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**DURHAM**SU

**Brand Refresh**

**Project Brief**

## PURPOSE

To deliver a brand refresh which enables creativity, innovation and flexibility whilst ensuring adherence to a consistent and trusted brand identity.

## SUMMARY

Durham Students' Union exists to advance the education of Durham students. We're relentless in our goals to bring Durham students together, build confidence in the value and the purpose of the students' union and, perhaps most critically, to tackle the big issues that hold students back. We believe that Durham will be a better, fairer University because students make it happen.

In Spring 2026 Durham SU carried out deep dives into our key business functions which identified comms as one of our strategic improvement areas. The comms focus improvement area aims to deepen our impact, increase student engagement, improve reputation and reduce administrative burden. Our last rebrand was introduced in 2018 and unofficially refreshed in 2022 and Durham SU wishes to return to the last official rebrand in 2018 as a starting point for this work.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The summer 2025 restructure of the Durham SU staff team, reduced our marketing and communications team from 5 FTO positions to 2.8 FTO, comprising of 1.0FTE Communications Coordinator, 1.0 FTE membership data and technical expertise via the Web and Data Manager and 0.8 FTE of casual student staffing. Durham SU has therefore lacked the time and focus to ensure good compliance with the 2018 brand leading to concern that we may no longer have a clear, inclusive and trusted brand identity.

The restructure was based on the principle that all colleagues would share the responsibility for communications and marketing with our members, coordinated centrally by one member of comms dedicated staffing. To ensure our comms work is sustainable we will need to align what we do to our internal capacity, and individuals and teams need the confidence and expertise to play their role in communicating our key messages to the student body. Changes in the team have resulted in a lack of clarity around brand and well-intentioned attempts to innovate have meant we have inconsistent external experience of Durham SU. Whilst a full rebrand was considered, this was considered too resource intensive and untimely, due to Durham SU beginning work in the coming months on our new strategy for 2027-2032 and one of the big questions for this strategy is whether Durham SU needs to rebrand.

## DELIVERABLES

- Review and refresh assets for 2026 (e.g. to include marks for video).

- Review existing toolkit, assess what is fit for purpose, and audit current staff engagement with the 2018 brand guidelines and design and deliver training for all staff to ensure they understand the brand guidelines.
- Review externally facing comms and social media content for consistency with the brand guidelines.
- Provide Durham SU with a list of recommendations on how we can embed the brand refresh, on the branding guidelines and on the effective implementation of the brand refresh with stakeholders. Identify what is working and what isn't in terms of comms and factor this into the recommendations.
- Refresh guidance for implementation – is it clear what the expectations are?

## TIMESCALES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Durham SU is determined to ensure students experience a clear, inclusive and trusted brand identity for the upcoming academic year. We therefore look to implement improvements by the end of September 2026 with the understanding that staff training would happen in Summer 2026. Whilst the overall timeline can be subject to some negotiation our expected timelines are as follows:

Deadline	Project activity
End of July 2026	Review work and conversations with relevant stakeholders complete.
End of Mid-August 2026	Recommendations provided and agreed with Durham SU.
End of Mid-September 2026	Staff toolkit designed and sent to Durham SU.
End of September 2026	Staff received training on the brand guidelines and feel confident using the brand consistently.

## KEY CONTACT AND STAKEHOLDERS

Key stakeholders for the delivery of this work include Jamie Caress (Head of Student Community), Emily MacMillan (Communications Coordinator), Lil Collingham-Clark (Deputy CEO), Gary Hughes (CEO) and Abigail Taylor (SU President 25-26).

Questions about this brief can be directed to its author, Jamie Caress, Head of Student Community at Durham SU via email to [jamie.caress@durham.ac.uk](mailto:jamie.caress@durham.ac.uk)

## SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

Proposals to undertake this work should be submitted to [su.admin@durham.ac.uk](mailto:su.admin@durham.ac.uk). The closing date for proposals is Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June at midday. You are welcome to submit your proposal in whatever template you choose but please respond to the following questions and key information requests detailed below.

- How would you go about delivering the key deliverables?

Durham Students' Union is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 07689815) and is a registered charity (1145400). The registered address is Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham, DH1 3AN.

- How would you engage with key stakeholders throughout?
- What previous experiences do you have in handling similar comms projects?
- Detail all costings related to your completion of this project.
- Provide two references relating to previous comms projects you have undertaken.