be given the opportunity to write for *Felix*, and the Editor should strive to print all material which is of an acceptable standard of English.

26. Deadlines for content should be set by the Editor at the beginning of the year and should be widely publicised and available to all students.
27. The Editor retains the right to reject or edit any content submitted to *Felix*. These powers should not be used to misrepresent the views of contributors (see IPSO Code [I: Accuracy]).
28. Space must be provided for feedback from the student body concerning the content within *Felix's* pages and *Felix* itself. Students must be given the right to reply to any article published. Editorial powers should not be used to bias open debate or counteract criticism of the Union, the College, or *Felix* itself.

Content Guidelines

29. *Felix* should be a news-driven publication, printed on a weekly basis, with the primary focus being on news and content relevant to the members of the Union.
30. All Constituent Unions and Union CSPs should be given the ability to publicise and report on their activities. Space should be set aside each week for articles from Constituent Unions and CSPs who wish to report on recent events. This does not give Constituent Unions or CSPs the right to demand publication.
31. *Felix* should promote student engagement with the Union, with particular focus on key Union matters. *Felix* is not required to support or promote any decisions, actions or viewpoints relating to a meeting or matter for decision.
32. The election of Trustees (Officer and Student) and the Editor should be given extensive coverage. This includes but is not limited to: including details of the opening of nominations, Hustings and the elections themselves, and the printing of the manifestos of all the candidates for the posts, including Re-Open Nominations. Other positions may be advertised at the discretion of the Editor.

Felix Finances and Advertising

33. The Union shall pay for the remuneration of the Editor as a Sabbatical Officer.
34. The Union shall fund 29 issues of *Felix*, including a special edition for the start of each academic year.
35. The Union shall fund the operational costs required for the running of the *Felix* Office and production of the paper, e.g. software licensing, phone line rental etc. These operational costs will be discussed by the Editor and Union staff.
36. The Union currently manages advertisements printed in *Felix* – this includes those from the Union, external companies, and any CSP. *Felix* may arrange their own sponsorship and non-print advertising. The Union shall support *Felix* to manage these affairs independently, with support offered only on an ad-hoc basis, by 2023.
37. While managing *Felix* advertising, the Union shall pay *Felix* (CSP) 50% of any advertising-based income.
38. The Editor must make space for all advertisements sent by the Union for inclusion in *Felix*. The Editor must be notified of all requirements by midday on the Wednesday before the Friday publication date. The Editor must notify the Union of any issues with the inclusion of any advertisement by 5pm on the Wednesday and must specify why the advertisement is not suitable for publication.

Section 3 – Policy with Tracked Changes

Felix Policy

Introduction

1. This policy sets out: the expectations made by Imperial College Union (the Union) regarding the publication of *Felix*; the role of the Union in the publication of *Felix*; and the nature of the position of Editor.
2. *Felix* is the student publication of the Union. It covers both the weekly print edition, the *Felix* website, and social media pages.

Felix (CSP)

3. In addition to being the student publication of the Union, *Felix* is a ~~student club, society, or project (CSP)-student society.~~ *Felix* (CSP) refers to the societal aspect of *Felix* and does not include the running of the publication.
4. *Felix* (CSP) is governed by its ~~c~~Constitution and the decisions of the Clubs, Societies and Projects Board (CSPB), the same as any other CSP.
5. Other than the remuneration of the Editor, printing costs, operational costs, and print advertising income, *Felix* shall operate like every other CSP.
6. Committee positions with *Felix* (CSP) ~~are laid out in the *Felix* constitution., including Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall be elected by *Felix* (CSP) members at the Annual General Meeting. Positions within the *Felix* editorial team are appointed by the Editor and are not elected.~~
7. ~~The Editor is automatically the Chair of *Felix* (CSP) and holds ultimate responsibility.~~

Governance

7. The Editor shall be ~~ultimately~~ responsible to the Union for all content published. In relation to defamation, the Editor shall comply with relevant Union policies ~~and (such as the Union Media Defamation Code of Practice, any Union Media Charter,)~~ ^[AS-IP1] and with all relevant UK laws.
39.
- 7.8. ~~*Felix*, as a Union publication, is required to comply with the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) Editors' Code of Practice.~~
- 8.9. The Union recognises that, under the Statutes of Imperial College London (the College), the Union is to be “treated solely as an integral part of the College.” As such, both the College and the Union may be held responsible for the content of *Felix*.
10. ~~The Board is ultimately responsible for the content of *Felix*, and is thus ultimately liable for its content and would have ultimate responsibility for removing content. The Board will only~~

exercise this responsibility if failing to do so would leave the Union open to unacceptable risk, for example if material about a specific individual member of staff is set to be published for which the Board could be held liable. The Board will not normally be involved in the day-to-day operations of the paper

11. The College and the Union shall be available to offer advice to the Editor, should the Editor believe that any of the forthcoming content in *Felix* carries a legal risk, for example of potential defamation. The Editor is then responsible for omitting or editing that material, if necessary, following discussion with the College. On its part, the College shall also reserve the right to ask the Editor to omit, edit, or retract that material if it believes any content in *Felix* has the potential to be defamatory.

~~9-12.~~ Outside of these circumstances, *Felix* will retain editorial independence from the Union and the College. It shall be free to operate and report on events as the Editor, supported by their committee and editorial team, sees fit, provided such reporting complies with the IPSO code, and is not acting against the wider interests of the students. This may or may not coincide with the interests or attitudes of the College or the Union.

13. At the start of each year, the Board shall nominate an Officer Trustee to act as Supervising Trustee for *Felix*. This OT will act as a lead conduit between the Board and *Felix*, in collaboration with the relevant member of Union staff.

~~10-14.~~ The Editor shall present a termly written report to Union Council and shall be available to answer questions about its contents.

~~11-15.~~ The Editor shall be elected by a cross campus ballot subject, as set down in the governing documents of the Union-

~~12. *Felix*, as a Union publication, is required to comply with the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) Editors' Code of Practice and with all relevant UK laws on publishing.~~^[AS-IP2]

~~13-16.~~ Complaints relating to *Felix* should be dealt with in line with the Union's bye-laws.

Felix Editor Expectations

~~14-17.~~ The Editor shall oversee and manage all aspects of the running, production and dissemination of *Felix*.

~~15-18.~~ The Editor is responsible in their role as a sabbatical officer to the ~~Union President~~ Managing Director ^[SAP3] without prejudice to the Editor's operational and editorial independence.

~~16-19.~~ The Editor is responsible for seeking advice from relevant personnel within the College (for example its legal team) should the Editor believe that any of the forthcoming content in *Felix* risks contravening UK law, and is responsible for omitting or editing material based on advice received. The Editor is also responsible for responding to College should College indicate to the Editor that any *Felix* material has the potential to be defamatory.

~~17-20.~~ Should defamatory material be published in *Felix*, the Managing Director Union President should be contacted, and arrange its removal, ~~as per the 2008 Union Media Defamation Code of Practice.~~

- ~~18-21.~~ The Editor should ensure the production of a high-quality publication, within the content framework set out in this policy
- ~~19-22.~~ The Union, as the employer, shall be responsible for the provision of any training and support as needed on an individual basis for the production of a quality newspaper using the facilities as provided by the Union to the Editor. This may include training to support them in their role as the leader of a large diverse team of contributors.
- ~~20-23.~~ *Felix* shall ensure all its published content abides by relevant Union Policies.
- ~~21-24.~~ *Felix* shall remain editorially independent from the Union and College and is free to operate and report on events as the Editor sees fit, provided such reporting complies with the IPSO code, and is not acting against the wider interests of the students. This may or may not coincide with the interests or attitudes of the College or the Union.
- ~~22-25.~~ ~~Under no circumstance shall any individual Union Officer, employee, or member have the right to insist on the inclusion or exclusion of any content in *Felix*.~~ All students, from all campuses, must be given the opportunity to write for *Felix*, and the Editor should strive to print all material which is of an acceptable standard of English.
- ~~23-26.~~ Deadlines for content should be set by the Editor at the beginning of the year and should be widely publicised and available to all students.
- ~~24-27.~~ The Editor retains the right to reject or edit any content submitted to *Felix*. These powers should not be used to misrepresent the views of contributors (see IPSO Code [!: Accuracy]).
- ~~25-28.~~ Space must be provided for feedback from the student body concerning the content within *Felix's* pages and *Felix* itself. Students must be given the right to reply to any article published. Editorial powers should not be used to bias open debate or counteract criticism of the Union, the College, or *Felix* itself.

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- ~~28-31.~~ *Felix* should promote student engagement with the Union, with particular focus on key Union matters. *Felix* is not required to support or promote any decisions, actions or viewpoints relating to a meeting or matter for decision.
- ~~29-32.~~ The election of Trustees (Officer and Student) and the Editor should be given extensive coverage. This includes but is not limited to: including details of the opening of nominations, Hustings and the elections themselves, and the printing of the manifestos of all the candidates for the posts, including Re-Open Nominations. Other positions may be advertised at the discretion of the Editor.

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~~32-35.~~ The Union shall fund the operational costs required for the running of the *Felix* Office and production of the paper, e.g. software licensing, phone line rental etc. These operational costs will be discussed by the Editor and Union staff.

~~33-36.~~ The Union ~~shall currently~~ manages advertisements printed in *Felix* – this includes those from the Union, external companies, and any CSP. *Felix* may arrange their own sponsorship and non-print advertising. The Union shall support *Felix* to manage these affairs independently, with support offered only on an ad-hoc basis, by 2023.

~~34-37.~~ ~~While managing *Felix* advertising, the~~ The Union shall pay *Felix* (CSP) 50% of any advertising-based income ~~above the total cost of printing the paper and the remuneration of the Editor (should any be achieved).~~

~~35-38.~~ The Editor must make space for all advertisements sent by the Union for inclusion in *Felix*. The Editor must be notified of all requirements by 5pm on the Tuesday midday on the Wednesday before the Friday publication date. The Editor must notify the Union of any issues with the inclusion of any advertisement by 5pm on the Wednesday and must specify why the advertisement is not suitable for publication.