Kingston Students' Union

Brand Guidelines

Content

1.0	**Overview**	3
2.0	**Our logo**	5
3.0	**Kingston Sport logo**	12
4.0	**Typography**	15
5.0	**Our colours**	19
6.0	**Geometric shapes**	23
7.0	**Illustration**	28
8.0	**Photography**	30
9.0	**Brand voice**	34
10	**Applications**	40

1.0
Overview

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines have been produced for anyone using and implementing Kingston Student's Union brand. We've made it as simple as possible, whilst empowering you to apply your creativity, to embrace a confident visual identity.

2.0
Our logo

2.1 About our logo

About our logo

The logo is a combination of two elements:

1. The Symbol:
Our symbol is a graphic representation of our initials KSU. These bold shapes symbolize our trusted organisation. The dynamic angles suggest movement and forward momentum.

2. The Wordmark:
Kingston Student's Union name is presented in our sans-serif typeface in title case.

How to use the logo

Our logo is a key asset and must be used simply and consistently. To protect the integrity of the logo, always refer to these guidelines and only use the original master artwork files.

The logo can be brought to life digitally through animation and in print techniques such as embossing/ debossing etc.

To see examples of the logo in use, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.

2.2 Logo clear space

Clear space

The logo should always be clearly visible. It needs space to breathe. This space is considered as the minimum uninterrupted space surrounding the logo and is equal to half the height of the logo. Please adhere to this wherever possible.

Minimum size

For clarity and legibility 7mm height of the full logo is the minimum size for print.

Minimum height 7mm

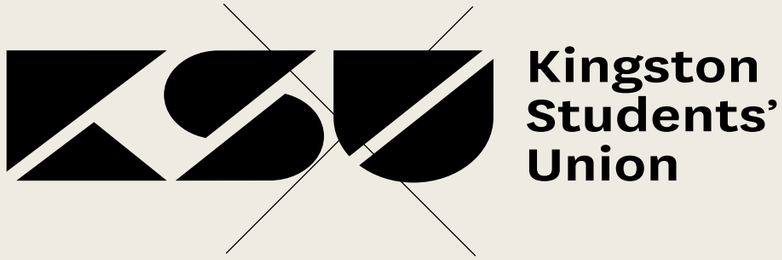
2.3 Logo rules

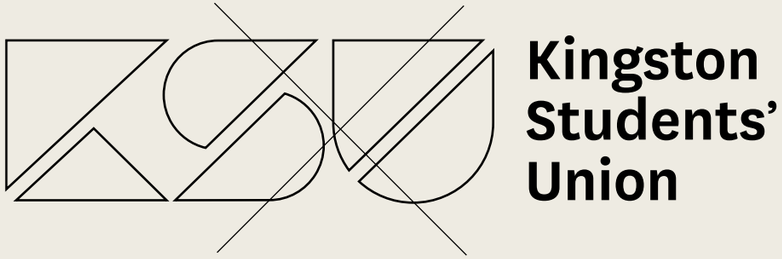
What not to do

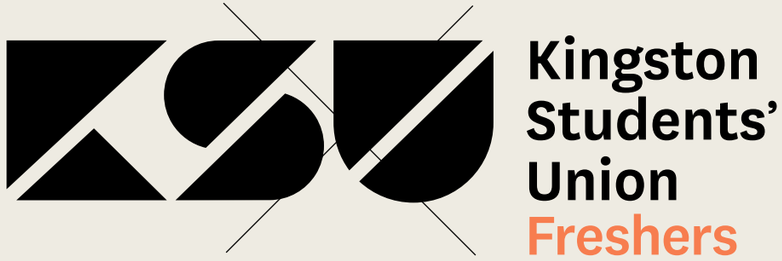
The logo should never be redrawn or recreated. This includes:

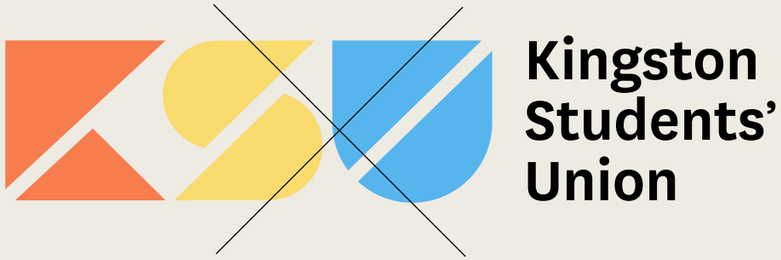
- Stretching the logo so the shape changes
- Adding words to the logo
- Outlining the logo
- Creating your own sub logo
- Using multiple colours in the logo
- Putting the logo in different shapes or devices

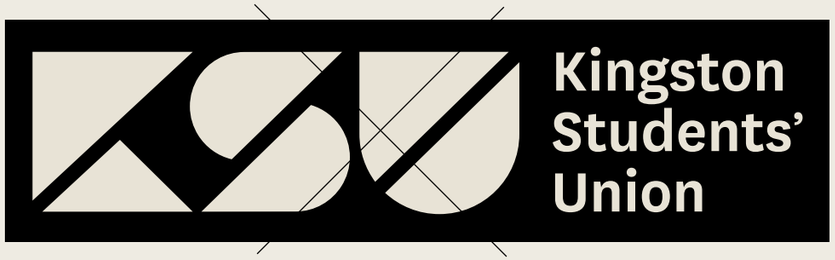
To see examples of the logo in use, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.





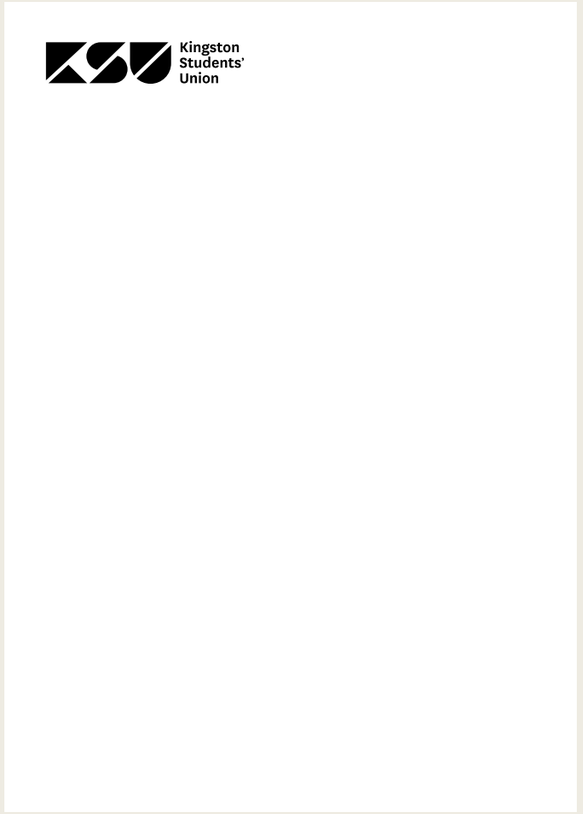






2.4 Logo positioning

The primary placements of the logo
are at the bottom or top left of a document.



The logo can be centre aligned in a document,
but please be mindful of legibility if it is being
overlaid on photography.

Do not rotate the logo so that the arrow in
the symbol appears to be pointing to the
right instead of upwards.

2.5 Our symbol

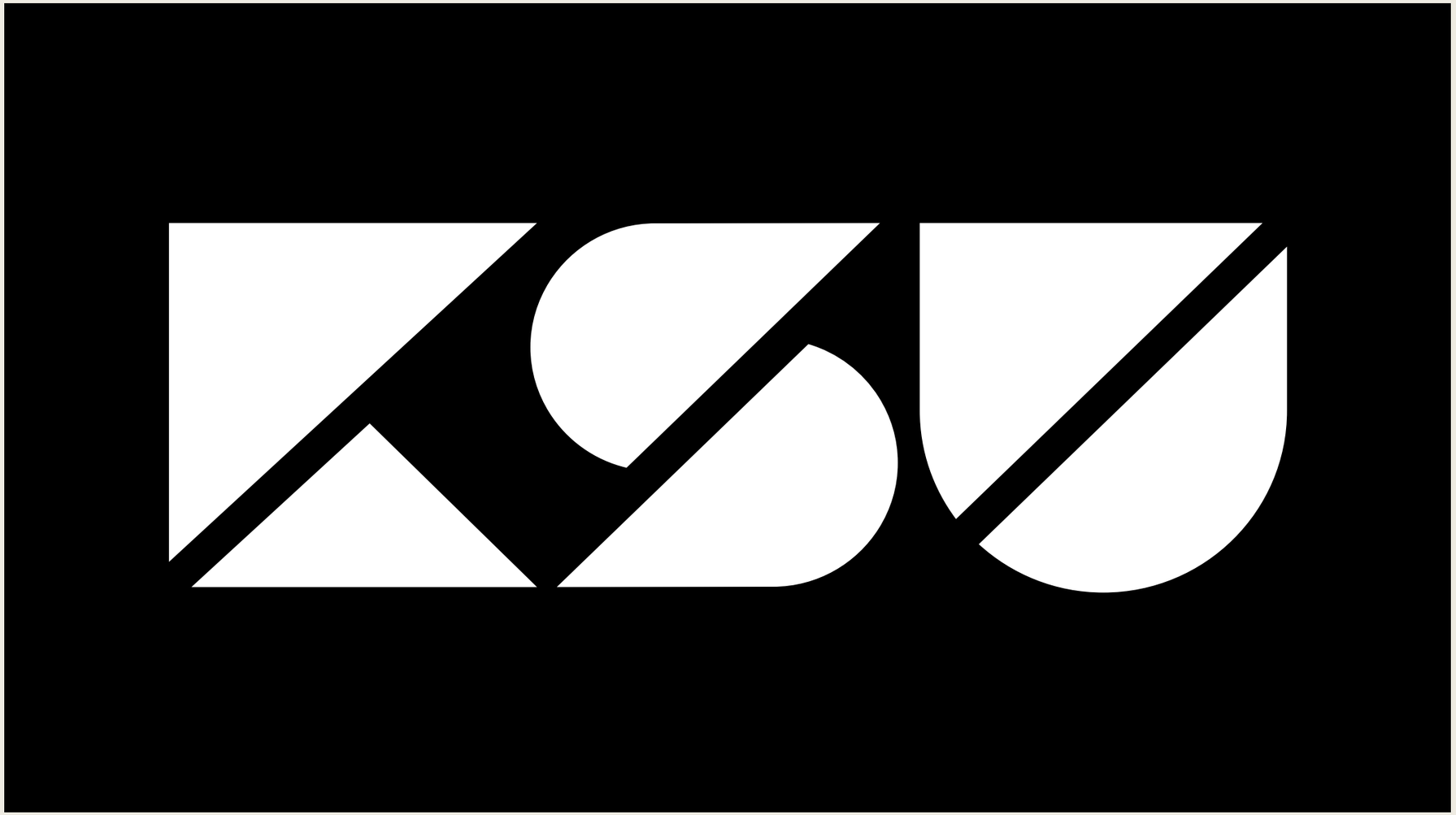
About our symbol

In some instances, the symbol can be used independently from the wordmark. This includes merchandise, wayfinding, social media icons and some digital applications.

How to use the symbol

To protect the integrity of the symbol, always refer to these guidelines and only use the original master artwork files.

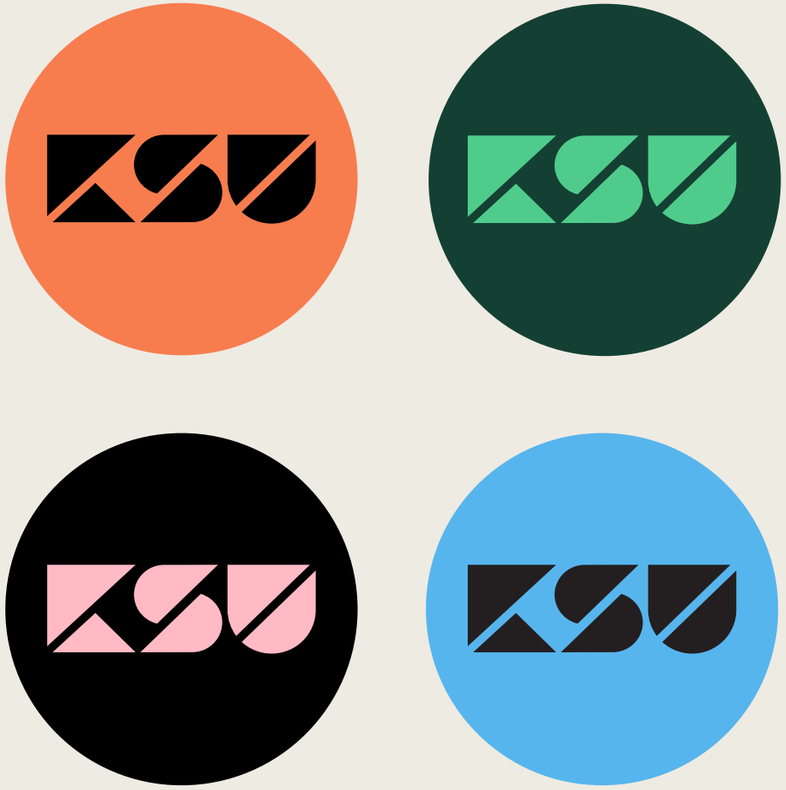
To see examples of the symbol in use, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.

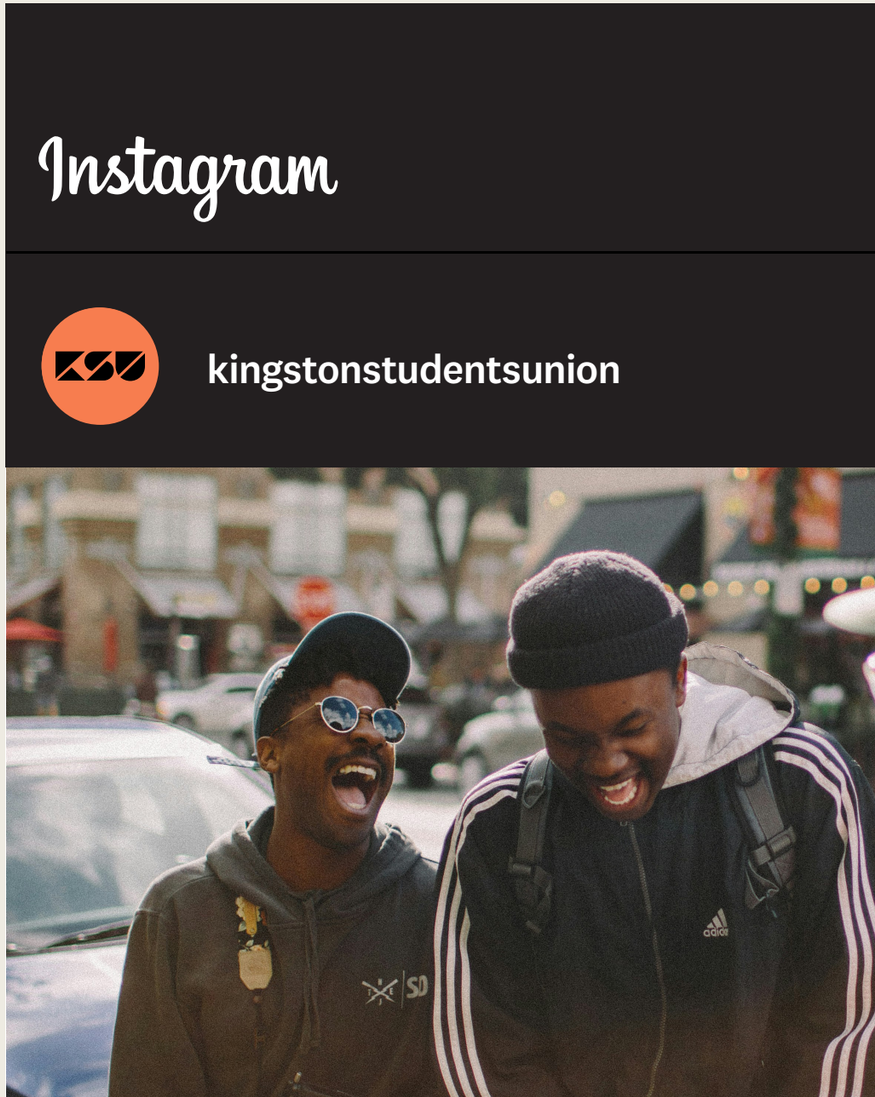


2.6 Social media icon

For social media, please use the symbol as shown opposite. Only use the version from the master logo folder. It has been created specifically for digital use.

The social media icon can be set up in any of the brand colour pairings.





3.0
Kingston Sport logo

3.1 Kingston Sport logo

About Kingston Sport logo

The logo is a combination of two elements:

1. The Symbol:
The symbol uses the bold shapes from the letter S of the KSU logo. The dynamic angles suggest movement and forward momentum and are directly linked to the Union, while keeping its own individual style.

2. The Wordmark:
Kingston Sport name is presented in our sans-serif typeface in title case.

How to use the logo

Kingston Sport is a key asset and must be used simply and consistently. To protect the integrity of the logo, always refer to these guidelines and only use the original master artwork files.

The logo can be brought to life digitally through animation and in print techniques such as embossing/ debossing etc.

To see examples of the logo in use, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.

4.0
Typography

4.1 Our typography

Our typography style is confident and clear. To be effective, all of our design output needs to be carefully crafted, following fundamental typographic principles.

When a variety of sizes and weights are used, the differences between them must be distinct, but try not to combine too many styles. For example, a simple distinction of type weight or spacing can create a successful hierarchy, without needing to vary the size as well. Try to stick to maximum of three point sizes on one application.

For examples of best practice, please see the applications at the end of this document.

- Keep type styles to a minimum to create a clear hierarchy
- Text should be centred and/or ranged left.

4.2 Brand typefaces

National 2 is our brand typeface.

It is at the core of our identity, it's our visual voice, and should be used across all of our materials.

National 2 is a contemporary sans serif typeface available in multiple weights, we have selected two weights for body text: Regular and Bold (with the italics of these).

We also use the Extrabold Condensed version of National 2 for titles and headlines. Due to it's tall and narrow nature, the condensed version works well to grab our audience's attention.

National 2 can be purchased at: https://klim.co.nz/retail-fonts/national-2/

National 2: Bold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

National 2: Regular

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

National 2: Condensed Extrabold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

4.3 Default typeface: Arial

Some computers may not have the National 2 typeface installed in the font library. In this situation the system font Arial can be used as a default.

However, this should be limited to email communication and internal documents that are not professionally designed.

Every effort should be made to use National 2 where appropriate.

Arial: Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!?,.’”@£%&*)(+-

Arial: Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!?,.’”@£%&)(+-*

5.0
Our colours

5.1 Our colour palette

The palette

Our flexible colour palette consists of five bright colours, two dark and an off-white. They have been carefully chosen to enable the Union to communicate effectively across the different channels.

RGB

These values should be used when creating screen-based applications.

HEX

For use when defining colours online.

CMYK

If Pantone® inks are unsuitable, then please use the four colour process (CMYK) values. These provide close representations of the Pantone® colours. They will vary in tone depending on the paper stock, the printing method and any finishes that are specified.

Pantone®

Printers match colour by using the Pantone® Matching System (PMS). These references give the exact recipe, so that printers can reproduce colours accurately.

Pantone: 164 C
RGB: 248 125 79
CMYK: 0 62 69 0
HEX: F87D4F

Pantone: 176 C
RGB: 255 186 196
CMYK: 0 38 13 0
HEX: FFBAC4

Pantone: 292 C
RGB: 86 182 237
CMYK: 63 12 0 0
HEX: 56B6ED

Pantone: 7479 C
RGB: 79 205 139
CMYK: 64 0 59 0
HEX: 4FCD8B

Pantone: 1215 C
RGB: 251 219 110
CMYK: 3 13 66 0
HEX: FBDB6E

Pantone: Warm Grey 1 U
RGB: 232 228 214
CMYK: 11 9 18 0
HEX: E8E4D6

Pantone: 5605 C
RGB: 20 63 51
CMYK: 88 47 71 58
HEX: 143F33

Pantone: Black 6 C
RGB: 0 0 0
CMYK: 100 100 100 100
HEX: 000000

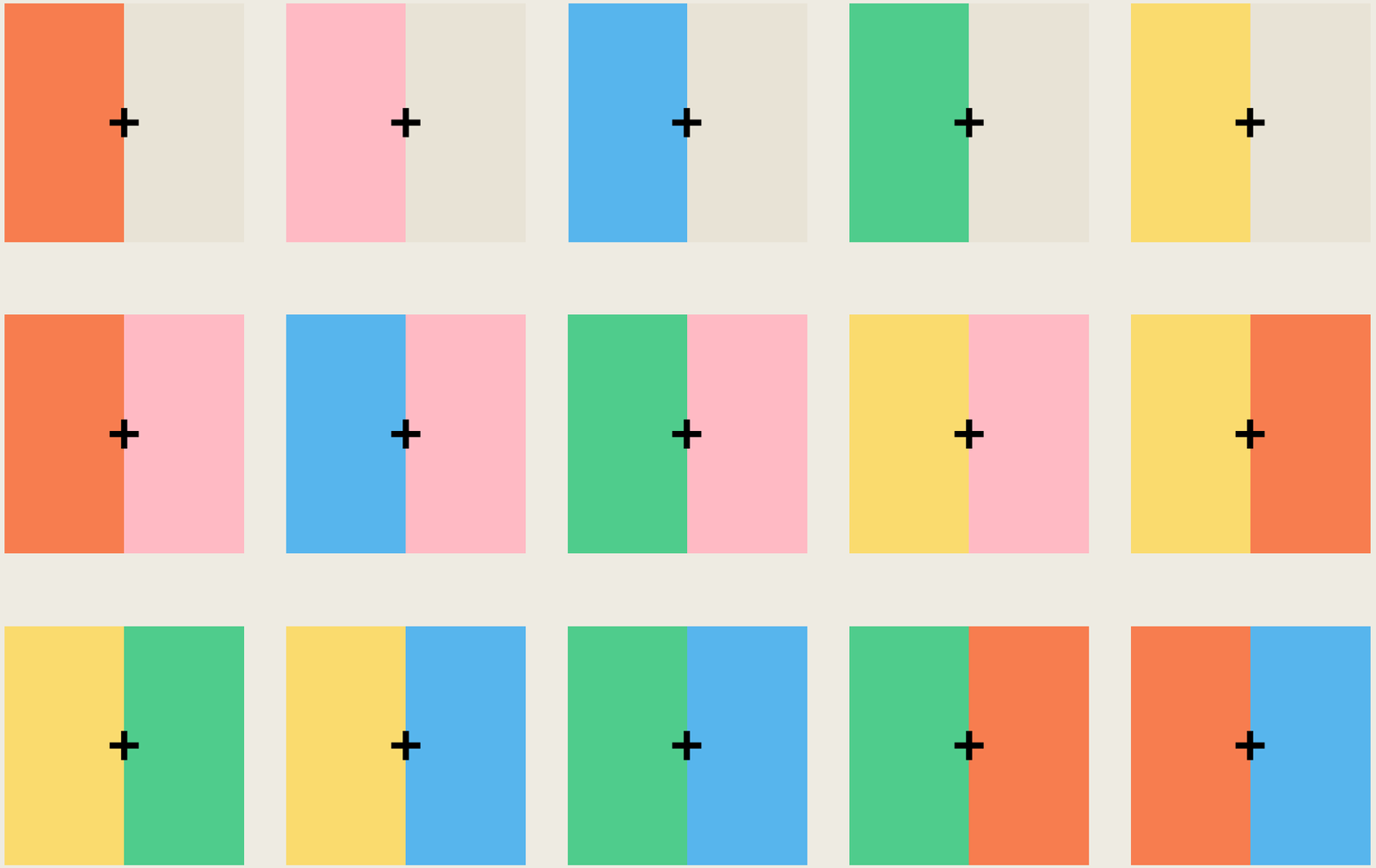
5.2 Typography on colours

It is really important to consider legibility and accessibility when selecting colour combinations for text, particularly for text that appears at smaller sizes. There should be high contrast between the background and text. Examples of acceptable combinations are shown here.

5.3 Background colour pairings

When creating a background for an application, you have the option to use our brand's flat colours or combine shapes and backgrounds using only the combinations displayed on this page. When using these background colour pairings, only use black text to ensure legibility.

To see in use examples of our background colours pairing with the brand shapes, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.



6.0
Geometric shapes

6.1 The shapes

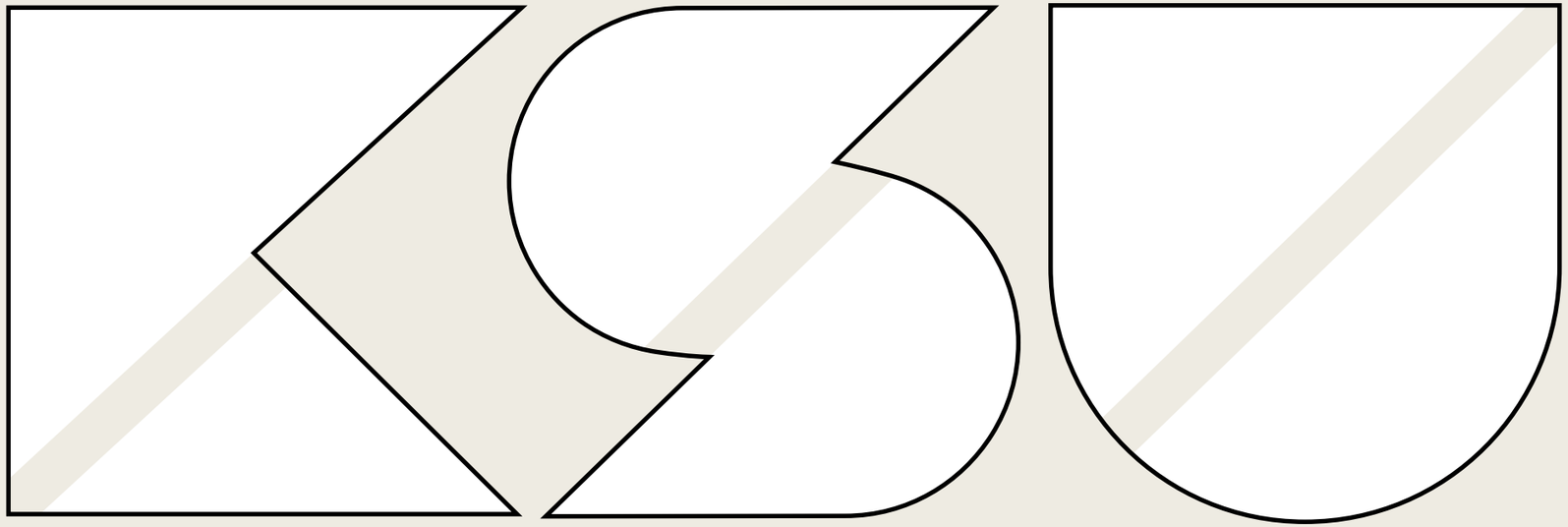
Our brand incorporates three geometric shapes derived from the KSU symbol. These shapes serve as additional elements of the brand identity and offer versatility in how they can be applied.

They can be used in the following ways:

- backgrounds

- patterns

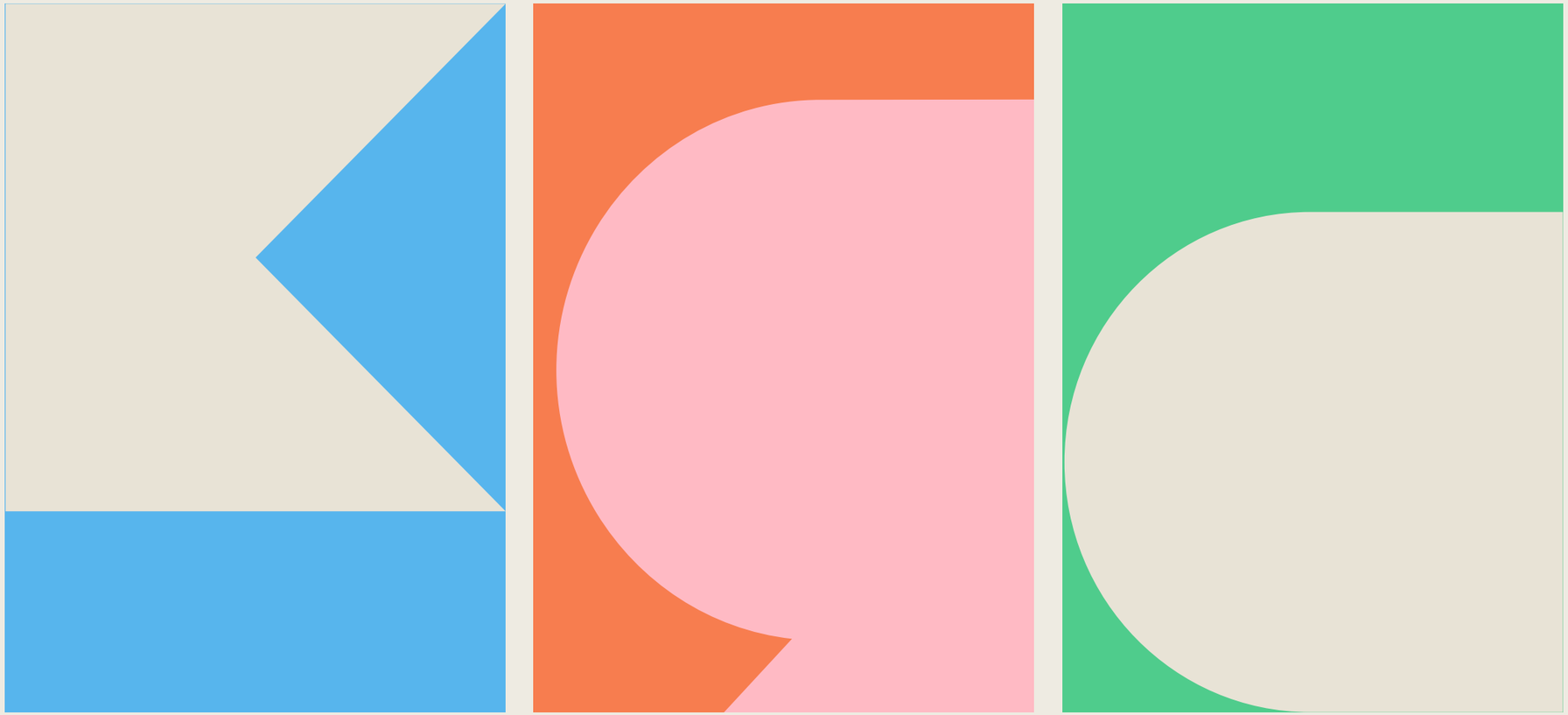
- image holders



6.2 Geometric shapes as backgrounds

The three geometric shapes should occupy a significant portion of the background. Please ensure that the placement of typography and the chosen colour combinations are legible. The shapes can be rotated, cropped and applied in different areas of the background.

Please follow the colour combinations outlined in the Colour section of this document. For examples of our background shapes in use, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.



6.3 Geometric as pattern

The three geometric shapes can also be repeated and cropped to create a background pattern, enhancing visual interest and flexibility in the design. This visual solution is particularly effective when photography and illustrations are unavailable. The tone of the pattern is fun, playful, and fresh.

When using the dark green brand colour as background for shapes or patterns, please ensure they are 90% tint of the dark green to maintain text legibility, as shown in the example on the right.

Please follow the colour combinations outlined in the Colour section of this document. For examples of our background pattern in use, refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.

6.4 Geometric as image holder

Our brand identity shapes can serve not only as background elements and patterns but also as holders for images, providing versatility in design applications. By using these shapes as image holders, we can implement dynamic cropping techniques, enhancing the visual appeal of the content. This approach not only maintains consistency with our brand identity but also offers creative opportunities to showcase imagery in unique and engaging ways.

For examples of our image holder shapes in use, refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.

7.0
Illustrations

7.1 Our illustration style

Sometimes, photography or typography alone are insufficient to convey a message or showcase our wide range of activities. This is where our illustration style comes into play, enabling us to communicate directly with our audience through abstract, enjoyable and dynamic illustrations.

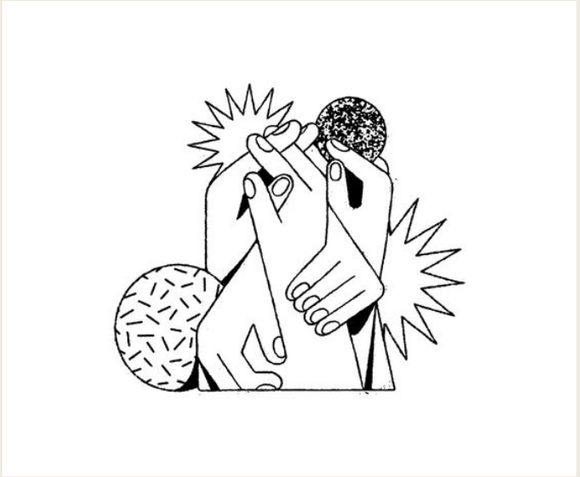
When commissioning an illustrator, it is crucial to follow this style guide. Doing so will help maintain the consistency and quality of our brand. The examples provided on this page offer a clear indication of what to look for. Our illustration style is characterized by simplicity, featuring black and white, outlines, dark spaces and light texture.

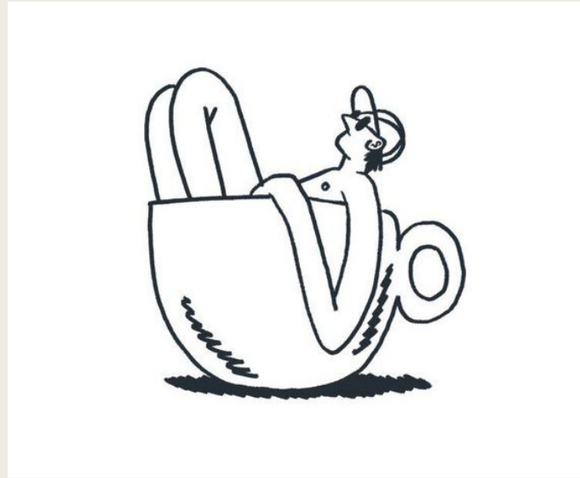
Our illustration style reflects our personality and communicates effectively with diverse audiences. Below are keywords to keep in mind that will help convey our uniqueness.

Our illustrations are:

Effortless, Intriguing, Imaginative, Uplifting, Inclusive (community), Lively, Authentic

To see examples of our illustration style in use, please refer to the Applications section at the end of this document.





8.0
Photography

8.1 Our photography style

Whether you're using your own image library, commissioning new photography or purchasing an image from a stock library, it's essential that you follow this guide. This will help to maintain the consistency and quality of our brand.

Consider unusual perspectives, scale relationships and depth of field. The range shown over the following pages gives a good indication of what you should be looking for. Ordinary images can often be improved by using a tighter or more dynamic crop.

Our image style says a lot about our personality and what we are trying to communicate to a diverse range of audiences.

Key words to have in mind that will help to convey our uniqueness and stand out from the competition are listed below.

We are:

Confident, Intriguing, Imaginative, Uplifting, Inclusive (community), Accessible, Authentic

We are not:

Generic, Poorly executed, Austere, Unfriendly, Commercial

8.1 Our photography style

8.1 Our photography style

9.0
Brand voice

Brand voice: Pillars

The character, personality and summation of values. Unchanging.

Trustworthy

Not Big Brother

We do what we say we're going to do, always with both purpose and intention. We build transparency
and trust through speaking clearly and earnestly. Students of all backgrounds come to us knowing they'll be welcomed.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do lead each interaction with empathy, understanding and genuine friendliness
- Don't conflate Union messages with uni messages, and don't speak as though we are students ourselves
- Do speak directly and transparently, maintaining a conversational, "chatty" tone that invites students to speak with us
- Don't veer too heavily modern or idiomatic – the student body is too diverse for that to feel representative

Vibrant

Not Pretentious

We reflect and encourage the upbeat energy of the students. They're here to invest in their future; we're here to be forward-thinking and optimistic. Earnest enthusiasm for our mission (advocating for the entire student body) drives our communication.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do emphasise the positive: opening doors, a wealth of possibilities, and promoting individual + community growth
- Don't shy away from complex topics: our students deal with life's hardships, so we should address them head-on
- Do champion and celebrate the many facets of student life
- Don't force or overdo enthusiasm when it's not a natural fit for the topic at hand

Supportive

Not Overbearing

We're practical in our approach, helping students get done what they need to get done. We are the bridge between the uni and its students. We're responsive and effective in our work, all of which is positioned to empower the student body.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do provide tangible solutions + ways for students to engage
- Don't simply offer information without context – answer the question "So what?"
- Do consider how each piece of communication can lift up the student body
- Don't fall into a motivator role – we are here to enable, not coach

Brand Voice: Style Guide

Sentence length

No run-on sentences or lengthy paragraphs. Break up paragraphs so they are easier to skim through.

Use bullet point and numbered lists frequently, as they make longer texts much easier to read.

Colloquialisms (ain't, pass the buck, etc)

Use with great caution.
Colloquialisms that have stood the test of time are good for maintaining informality, but more modern slang risks alienating some of our diverse student body

Pronouns (we/you/them)

KSU: us/we/ours
Students: you/yours
Kingston University: avoid using pronouns for the University

Active vs passive voice

Use active voice wherever possible for the sake of greater clarity (e.g. "The Union held elections," not, "The elections were held by the Union.")

Numbers

Spell out numbers 1-9, use numerals for 10 and above (e.g. "nine questions," "10 posts")

Exception: If it's a range, like 1-9, use numerals.

Abbreviations

Spell out most acronyms on the first use (e.g. "Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)")

In social media and other very short texts, it's okay to abbreviate (e.g. "Management" can become "mgmt" if needed) o a diverse range of audience

Punctuation

Use exclamation points to reflect genuine excitement – one per piece of content is usually enough.

Do not use the serial/Oxford comma unless critical for the sake of clarity (e.g "this, that and those")

Social posts can be more flexible with punctuation standards. Everywhere else, it's important to get it correct.

Emojis

Emojis are 👌, especially in social posts – but use with the same caution as colloquialisms. Slang use can be unclear and even alienating

Text case

As we're associated with a University, it's important to correctly use capitalisation standards – even in social posts.

H tags (e.g. page titles): Sentence case with no period at the end (regardless of whether it's a complete sentence or not)

Paragraphs: Sentence case with a line break between paragraphs. No indenting the first line.

CTAs: Sentence case

Bullet points: Sentence case, with no period at the end of the lines if only one sentence

Messaging guidelines: Checklist

Put this all into action!

Reliable:

- ☐ Is this as clear and specific as it can be?
- ☐ Have we checked our facts?
- ☐ Are we able to follow-through on everything that we're promising?
- ☐ Are we making the entirety of our diverse student body feel welcomed, or could someone feel left out?

Consistent:

- ☐ Have we run the draft through a grammar-checker (like Grammarly)?
- ☐ Are we following our own Style Guide?

Supportive:

- ☐ Are we offering practical ways to help students accomplish their goals, or is this just adding to the noise? (ask yourself: "So what?")
- ☐ Have we front-loaded the most important information?

Vibrant:

- ☐ Are we mirroring the level of enthusiasm the student body has about the topic at hand?
- ☐ Are we speaking clearly and openly about what's important to our students, even when it's hard?

Union-specific words

Words that have a special meaning for KSU, or that stand out as a major part of who we are

How we refer to ourselves
(from most formal to least)

- Kingston Students Union
- KSU
- your Union

How we refer to the University
(from most formal to least)

- Kingston University
- Kingston Uni

Words to carefully consider

Words we either never say or only use with context/definitions

Harmful, toxic or questionable language
(e.g. blacklist, swarthy, dame)

Gendered terms
(e.g. “Hey you guys,” “man hours”)

Alienating words or phrases, especially those that apply to marginalised groups. (e.g. “driving blind”)

Annotated sample texts

Examples of how various kinds of texts can be transformed using the Union's ToV pillars

ORIGINAL

Union Guide: About us

Hey there! We're your Union. Simply put, we're run by students for students. A student-elected team of officers lead a plucky team of staff to make your time at Kingston so much better. If you need a host of activities and groups for the good times and support for the bad, we're here for you.

A bit like mayors of a city, student officers campaign on issues that you care about and affect you. They work to improve uni life and change the issues that matter to you. we're politically independent from the uni and represent your views. So if you need us, we've got your back.

We've developed a guide to let you know everything about the Union in a whistlestop tour. check it out below.

UPDATED

Union Guide: About us

Hey there! Welcome to your Union, where YOU:

TRUSTWORTHY: Center the entire student body in your communications

· Elect the brilliant student officers who will lead our plucky team of staff

TRUSTWORTHY: Shorter sentences, easy to scan via bulletpoints, which are clear "promises" to the reader

· Plug in to activities and groups to complement your Uni experience

· Get support for any challenges that arise throughout your time at Kingston

And us?
We're here to make your time here so much better.

VIBRANT: Emphasis on forward-motion, being problem-solvers here to help make things rosier

We're politically independent from Kingston. That means we're here to represent YOUR views.

VIBRANT: This is a crucial point that brings the Union closer to the students, break it out to increase weight

Hop onto a whistle-stop tour of your Union just below.

ORIGINAL

Article: What's on for LGBTQ+ History Month?

February is LGBT+ History Month, a time when we reflect on the struggles and triumphs of the LGBT+ community throughout history. At Kingston University, we believe in embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity. That's why we have organised with the LGBT+ Student Society a series of engaging events and activities to celebrate this important month. Whether you identify as LGBT+ or as an ally, we invite you to join us and celebrate the rich history of the LGBTQ+ community.

Join us in unleashing your creativity and making colourful banners that will be displayed across the campus, spreading the powerful message of love, acceptance, and equality! Start your day with a warm cup of coffee and engaging conversations, as we invite you to join us and meet members of the Kingston LGBTQ+ Forum. This is a great opportunity to build connections within our vibrant community and foster meaningful relationships. Let's come together for an evening of entertainment and inspiration as we watch the critically acclaimed film, Rocketman.

UPDATED

Article: What's on for LGBTQ+ History Month?

TRUSTWORTHY: The previous title wasn't inclusive; it implied that it's common to doubt whether LGBTQ+ History Month is even needed anymore. We can make it stronger by being more straightforward, which is both clearer and better represents our values

Every February, we celebrate the rich history of the LGBTQ+ community. It's a profound recognition of why diversity is a fundamental strength in our society–and in Kingston's own student body.

TRUSTWORTHY: Tie everything back in with the student body

Throughout this month, the Union and the LGBTQ+ Student Society will host a series of events for LGBTQ+ folks and allies:

TRUSTWORTHY: Clear active-voice statements make it obvious who is doing what ("promise" + follow-through)

· Make creative banners together to splash the Kingston campus with color–and spread the powerful message of love, acceptance and equality

SUPPORTIVE: A list makes it exceptionally clear how students can engage with what's happening. Ideally, each of these bulletpoints should link to more information + how to get involved

· Join members of the Kingston LGBTQ+ Forum for morning coffee and conversation to build stronger connections within our vibrant community

VIBRANT: Emphasis on how the event will drive connection between students

· Grab some popcorn and come watch the critically acclaimed film, Rocketman

Annotated sample texts

Examples of how various kinds of texts can be transformed using the Union's ToV pillars

ORIGINAL

Kingstonstudents IG: Freshers post

FRESHERS 2023 LINE UP IS HERE
Finally the wait is over and the ultimate fun has started!

18,000 students
8 unmissable, unique events
1 official Kingston Freshers Week

Grab your wristbands now to experience them all and save over £40.

Which event are you most looking forward to?

UPDATED

Kingstonstudents IG: Freshers post

FRESHERS 2023 LINEUP IS HERE

· 18,000 students

· 8 unmissable events

· 1 official Kingston Freshers Week

Visit the link in our bio to grab your wristband now (and save over £40!)

SUPPORTIVE: Gives instructions on an action to take in response to the information

Wristbands give you entry to every single event, PLUS free entry to @ pryzmkingston before 11pm each night

VIBRANT/TRUSTWORTHY: Grabbed this from another Freshers post. It felt important to explain what wristbands do, plus add bonus information that hypes an aspect of the event that students will certainly be excited about (entry to a club)

What are you looking forward to the most this Freshers Week?

ORIGINAL

Newsletter: Cost of living survey

Help us understand how the rising cost of living has impacted your life and experience at uni. Complete our short survey and you could win a £50 or £25 cash prize!

All submissions are anonymous, and data will only be used to support the project.

UPDATED

Newsletter: Cost of living survey

Cost of living is rising for everyone. We want to know how it's impacted YOUR life and experience at uni.

VIBRANT: Context-setting that empathizes with the student experience, including hardships

Take the Cost of Living survey [5 minutes]

SUPPORTIVE: Large CTA that sets clear expectations of time commitment

Two random participants will win a £50 or £25 cash prize!

VIBRANT: Thoughtfully deployed exclamation points can add enthusiasm at points where students are likely to feel it too.

· All submissions are anonymous

· Data will only be used to support the project

TRUSTWORTHY: Critical information separated out for very easy scanning

This is part of the [Cost of Living Project], which KSU is running throughout 2024. Our goal is to provide financial support in ways that matter most to our entire student body.

TRUSTWORTHY: For the sake of the example, I made up this project -- it adds a LOT to the original message

Annotated sample texts

Examples of how various kinds of texts can be transformed using the Union's ToV pillars

ORIGINAL

Website: Sports intro

University sport clubs are great way to continue playing a sport alongside other student across the university (including, year, course and halls) if you have moved away from home. here at the Union we offer the biggest programme of sport at the university and would love to have you as part of Team Kingston!

We'd like to think there is something for everyone. Being part of sports clubs is a great way to try something new, get active, make friends and broaden your horizons. It's a worthwhile thing to do and many students say that their best friends are the ones they made in their club. We have over 30 Sports Clubs for you to get involved with and really make the most of being a student at Kingston University

UPDATED

Website: Sports intro

The Union offers the biggest programme of sport at Kingston, because we believe:

- Sport connects us: With ourselves, with other students across the uni, with tradition and with new friends
- Sport offers something for everyone: We're proud to offer more than 30 Sports Clubs, all of which are open to anyone at any level of experience
- Sport makes a place feel more like home: Kingston students come from all walks of life and over the globe; sport is a place that we can all belong

Ready to get involved in sport at Kingston? Chat with one of our friendly reps to get your questions answered today.

VIBRANT: Context-setting that empathizes with the student experience, including hardships

VIBRANT, SUPPORTIVE: Clear CTA to give students an option of what to do next if none of the menu options fit their needs. Tone indicates an optimism + fast pace of communication to mirror the energy that students certainly feel about sport.

ORIGINAL

Headers (print + digital)

Print booklet:
welcome to the kingston family
the unmissable guide to help you get the most out of uni life

Website banner:
get ready to vote...
[meet your candidates]

Website banner:
UKS end of the year student survey is now live
[fill before 14th May 23:59pm]

On-campus poster:
Build your campus' future
NOMINATION DEADLINE 12PM 10/03/2023
The place you study is changing.
You can be part of that conversation, and we can help you do it.

On-campus poster:
November is Islamophobia awareness month!
Please join us in promoting awareness.

UPDATED

Headers (print + digital)

Print booklet:
Start here
The go-to Kingston guide for thriving at uni

Website banner:
YOUR VOICE. YOUR CHOICE.
[Get to know the candidates]

Website banner:
Shape the Union's future!
[Survey closes 14th May 23:59pm]

On-campus poster:
Transform your university
NOMINATIONS CLOSE 12PM 10/03/2023
Redefine the Kingston experience,
For your fellow students and for yourself.
Together, we can drive change that matters.

On-campus poster:
Educate. Engage. Empower.
Raise awareness against Islamophobia

SUPPORTIVE: Very clear what the purpose of this booklet is + how to use it

VIBRANT: Exciting, forward-looking language paints a bright future

TRUSTWORTHY: Making it very clear what responsibility the students have when it comes time to vote.

VIBRANT: Friendly, chatty language

SUPPORTIVE: Explain why this matters in the big picture

TRUSTWORTHY: Friendlier language that explains "just the facts" rather than implying an obligation on the part of the student body

VIBRANT: Inspiring language that pushes the conversation forward

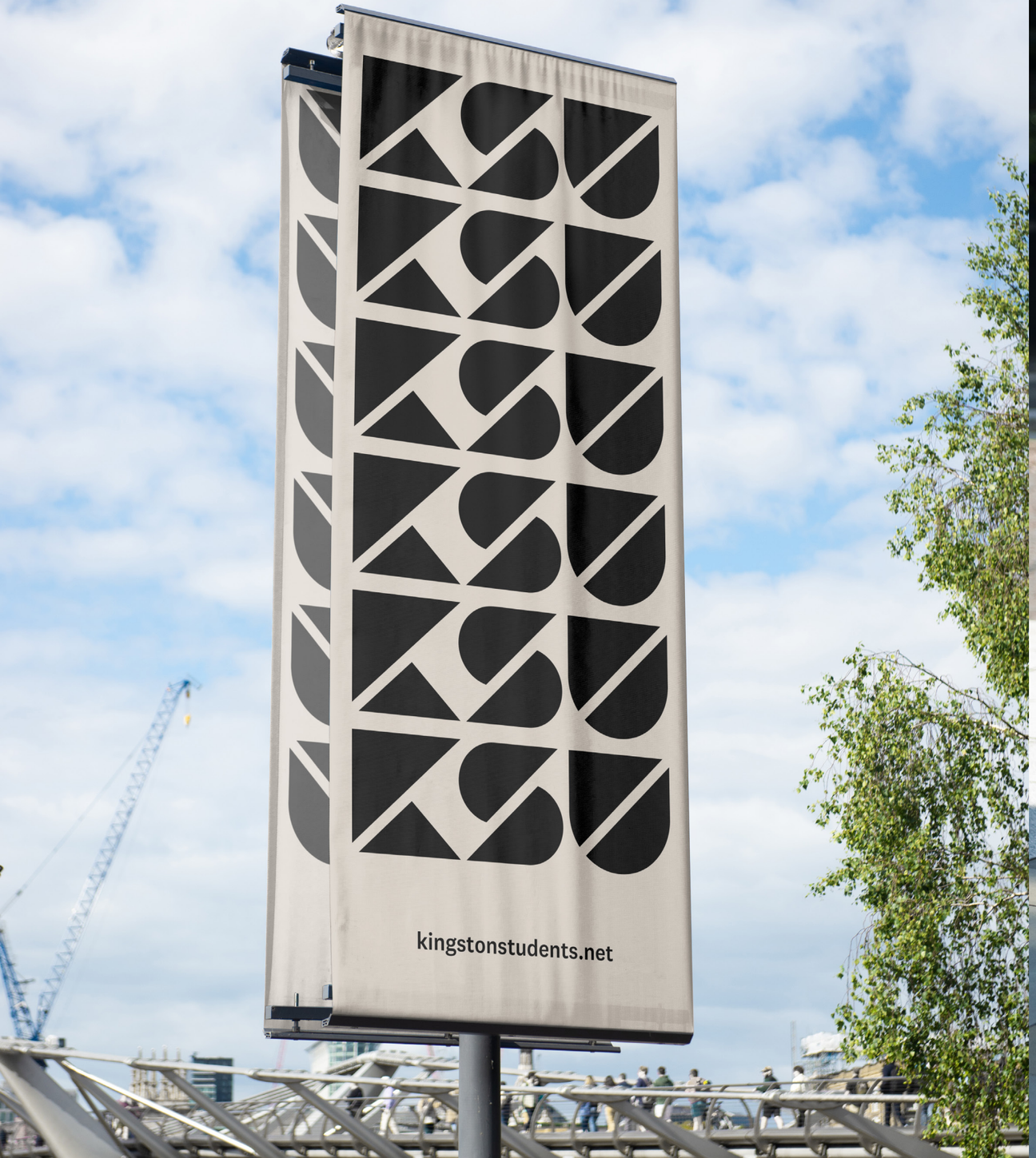
SUPPORTIVE: Points towards the specific benefits for fellow students AND for the candidate's own experience

VIBRANT: Inspiring, positive language that serves as a call to action. The visuals should already do a lot of heavy lifting in explaining the context (Islamophobia Awareness Month), the headline should raise energy further instead of just giving facts

10
Applications

kingstonstudents.net

Kingston
Students'
Union


kingstonstudents.net

September 18–24
Kingston Freshers Fair 2024
Kingston Students' Union
kingstonstudents.net

Nomination deadline
Get employed before your mates do!
When you're finding jobs, we'll give you the stand out skills that employers want.
Kingston Students' Union
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TIME TO VOTE
Kingston Students' Union
Our elections are now open, it's time to meet your candidates!
kingstonstudents.net
November 2024
Islamophobia Awareness Month
Kingston Students' Union
This November is Islamophobia Awareness Month. Please join us in promoting awareness. #MuslimStories
kingstonstudents.net
STAND NOW

Contact

If you have any questions about
our brand, please get in touch with:

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Interim Deputy CEO (Commerical)
G.Richards@kingston.ac.uk