



**UCC  
SOCIETIES**

Cumann Choláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

# GUIDE TO PR & MEDIA

## 2025/26





# INTRODUCTION

**Hi there!**

My name is Josh Hanover (he/they), and I'm your **PR, Media & Engagement Officer** on the UCC Societies Executive.

I've been involved with Societies for the past 2 years, holding the positions of PRO and Graphics Officer on various committees.

This guide has been a love of labour, compiling **the best tips & tricks** that I've learned in these roles, and giving you the tools to **elevate your society's profile** both online & on-campus.

As always, **my job is to support you!** If you have any questions, feel free to reach out by email to [pro@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:pro@uccsocieties.ie), and I'll be happy to help.

**Best of luck for the year ahead!**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **1. Purpose & Policy**

**1.1 Social Media Policy**

**1.2 Web & Social Media Training**

## **2. Branding & Design**

**2.1 Brand Identity**

**2.2 Design Principles**

**2.3 Accessibility**

## **3. Student Engagement**

**3.1 Mailing List**

**3.2 Events Wall**

**3.3 University Departments**

**3.4 Digital Signage**

## **4. Social Media Strategy**

**4.1 Social Platforms**

**4.2 Engagement**

**4.3 Collaboration**

**4.4 Content Planning**

## **5. Press Engagement**

**5.1 Writing a Press Release**

**5.2 Publishing a Press Release**

## **6. PR Consultations**

## **7. FAQs**

## **8. Tools & Resources**



# 1. PURPOSE & POLICY

Every society has stories to tell, events to promote, and achievements worth celebrating. **Public relations (PR) is the bridge between what you do, and the audience you want to reach.**

Whether it's filling the room for your next event, keeping members engaged through the year, or attract new supporters and sponsors, **clear communication is the key to success.**

Social media & our various communication channels in college offer a space for you to showcase your work, promote events, share news, and connect with new members.

This guide is here to help you **make the most of these platforms, with practical steps towards building a strong digital & physical presence.** The goal is simple: to give your society the tools to put your best foot forward, communicate confidently, and **ensure your work is seen, heard & remembered.**



# 1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Before using a society-affiliated social media account, there are two essential steps. The first is to **familiarise yourself with our Social Media Policy.**

This document **governs usage of online platforms** by UCC Societies, outlining expectations for professional conduct, appropriate content, and the responsibilities that come with managing a society's online presence.

Key information includes:

- **Soc/Society MUST be in all social media handle names**, i.e. UCCBarbieSociety, UCCKenSoc
- **Your personal social media accounts are personal**, and should not be used as accounts affiliated with UCC Societies, i.e. don't message members on your personal account, and don't collab post between your society account and your personal account.
- Common sense should be applied when sharing posts online. All individuals involved in the work of UCC Societies should **exercise care and discretion with their use of social media.**
- Under no circumstance should you try to change the associated email, password or the account name etc. should you leave your position.



# 1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



## UCC Societies Social Media Usage Policy

**CLICK THE IMAGE TO VIEW**



# 1.2 WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

You must also complete **UCC’s Social Media Awareness Training module**, before using a society-affiliated social media page or website.

This requirement was introduced in May 2025, as outlined in the [University’s Web & Social Media Policy](#). The training module is available to all students on Canvas [here](#).

Resource Site

Home

Announcements

Modules

Assignments

Discussions

Grades

Pages

Syllabus

Replay Recordings

Microsoft Teams classes

Lesson 1 - Enjoying social media healthily

Lesson 1 - Enjoying social media healthily (UCC Social Media Awareness)

Benefits of Social Media


Content below.

Healthily learning objectives

Benefits of social media as well as healthy ways of using social media.

able to IDENTIFY the benefits of social media and will be able to

al media.



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

University College Cork, Ireland


Social Media Awareness for


Staff and Students at UCC


UCC-Social Media Awareness

UCC-SMA

Resource Site









## 2. BRANDING & DESIGN

These are the foundations of PR, and shape the impression you make on students: how **recognisable** your society is, how **attractive** your events appear, and how **accessible** your content feels. Building a strong brand is all about **trust and consistency** – not only making your message stand out, but ensuring that when students see a poster or email, they instantly know it's from you.

### 2.1 BRAND IDENTITY

Your identity is more than just a logo. **Think of it as your society's signature** – what makes your society unique & identifiable. It usually brings together your **logo with fonts, a colour palette, and overall visual tone**, all reflecting your society's mission and values.

That might sound broad at first, but a simple starting point is to ask yourself: **what impression do we want to make on students?** Some societies will naturally lean towards being warm and playful, while others will prefer a more formal and polished look. Neither is obviously better, it depends on the audience you're striving to attract.



A really helpful tool for this is a “**branding kit**”. It’s a single guiding document that pulls everything together: your mission, target audience, logos, colours and fonts. It’s designed to be **quickly and easily referenced** when creating content for your society, and **helps you maintain a consistent look** across posters, social media, emails & more.

We provide a customisable template that you can simply fill in, and have a brand kit set up for yourself.

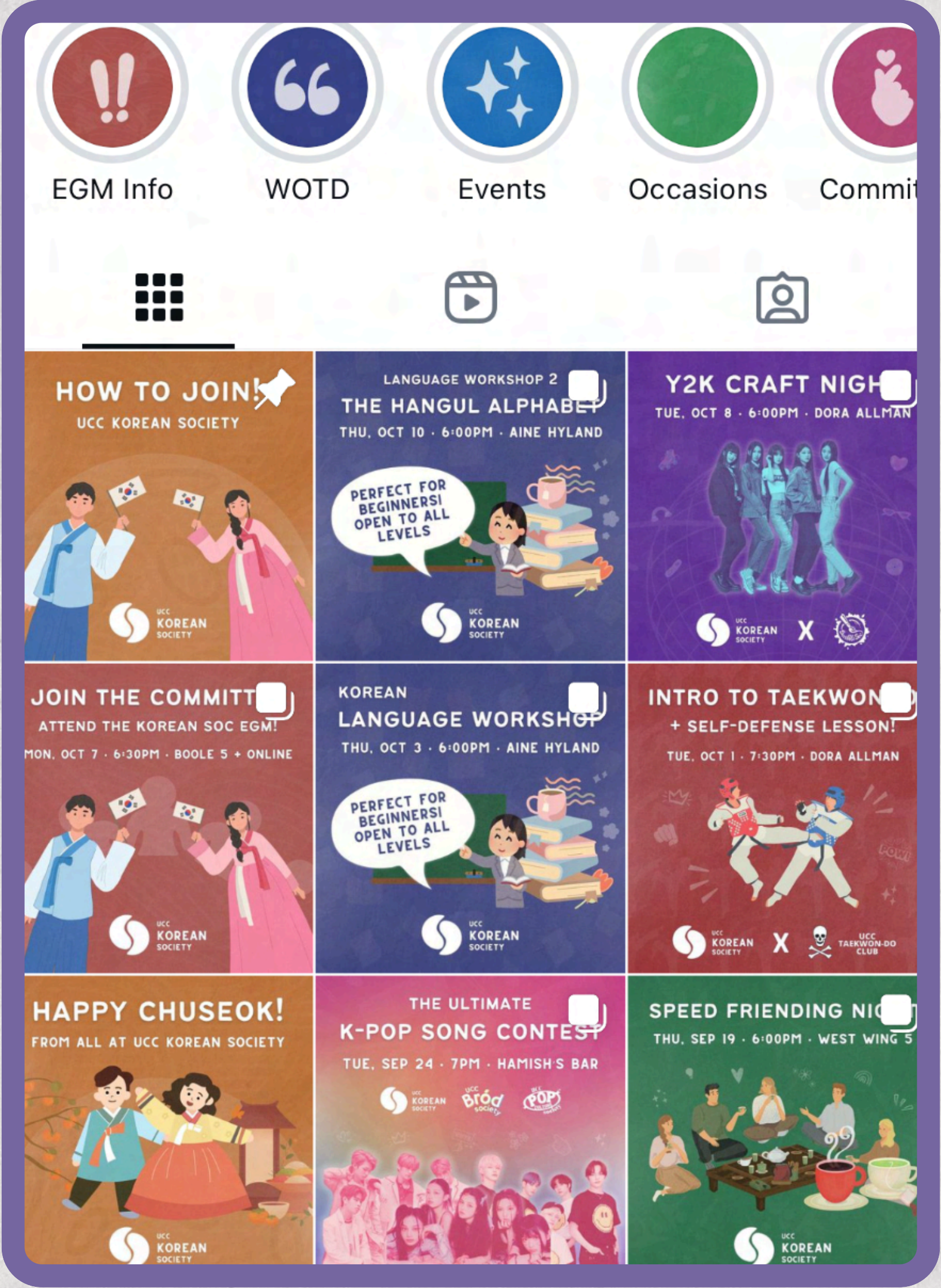


**BRAND PACK**

**CLICK THE IMAGE TO VIEW**



**Why does this matter?** First impressions count. When your branding is consistent, **students are far more likely to notice your events and remember them.** They'll quickly become familiar with your society, and far more likely to stop scrolling, and check out what you're doing. Consistent, polished branding also **shows that your society is organised and credible,** which naturally increases your trust. The more often students encounter your brand in a clear and consistent way, **the stronger your presence on campus becomes.**





## 2.2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

You don't need to be a professional graphic designer to create materials that look sharp and catch attention. A few simple principles can go a long way in making sure your posters, slides, and posts look professional and are easy to follow:

- **Prioritise the essentials:** the what, when, and where should always be clearly visible.
- **Keep it uncluttered:** too much text or too many images will overwhelm your audience.
- **Avoid text-heavy layouts:** if it looks like a wall of words, people are unlikely to read it.
- **Choose good images:** use high-quality, well-lit visuals, and make sure they don't clash with the text.
- **Guide the eye:** headings, subheadings, and bullet points help people process information quickly.
- **Stay consistent:** apply the same style across posters, social media, and emails so everything feels part of the same identity.



## 2.3 ACCESSIBILITY

Good PR isn't just about looking polished – it's about **making sure everyone can engage with your society's content**, regardless of disability or circumstance. Accessibility should always be part of your planning, whether your content is digital or physical. Use the checklist below as a guide:

### Visuals

- ☒ Use high-contrast colours (e.g. dark text on a light background).
- ☒ Keep posters and slides clear, avoid overcrowding them with text.
- ☒ Use large, legible fonts. Sans-serif fonts are easier to read than decorative fonts.

### Text

- ☒ Keep language simple and direct; avoid jargon.
- ☒ Make headings and captions meaningful, and always include the key details (date, time, location, topic).
- ☒ Use inclusive language – avoid slang, inside jokes, or terms not everyone will recognise.



## Social Media

- ✓ Always add alt text to images – short descriptions for those using screen readers.
- ✓ Add captions or subtitles to videos and reels.  
Use Camel Case for hashtags (capitalising the first letter of each word), e.g. #UCCSocieties, #UCCStudentsUnion.
- ✓ Include a Trigger Warning at the start of posts containing sensitive content (e.g. sexual violence, homophobia, transphobia, eating disorders, suicide, or other potentially triggering topics).
- ✓ Add warnings to audio-visual content with loud noises or flashing lights.

Accessibility isn't about limiting creativity – **it's about making sure everyone can take part.** A strong design is one that's both engaging and understandable for all.



# 3. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

**Your primary goal with PR & communication is, of course, reaching the students of UCC!** You'll want to share your society's events, achievements, and news in ways that catch their attention and keep them involved.

Societies have access to a wide range of channels that can reach over 25,000 students across campus, each with their own strengths.

## 3.1 MAILING LIST

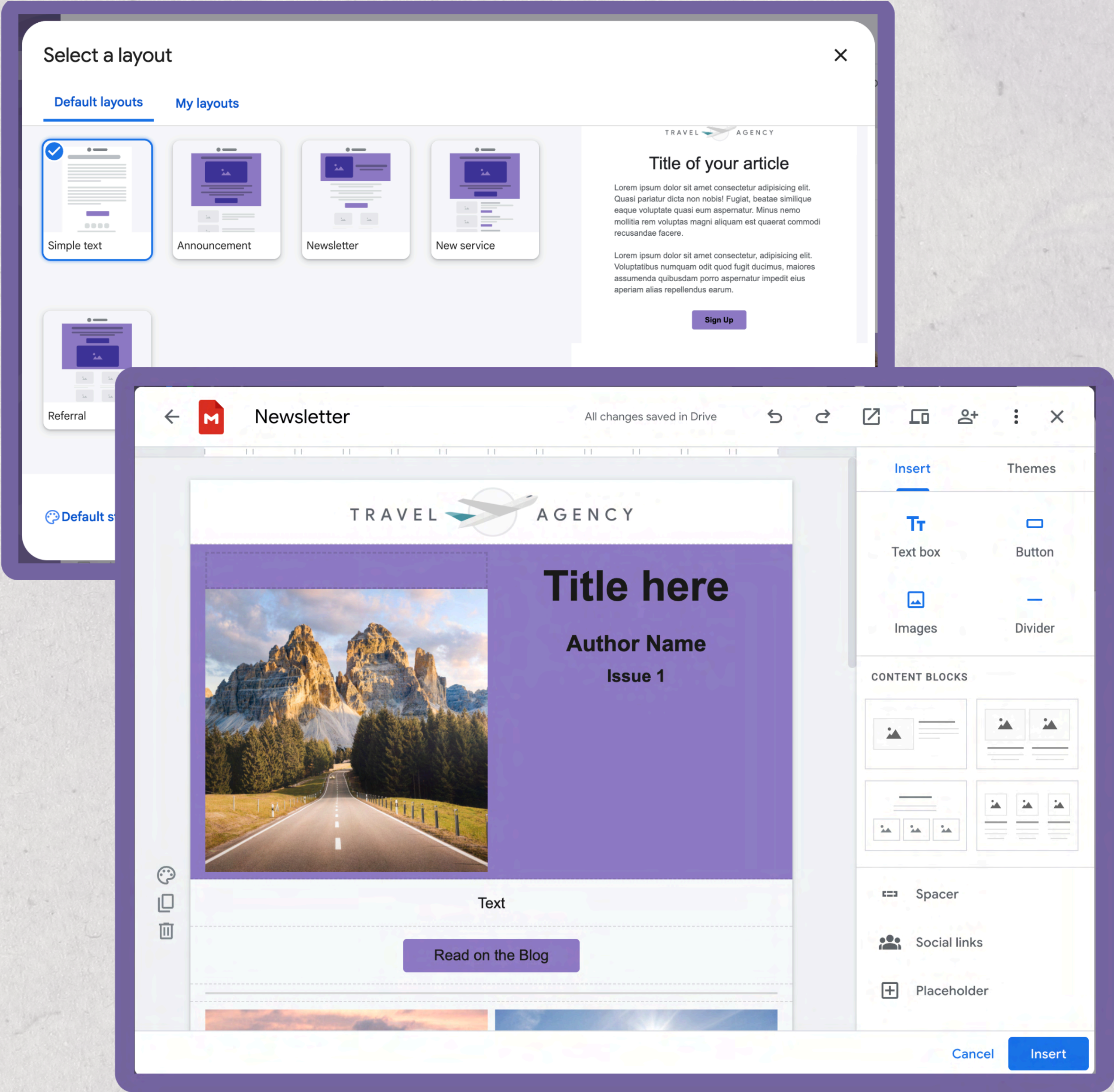
One of the simplest and most effective tools, and one that's often overlooked, is your society mailing list. When a student becomes a member of your society through the Clubs & Societies Portal, they are automatically added to your email list. This makes it the **only guaranteed way to reach all of your registered members**, directly in their inbox.

Every society has its own mailing list. This ensures you stay clear of GDPR breaches introduced by sending email to student addresses.

To confirm your mailing list address, contact [president@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:president@uccsocieties.ie).



If you'd like to level up your use of email newsletters, you can **try using Gmail's built-in Layouts feature**. These are free templates that you can customise with your society's logo, brand colours, and fonts to give your emails a more polished look. To access them, start composing a new email, and tap on the "Select a layout" button in the bottom toolbar. You'll find a range of designs suitable for different occasions.





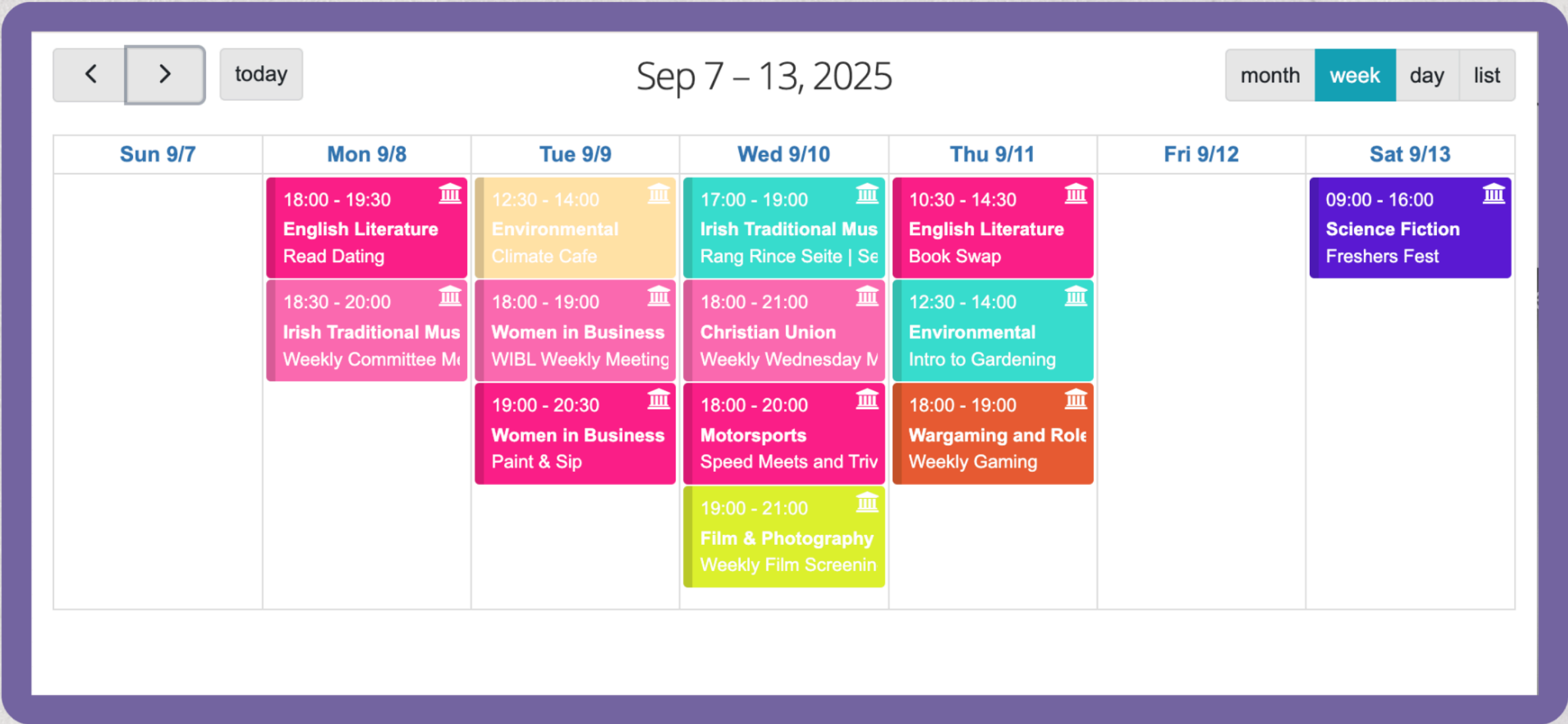
# 3.2 EVENTS WALL

The Clubs & Societies Portal is also home to the Events Wall – **a personalised dashboard for each UCC student**, showing upcoming events from the societies they are registered with.

You can add events through your society’s admin dashboard on the Portal. Log in with your student email, then go to Calendar > Add Event from the sidebar. Fill in all the relevant details, and make sure to select “All Members” under the Group section.

**All events added before the weekly deadline of Friday at 1pm will also appear in the “What’s On This Week” post**, which is shared on the official UCC Societies social media page.

This is also the main source reviewed by the Executive when conducting Mid-Year Reviews.





## 3.3 UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS

If your society has significant crossover with an academic department of the university, **it can be worth building links between your committee and their faculty.**

Departments can help share details of your events with directly relevant students, whether by email or even during lectures. **You may also be able to collaborate with them on events** – for example, inviting a lecturer to act as a guest speaker. **Always use this channel respectfully, and ensure your society is represented professionally** when engaging with staff.

You can also work with groups such as the UCC Students' Union (UCCSU) to increase your reach. **UCCSU runs themed weeks throughout the year, of societies are invited to participate by hosting their own relevant events.**

Regular themes include **SHAG Week, Green Week, and Seachtain na Gaeilge.** Events held under these banners are featured in a timetable that UCCSU promotes across all of its official social media channels.



## 3.4 DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Digital promotion isn't limited to social media. Every day, **thousands of students pass through campus**, and our on-campus signage is one of the most effective ways to reach them. As part of UCC Green Campus policy, flyering and posterage are heavily regulated, but **societies can take full advantage of UCC's digital screens**.

This is an excellent option for flagship events where you want maximum visibility. **Societies have a dedicated screen in front of the Quad**, and your graphic will also appear across campus in locations such as The Hub, Western Gateway Building, and Brookfield.

To feature your event on these, **prepare a graphic of 1920x1080 resolution, and submit it by email to [admin@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:admin@uccsocieties.ie)**.



# 4. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

## THREE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

### ENGAGEMENT

audience interaction  
with content

### RETENTION

keeping viewers  
watching over time

### CONSISTENCY

regular posts &  
recognisable style

## 4.1 SOCIAL PLATFORMS

There are a flurry of apps & social media platforms out there nowadays, and **not all are created equally**. Each platform has its own algorithm that heavily influences the approach you should take to your content, and who you can expect to reach.

Let's have a quick overview of the most common platforms in use today.



## 4.1.1 INSTAGRAM

Currently the most popular social media platform, and **highly effective for actively reaching students**. The algorithm prioritises visual content – posters, photos, reels – and **will help in pushing your posts beyond your followers to new viewers**. As Instagram is now the “default” platform for most students, it’s usually the **first place they’ll look** to see what your society is doing. Maintaining a strong presence here is also valuable if you plan to work with sponsors during the year.

## 4.1.2 TIKTOK

Excellent for visibility, less so for community-building. The algorithm favours **fun, authentic, short-form videos**, making it a great way to show your society’s personality. However, TikTok rewards viral reach rather than steady growth. **Think of it as a showcase tool**, and a companion to Instagram, rather than a noticeboard.



### 4.1.3 LINKEDIN

Previously overlooked, it is now growing quickly among brands and organisations. **A great option for connecting with alumni, showcasing the work that goes on behind the scenes in your society, and highlighting your achievements**, such as a win at STARS Awards. Fantastic tool if you're looking to reach corporations & build new contacts.

### 4.1.4 FACEBOOK

Once the default platform, now less commonly used by students. It still has value for **engaging alumni, local businesses, and community groups**.

### 4.1.5 TWITTER/X

Activity has declined sharply since the rebrand, with most major organisations leaving the platform. The algorithm works differently from other social media, and growth can be slow.

While it may still help with press or business contacts, as of 2025, it has very limited use amongst societies.



## 4.2 ENGAGEMENT

**Social media nowadays is a two-way street.** Those viral posts you see on your feed don't take off by chance – **they spread because people choose to interact with them.** Likes, comments, shares and saves all signal interest, and platforms reward that by pushing the content to more people. The key question for societies is: **how can you encourage your audience to engage with what you post?**

On Instagram, one of the easiest ways is through **interactive stickers.** These include question boxes, polls, web links, countdowns, and more – all quick to set up. **Used well, they can boost engagement rates to 20–30% per post,** compared with the platform average of just 1–5%.

**Some simple suggestions you can incorporate:**

- At the start of a semester, open a question box for event suggestions, then share responses to your story and tease upcoming plans.
- Before a screening or themed event, use a poll to let members vote on the film or topic. The more creative you are, the better!

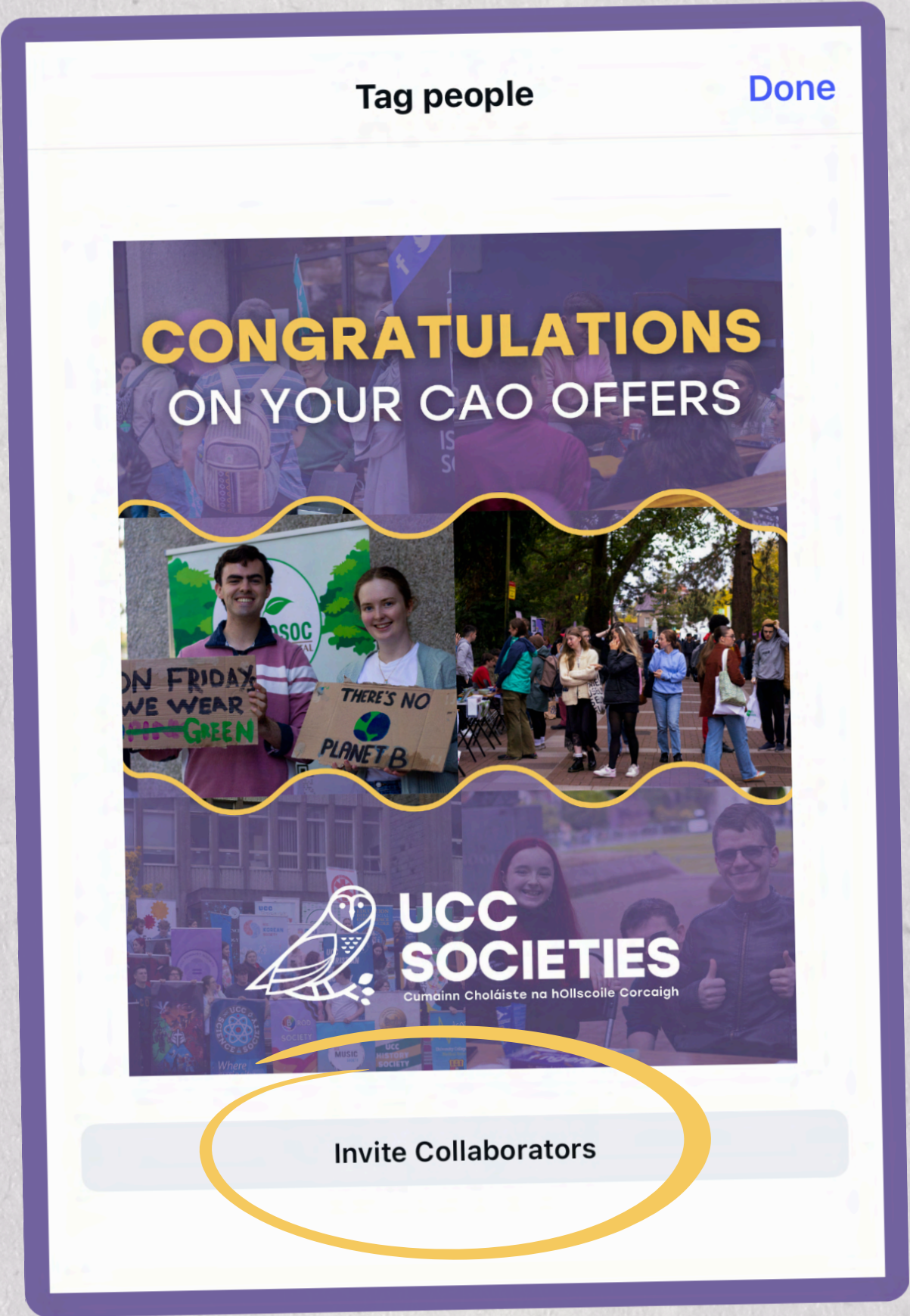
Instagram uses engagement to measure your page's success, and **accounts with consistently strong engagement are rewarded with greater visibility.**



# 4.3 COLLABORATION

We live in a society... literally! If you've spent any amount of time on social media, you'll know how powerful collaborations can be. For creators, they expand reach to a directly relevant audience; for viewers, they're a chance to discover new groups they'll likely be interested in. Done well, it's a win-win for everyone.

**You already have the perfect network around you to collaborate with: our 116 vibrant societies here at UCC!** Many of you will already already host joint events, but you can also collaborate on content. Instagram now makes this even easier with its **Collaborative Post feature**.





**Using this tool is simple:** one society publishes the post, invites others to join, and the same content then appears on all accounts involved. The post is pushed to followers of each society, and **engagement statistics are shared**. This makes it easy to compare performance against solo posts and track how many viewers are new, non-followers.

The simplest collaboration post is a shared event graphic, but **you can also get creative by filming short reels together** – for example, a quick recap of the event.

Another great opportunity for collaboration is at the **Clubs & Societies Days in both Semester 1 & 2**. You'll have representatives from all our vibrant societies around you in the Hub all day, why not invite them to get involved with your society! Take a look at some great uses of this below.



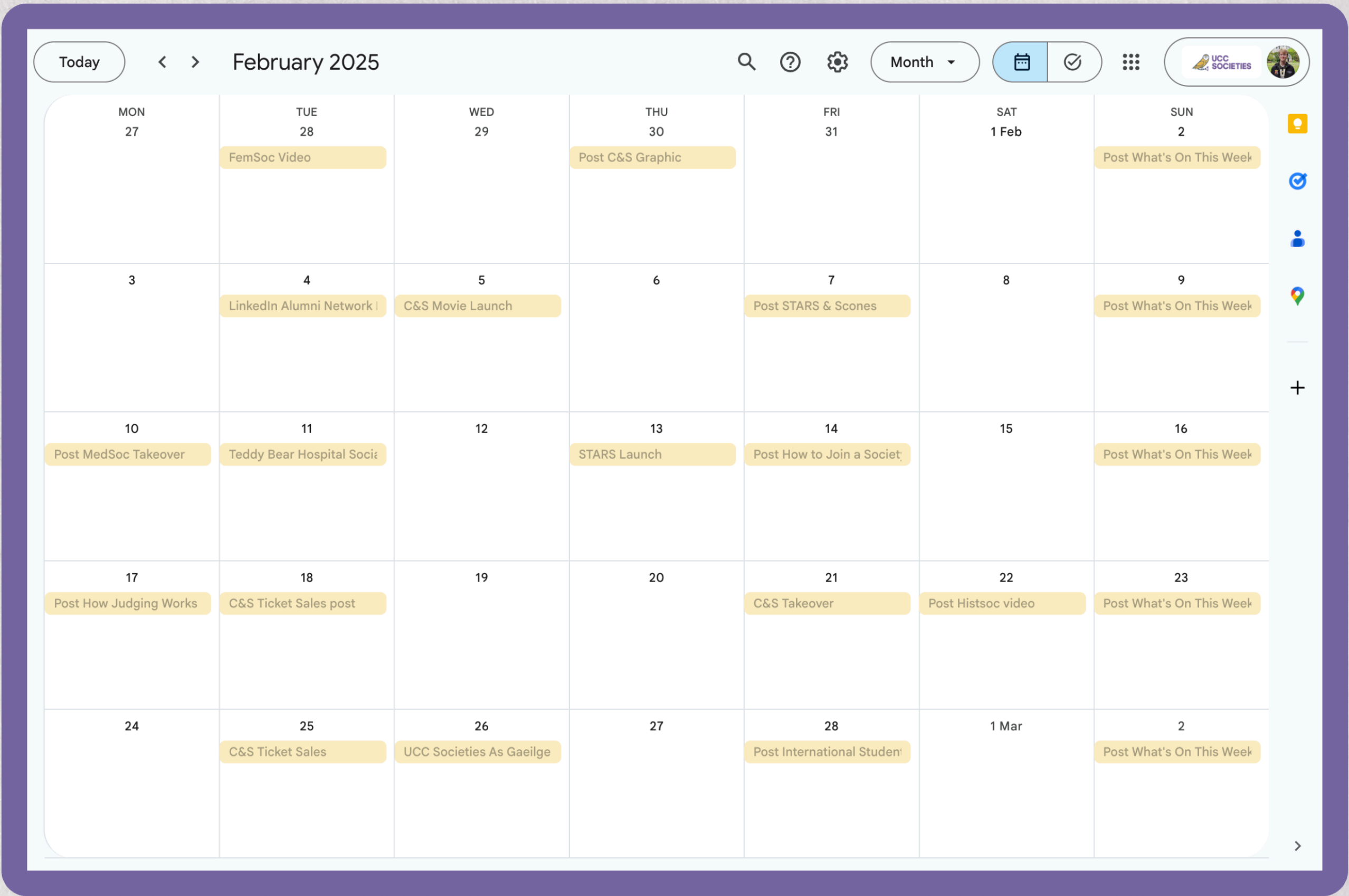


# 4.4 CONTENT PLANNING

A strong social media presence starts with a strong plan. Once you’ve set clear goals for your society’s brand, the next step is to create content that brings that vision to life.

## 4.4.1 SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR

One of the best steps you can take right now is to set up a social media calendar. **Every society should have one.** The simplest option is on Google Calendar, which you can create as shown here.





A post calendar allows you to visualise when posts are going live, and helps you plan ahead. **Try to space out grid posts evenly, leaving at least 1–2 days between them.**

**Avoid publishing two grid posts on the same day – one will inevitably reduce the performance of the other and limit its reach.**

For event announcements, **you should always be providing a minimum of one week's notice**, and continue to promote this with stories across the week.

## **4.4.2 WEEKLY POST SERIES**

Your social media should do more than advertise events – that's what the Events Wall is for. Here, your job is to **bring your society to life, giving students a flavour of your activities and community.**

One effective way to do this is through a **regular content series**, posted weekly or bi-weekly. Choose a day and time you know you can stick to, e.g. Fridays at 6pm, and add it to your calendar.



Work ahead wherever possible and stay consistent. As we discussed above, consistency is everything on social media. With posts reliably going live each week, Instagram will begin pushing them further, anticipating strong performance.

**Some content ideas to try:**

- A weekly roundup of news in your society's remit.
- Committee suggestion of the Week, e.g. a relevant book, podcast, or resource.
- Short videos such as committee introductions, or vox pops with students.

Video clips work really well here, as they can be filmed & edited in bulk at the start of the year, and scheduled across the year. This would also help you deliver a **variety of content**, which will see the performance & engagement on your account improve.

**For more personalised suggestions, you can book a PR consultation**, and we'll work on developing ideas together!



# 5. PRESS ENGAGEMENT

Local media outlets, such as newspapers and radio, can shine a spotlight on your society's activities well beyond campus. **Press engagement is especially valuable for highlighting how student life contributes to the wider community.** It can also help raise your profile, attract new sponsors, and promote your events to a broader audience.

The main way to do this is by **circulating a press release.** A press release is a short document sent to media contacts that **draws attention to a newsworthy event or story.** It provides the essential information a journalist needs to write an article, and includes a point of contact for your society.

**If your release sparks interest, journalists may follow up with you directly to request a quote for inclusion in their piece, or even invite you to appear on radio or TV.**

Only students who have completed Press Training are permitted to engage with the media. Remember, in doing so you are representing not just your society, but the University as a whole.



## **Occasions to circulate a press release include:**

- If you've won an **award** (esp. national/international)
  - i.e. BICS, ENACTUS World Cup,
- If you're holding a **big conference/event** (to get attendees and showcase it!)
  - i.e. TransMed Soc Conference, Med Soc Teddy Bear Hospital
- If you're **fundraising for charity**
  - i.e. Gig for Gaza, Scribble Soc Childline Fundraiser
- If you have a **celebrity/politician/big name** on campus
  - i.e. Law Soc Niall Breslin, Economics Soc Chief Economist



## 5.1 DRAFTING A PRESS RELEASE

Here's an example of a strong press release, from the UCC Law Society.

### ***UCC Law Society Press Release***

***Date:*** 12/10/2022

***For immediate release***

#### **Headline: Sir Bob Geldof to receive Honour from UCC Students.**

UCC welcomed Sir Bob Geldof to campus on 12th October 2022. The musician and activist visited the President's Office on Wednesday evening where he met with Professor John O'Halloran, UCC President, signed the Visitors' Book and was presented with a copy of 'The Atlas of The Great Irish Famine' published by Cork University Press.

Sir Geldof was in Cork for the presentation of the Mutatio Factorem Award by UCC's Law Society. The Mutatio Factorem 'change maker' Award is given to people who have in their career and or life brought about significant change and inspiration in their industry or area of work or through their own personal life.

Founded by former President Mary Robinson, who was the first recipient of the award, Bob Geldof is the third person to be honoured with the Mutatio Factorem Award, following actor Stephen Fry, who received the award last year.

Melissa Ferris, Auditor, UCC Law Society said:

'It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to present the first Mutatio Factorum Award of the 93rd Session to Sir Bob Geldof. This award was established to recognise the work and achievements of those who have been the influence of change to society in their careers and lives. It very much follows the core value of the School of Law of 'shaping a just society'. On behalf of the Law Society, we are delighted to engage with the Law School in promoting this message. The Law Society is very grateful to Sir Bob Geldof for coming to UCC to proudly accept the award. I would like to extend a thank you to Bailey for the work he put in to organise this award, Professor Mark Poustie and the School of Law for their support, Dr. Dug Cubie for his contribution to the event, and the Executive Committee of the Law Society for their tireless work.'

**\*\*\*\*\*Ends\*\*\*\*\***

For more information please contact :  
Melissa Ferris, Auditor, UCC Law Society  
[Law@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:Law@uccsocieties.ie)

#### **Notes to Editor:**

UCC Law Society is one of UCC's oldest and most active societies providing a wide variety of events every week. There are loads of ways to get involved in the society and there's something for everyone from monthly house meetings, public speaking workshops and debating and mooting competitions.



## 5.2 PUBLISHING A PRESS RELEASE

**Press releases are circulated to the media by either the UCC Societies PR & Media Officer, or the President.** Once you have prepared your document, submit it by email to [pro@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:pro@uccsocieties.ie) for review.

After approval, your release will be sent to our Press Contacts list, which includes a range of relevant journalists and reporters across both local and national outlets.



## 6. PR CONSULTATIONS

If you'd like personalised assistance with your social's digital and/or physical presence, **we can arrange a 1:1 PR consultation.**

We'll meet to talk through your society's approach to PR & social media: what you believe has previously worked well, and **what you hope you to improve this year.** Based on this, **I'll prepare a digital strategy tailored to your society.**

We can also work on your brand kit, make some sample posts together, or brainstorm ideas for regular post series.

**This would be of particular interest to PROs,** but are open for all to attend. If you'd like to organise one, just send me an email at [pro@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:pro@uccsocieties.ie)!

What do you think has **previously worked well** for your society? \*

In terms of PR & social media, e.g. a particular series of videos, use of email newsletter etc.

Short-answer text

What do you **aim to improve this year?** \*

e.g. quality of visuals & graphics, consistency in posts, follower engagement etc.

Short-answer text



## 7. FAQs

**Q: I'm having trouble sending emails to our society mailing lists.**

The Societies President is the administrator of these mailing lists, and can assist you with any issues. Contact them by email at [president@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:president@uccsocieties.ie).

**Q: I'm having trouble accessing the Events Wall on the Societies Portal.**

Access to this admin portal is through your student email. First, ask your Chairperson to confirm you've been added to the committee with the correct student number, and under 'Current Year'. If this has not resolved the issue, get in touch by email at [pro@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:pro@uccsocieties.ie).

**Q: Do I need Canva Pro for graphic design?**

That depends on your society's needs and goals. Canva Pro isn't essential, but it can help elevate your digital presence and make your content stand out in a crowded social media space. Think of it as an investment in your content.

Our SoA contribution reduces the cost to €40 per academic year. For queries, contact the Finance & Sponsorship Officer at [finance@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:finance@uccsocieties.ie).



## 8. TOOLS & RESOURCES



*Canva*

### Canva

A free, user-friendly content creation tool that can be used by your entire committee. Lots of templates and the ability to create your own from scratch.

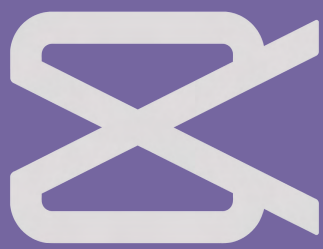
Also: [Canva Design School](#)



Linktree\*

### LinkTree

A free link in bio tool that keeps all your links together. Great to track how many people are clicking links too.



### CapCut

A free all-in-one video editor with everything you need to create high-quality videos. Great for things like subtitling videos, and putting together reels.



Meta  
Business Suite

### Meta Business Suite

Allows you to publish, schedule and manage all your content for both Facebook and Instagram all in one place.