

# Oxford University Islamic Society Magazine Guidelines

This document outlines the guidelines by which those involved in the production process of the society's magazine should abide. The primary purpose of this document is to ensure that there exists clear guidance for future Committees and Magazine Team members. These guidelines will give the magazine clear ground and purpose, and at the same time allow for an apt degree of flexibility to be exercised on the part of those involved in the production process.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE MAGAZINE

The purpose of the magazine is three-fold. The magazine should firstly serve to strengthen and unify the ISoc community through encouraging participation of individuals from all corners of the society; secondly, it should showcase the diversity of thought that exists amongst the society's members; thirdly, it should work to paint the ISoc in as best as possible light to 'outsiders'. The magazine should not seek to push any agenda aside from the one(s) highlighted above.

## STRUCTURE OF THE MAGAZINE TEAM

### a.) Editor

This position is separate to any Committee role, although Committee members can still apply. The Editor is responsible for reviewing all content and checking the grammar of submissions. The Editor shall be a 'hands on' project manager, who oversees both the Designer and the Content Curator. The Editor will have the most direction over the content of the magazine.

### b.) Content Curator

This position is separate to any Committee role, although Committee members can still apply. The Content Curator is responsible for the curation of 'prescriptive' content and the chasing up of respective contributors. Prescriptive content refers to content for which society members were specifically contacted by the Magazine Team at the start of the magazine cycle.

### c.) Designer

This position is separate to any Committee role, although Committee members can still apply. The sole person who designs the magazine, they will have the most direction over how the design will look. The Designer will liaise with the Society's Technology and Communications Officer to export and upload the magazine as a PDF and onto the website.

### d.) Technology and Communications Officer

Provides a strong link between the magazine and Committee. The Technology and Communications Officer oversees the project, their contribution may vary depending on their skillset. They have veto power, in consultation with the President, over the Editor, Designer, and Content Curator.

## PROCEDURE FOR THE RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL OF A MAGAZINE TEAM MEMBER

All members of the Magazine Team subcommittee, bar extenuating circumstances, are encouraged to complete each magazine cycle before resigning from their responsibilities. When resigning, the member should ensure that all information regarding their role is handed over properly without jeopardizing the quality of the magazine. Resignations during the middle of a magazine cycle are thus strongly discouraged.

In the event that any of the Editor, Designer or the Content Curator are not fulfilling their responsibilities to the required standard, they may be removed from their respective positions. This may occur if the President, in consultation with the Technology and Communications Officer, decides in favour of the individual's removal.

The President alone has the authority to reallocate all the responsibilities of the Technology and Communications Officer pertaining to the magazine to any other member of the full committee (including his or herself) at his or her discretion. In the event that this happens, every mention of the Technology and Communications Officer in this document can be thought of as having been replaced by the relevant member's job title.

## 'UNACCEPTABLE' SUBMISSIONS

A submission is unacceptable if it violates any official University policy by which the society is obliged to abide.<sup>1</sup> *'All staff and students have a responsibility to... treat others with dignity and respect' and 'respect the University's commitment to... eliminate unlawful*

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<sup>1</sup> University policies - <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies-guidance-and-procedures>

*discrimination and harassment*.<sup>2</sup> *Vigorous academic debate will not amount to harassment when it is conducted respectfully and without violating the dignity of others or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.*<sup>3</sup>

Any submission that distorts or undermines the purpose of the magazine is unacceptable. A submission that criticises the society may be rejected on the grounds that it violates a fundamental objective of the magazine: that the magazine seeks to strengthen the society. If the primary intention of the individual is to use the magazine as a means to undermine the society, rather than to simply express their unique opinion, the submission should not be accepted as the agenda would entirely deviate from the intended purpose of the magazine. In summary, an article that criticises the society with the latter intention would be acceptable, but an article with the former would not be.

An unacceptable submission may not necessarily fall short of the University's policy of non-discrimination, but might be believed in the best judgement of the Editor, in consultation with the Technology and Communications Officer, to undermine in a non-trivial way the unity of the ISoc community. For example, an article dealing with contentious religious issues that would inflame tensions within the community should be rejected. This decision must not be taken out of personal bias or over-cautiousness, but out of genuine concern over causing community upset. If unable to reach an agreement with confidence, the President should make the final decision.

## **PROCEDURE FOR ACCEPTING 'NON-PRESCRIPTIVE' SUBMISSIONS**

The Editor should, as best as possible, aim to include a diverse range of opinions, and at the same time seek to ensure that the pieces are to a good standard. These two considerations must be weighed up. Quality should be prioritised, but the Editor must also consider whether the magazine is portraying diversity of thought to a sufficient degree.

The procedure for accepting pieces to include in the Current Affairs section of the magazine is as follows:

- a.) Society members are given one week to send in a 50-word synopsis - following the formal advertisement given on WhatsApp group chats - that outlines their desired theme of interest and direction of opinion piece. The individual should also give a preliminary title.
- b.) This is to be submitted by the individual under the understanding that they must commit to writing the respective article if their idea is selected.
- c.) They will have two weeks to write the opinion piece following notice that their idea has been chosen. The Editor should highlight submissions that they have selected amongst the synopses and titles sent in and post this highlighted list on the Google Drive (or a different medium if this is more appropriate), for the whole Magazine Team to see.
- d.) The Communications Chair should review this list to check that there is no clear Editor bias.
- e.) After the contributor has been informed of their success, the Editor still holds the right of rejection, but the assumption is that the article will be included. The Editor may at this stage decide to reject the article if there has been a particular deviation from the theme suggested within the synopsis. Equally, this right may be exercised if the quality of the piece is substantially lower than the quality indicative from the synopsis that was initially sent in. This should not at all be a subjective matter – the quality must objectively be considerably lower.

## **RIGHTS TO CONTENT**

Withdrawals are allowed up to a week before the magazine's publication date, in order to allow time to source for alternative content and/or readjust the design. Prior to this, the individual has the right to withdraw their submission. They should not be making changes to the submission willy-nilly.

If an individual requests that their piece is changed or removed after it has been published, the Magazine Team will not be able to act on it. Exceptions might be made, at the discretion of the Magazine Team, to make minor edits (such as the removal of real names from articles). This is in some part to prevent the magazine from becoming an additional burden to Team members during any time outside the magazine cycle.

Anonymous submissions are not permissible. Contributors may request to have their name printed as an image so that it is not discoverable via searches by text; the option for the contributor to be credited with a 'pseudonym' may also be provided, where this does not render the submission completely anonymous. This is to allow for a sufficient degree of accountability on the part of the contributor, and those involved in the acceptance of the submission. It is also to help maintain the quality of submissions.

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<sup>2</sup> Equality Policy, <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-policy#collapse1138416>

The quotation has simply been taken as an example. In the event that it is removed or changed, please refer to the rest of the information that is available through the link

<sup>3</sup> Harassment Policy, <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/university-policy-on-harassment#collapse1072106>

The quotation has simply been taken as an example. In the event that it is removed or changed, please refer to the rest of the information that is available through the link

## **LATE SUBMISSIONS**

With prescribed content (i.e. content that the Content Curator is responsible for), any submission sent in after the deadline may be included. However, if the Designer is too occupied with existing design work, the team is not obliged to incorporate it into the magazine. For non-prescriptive content, concessions may be made, however only if there would otherwise be a 'lack' of submissions. The Magazine Team cannot accept a one-day late submission over an 'on-time' submission on the grounds that it is perceived to be of better quality. If the said 'on-time' submission was of such poor quality that its rejection would have been inevitable anyway then it should be permissible to accept the late submission as it would not be threatening the acceptance of any submission that had been sent in on time. Thus, late submissions can be accepted but not at the expense of submissions sent in on time. In the event that there is a strong preference for something sent in late, the said submission must be included as additional content rather than content that takes the place of any 'on-time' submission.

## **FREQUENCY OF MAGAZINE PUBLICATION DATES**

In conjunction with its intended purpose, the magazine should be published once a term. There may very rarely be slight deviation from this pattern, for example, to cater to the publication of a special edition, however, such deviation should not become the norm. Any attempt to change the pattern of publication should be done in the best interest of the intended purpose of the magazine and more generally, this document.

## **THE CHOOSING OF THEMES**

The theme for the magazine as a whole, and any other sub-themes for individual sections should be decided collectively by the Magazine Team. The team may consult the committee for advice in deciding themes if they wish. The overall theme of the magazine must be broad enough so that the bulk of sections can relate to it in one way or another. The main theme should also be somewhat relevant to the time period in which the respective issue is published. Similarly, the theme for the current affairs section must be relevant to contemporary society, and broad, in order to allow for the inclusion of a diversity of submissions from a variety of different disciplines. The theme does not have to be related to the overall theme of the magazine. It must not directly render the section liable to political bias. As such, it should be an objective theme that lends itself to discussion from all angles. As far as possible, it should not in any way limit the scope for discussion and the possibility for representation of different viewpoints. The President, although not required to be involved in choosing a theme for the magazine or Current Affairs section, must sign off on the final themes chosen by the Magazine Team, and has final veto power over any decision.

## **CHANGES TO MAGAZINE CONTENT**

In accordance with the guidelines outlined in this document, sections of the magazine may be axed, or new ones introduced. The Current Affairs section, however, cannot be axed. This is largely to avoid any scenario where all avenues for participation from the wider community are cut off due to any such axing of 'community write-in' sections. Following any such scenario, there would be no opportunity for free involvement or participation from society members - only people specifically contacted by the Magazine Team would have the opportunity to contribute. The purpose of this guideline is therefore to safeguard the right of all society members to have an opportunity to contribute to the magazine. Otherwise, the magazine is not fulfilling two of its fundamental purposes: encouragement of a.) diversity of thought and b.) participation of individuals from all corners of the society. It is necessary to go one step further than simply safeguarding the right. The right shall specifically be safeguarded through the Current Affairs section since this arguably lends itself clearly to the purpose of the magazine.

The Editor may wish to propose changes to magazine content. Again, the Technology and Communications Officer has veto power in consultation with the President, over any decision that is made.

## **VETO POWER**

The Communications Chair, on behalf of the President, reserves the right to make any changes to the magazine, including to areas that fall under the responsibilities of the Editor and Designer. This includes rejecting articles, insisting on changes to the structure of the magazine, and decisions on magazine themes.

The President and Technology and Communications Officer do not need to give a 'reason' for their veto, though in good faith it should be 1) explained where possible and 2) used only in good faith, and for the betterment of the ISoc community in line with the ISoc constitution.

## **SUCCESSORS**

Any ISoc member may apply for a role and they may apply for as many as they wish. The President and the Magazine Team should decide on who to select for each role. The President has the final say on the matter.

## **PROCEDURE FOR MAKING AMMENDMENTS TO THE MAGAZINE GUIDELINES**

Committee should discuss any proposed changes to these guidelines. The President alone has the power to change this document. Any changes made must be declared to the Committee and updated on the official document for public view. So long as this has not occurred, the 'changes' may be regarded as invalid.

#### **THE STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document is intended primarily to act as an aid to future OUISoc Committees and Magazine Teams. It should be made public to allow for a sufficient degree of accountability to be placed on those involved in the production process of the magazine. As outlined previously, the President is not required to formally declare any amendments made to this document to the wider ISoc community. However, the document must at all times be made visible to society members, such that individuals from the wider community may view the guidelines should they wish.