

Introduction

The core purpose of The Dartmouth is to inform our community — those in Hanover and around the girdled earth — through high-quality and responsible content. Our conduct, both inside and outside Robinson Hall, is rooted in honesty and respect. The relationships we have with sources and readers are based in trust, trust that we will work every day to earn through fair reporting and the way in which we present information. Our goal is to seek and report the truth, and we hold ourselves to high ethical standards in product and process. This document's purpose is not to be the be-all-end-all for all questions; instead, we aim to start a discussion on ethics that we hope continues throughout our time in Robinson Hall.

We are indebted to former editors and The Dartmouth's Board of Proprietors for their guidance as we wrote the code. Guides from National Public Radio, New York University, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Boston Globe, The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the Daily Princetonian informed our research and writing.

Responsibility, applicability, questions

A lack of familiarity with these standards does not excuse violations. All members of The Dartmouth's editorial staff must read and understand all parts of this document. The ethics code applies to all members of the editorial staff, unless individual editorial sections are otherwise specified.

We expect and encourage questions on the guidelines outlined here. If you are unsure about a specific guideline or if you have questions on a specific situation, approach your section editor. Questions that require more conversation and input will be passed along to your executive editor or to the editor-in-chief. Of course, if you feel uncomfortable speaking to your section editor, feel free to approach your executive editor directly. Asking questions is crucial — we're looking forward to the discussions that we hope this code sparks.

Editorial/Business

The Dartmouth's editorial staff and its business staff are separate. We value our editorial independence, this separation allows journalists to report without the bias of considering fiscal implications.

The layout staff, which designs and places advertisements in the print paper, and the video staff, members of which are tasked with producing video advertisements, walk an especially fine line. The names of those who template advertisements and lay out the news section will be printed on our masthead each day. Video advertisements must be produced by a separate team and must be clearly marked as advertisements.

Advertisers will not receive favored treatment in coverage.

Cross-section rules

Opinion — our staff and our content — is separate from all other sections at The Dartmouth.

We will never print opinion content on the same page as content from another section, and we will mark our content online to indicate the section to which it belongs.

Opinion writers cannot later write for any other section, and they must not attempt to influence coverage in other sections.

Editors for the news section and the opinion section report independently to the editor-in-chief, and these sections must fall under the purview of separate executive editors.

Working across sections, with these exceptions, is generally encouraged.

Pre-Publication distribution

The Dartmouth's reporters cannot circulate internal documents to those who would not otherwise have access to them, such as other students, professors, administrators, organizations or staff members in other sections. This includes stories or parts of stories before they are published. By showing documents to inherently invested parties — especially sources — we are putting our work through a biased editorial filter. We are an independent news organization, and this process would compromise our editorial integrity.

Reporters must not share off-the-record information with those outside of their section editor, executive editor or the editor-in-chief. Off-the-record means off-the-record — the information is not for publication or other distribution.

As a courtesy, reporters can read back quotations to sources with a sense of the context of the quote. This is for accuracy purposes, not for the source's approval, and if a reporter's notes or recording indicates that a source's quotation is accurate, we will print the quotation. Fact checking with sources is of course allowed and encouraged.

When someone is criticized in an article, reporters have an obligation to hear the criticized person's side of the story. Explain the criticism in detail and allow him or her to respond.

Outside work

In outside editorial work, do not compete with The Dartmouth. Always ask how this work impacts your work for the paper. In external work, you should not express views that go beyond the news and analysis that could appear properly under your byline for The D. The Dartmouth generally discourages working for other similar news and media organizations on campus. Your freelance work cannot hinder The Dartmouth's integrity or lower our competitive position. Frequency matters — your work for another publication should not impede your ability to work for The Dartmouth.

Do not perform public relations work, paid or unpaid, for organizations that you may feasibly cover. For example, members of the news staff should not work as tour guides or for the office of undergraduate admissions, and arts writers should not work for the Hopkins Center.

External relations

Do not speak to the media on behalf of The Dartmouth or about your work for The Dartmouth — on or off the record — without the authorization of the editor-in-chief, who serves as the official public relations spokesperson for the paper. Talk to your section editors before you respond to critical emails from readers; often, an editor will respond instead.

You can describe normal operating procedures of The D to those not on staff.

Note that those connected to Dartmouth will link you with the paper even outside of Robinson Hall. Your actions in public must reflect this association.

Conflict of interest

Reporters should disclose all possible conflicts of interest before they accept a story — be in the habit of talking to your editor about any of your activities that could convey bias. Besides opinion writers, if you are involved in a group or activity or you are close friends with someone in that group or activity, you may not cover that story. This applies as well to former memberships. Opinion writers must disclose this affiliation in their column.

Reporters cannot interview friends, roommates or current professors. We worry that reporters could inadvertently change the types of questions they ask or the information they include based on their relationship with the source, which is unfair to our readers, who deserve our best work across the board. Certainly cultivate relationships with your sources, but do not let these relationships sway your coverage or create favoritism. Instead, these relationships should help you better understand the topics you cover.

News section staff members and directorate members cannot run for Student Assembly positions, nor can they publicly support candidates. Our definition of public support includes online social media activity, wearing buttons, distributing fliers or participating in a public rally. All other staff members must tell their editors about this support and cannot participate in related coverage.

Recognize that you are seen as a representative of The Dartmouth, and do nothing to raise questions about your professional neutrality.

Identification as reporters

All staff members must be honest about their affiliation with The Dartmouth and the subject of their work.

When contacting potential sources, either via email, over the phone or on the street, news reporters must identify themselves as such immediately. If a reporter is accessing information that is publically available, however, such disclosure is not necessary. As a courtesy, when reporting on public campus events, reporters will make an effort to introduce themselves to event organizers.

Obey New Hampshire law in your interview conduct — the law requires consent of all parties and forbids unauthorized use of cameras in private places. Never use a hidden camera or recorder.

Conduct on social media

Use social media as part of your newsgathering and reporting process, but be cognizant of how you act online. Before you post, ask yourself how you would feel if our organization had to defend your comments on social media. If it wouldn't appear under your byline, don't say it online. Your words and name will be associated with The Dartmouth even on a different platform.

Sources and interviews

An overarching principle of source-reporter relations is respect. In each of your interviews, you represent The Dartmouth, so be civil and polite, and do not mirror others' tone if they are rude. Never threaten a source who does not cooperate. **Reporters should keep promises to their sources.** This integrity is one of the most important values that we possess as journalists.

Reporters must speak with all sources in person or on the phone. Candid conversations with sources offer reporters an understanding of a topic that question-and-answer

exchanges over email simply cannot convey. In the rare circumstance that an email interview is necessary, reporters must get their section editors' approval. The story must disclose that the interview was conducted over email.

When coordinating interviews with sources, reporters should explain the focus of their article and clearly indicate their deadline. Reporters will not enter into a story with a certain predetermined angle nor promise sources a particular slant.

If an individual is mentioned by name in an article, all reasonable effort must be made to contact that person, and such efforts must be disclosed in the story. If a person is criticized, reporters must explain the accusation and let him or her respond in detail. No one should feel surprised by the way he or she is represented in The Dartmouth.

For the sake of transparency, unsuccessful efforts to contact sources central to a story will be noted at the end of the article. If reporters contact sources who decline to comment, this fact will be noted. If sources do not respond, provided they are given adequate time to do so, this will be noted as well. If a story is late breaking news, this timeframe is shortened and the limited timespan available will be noted as well. Start stories early to work as ethically as possible.

Our sources must stand by their words, and it is only in very rare cases that we will allow anonymity. If we do give sources anonymity, we explain the reason in our stories. Only the editor-in-chief and executive editors can approve anonymity, and the identity of sources must be disclosed to the editor-in-chief. Question a source's motives before publishing anonymous information, and question exactly how they know what they know to ensure credibility.

We encourage journalists to be cognizant of the fact that many of our sources are students. Recognize that many students you interview are not as media savvy as the adults and experts that you will interview — make sure sources know when interviews begin and end, and if there is a question of whether something is on or off the record, ask it. And recognize that as a journalist, you may cause discomfort for asking difficult questions, so approach each topic with the sensitivity that it deserves. Private citizens inherently have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others in the public spotlight, but an overriding public need to know can justify intruding into others' lives. To that end, because of the small nature of our community, we do not report on a student's death unless it is confirmed by authorities and we are sure a family knows.

The Dartmouth does not identify criminal suspects before formal filing of charge or survivors of sex crimes. We do not publish pictures of people who we would not identify by name in print.

Reporters and editors involved with a story know the source of every piece of information that The Dartmouth distributes in that story. Always ask sources how they know their information. We always need more than one source, unless information comes from someone who provides information so detailed that we cannot question its accuracy.

Diversity of sources:

Avoid interviewing members of our staff. If interviewing current or former staff members is unavoidable — say, he or she is central to a story — include the source and indicate his or her relationship to the paper within the story.

Be cognizant of having diversity in your sources — in background and viewpoint. Ask what themes you may be overlooking and which you may be focusing too closely on. Do not stereotype by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status. Also seek a diversity in the types of sources you interview — striking a balance between official sources, such as College officials, and unofficial sources,

the people with stories, makes a good piece great.

“Person on the street” interviews are to better understand the diversity of opinions on this campus, not to add color to a story. Be able to quantify the responses you collected, and only use quotes from individuals once you’ve culled enough to understand the broad range of views on this campus. It is unethical to represent an unqualified individual’s opinion as representative of the norm when you have not done the background research to stand behind this assertion.

Quotations:

Every word between quotation marks must have been said by a source. Paraphrase quotations if the grammar or taste of a quote may be in question. Include the setting and tone of the quotation — affect can give as much insight as the words themselves. Record your interviews and keep your notes. For clarity, reporters can remove verbal pauses and false starts from a quotation, unless this changes a source’s meaning.

Never include obscenities, racial epithets or other offensive slurs in the copy that you write. If these appear in a quotation, only include that quotation if there is a compelling reason. In most cases, give your reader a sense of what was said without saying it explicitly.

On the record and off the record:

All interviews are assumed on the record unless a source asks otherwise. As you report background and off-the-record information, make every reasonable effort to get that information on the record, as we must be totally transparent with our readers.

An off-the-record interview is an agreement between reporter and source, and all information within that interview must be confidential. When sources go off the record, that means the information is not for publication and is solely used to give reporters background insight into a topic that they report.

On background is also an agreement between reporter and source. The source’s name will not be reported, and the reporter and source will come to a mutual agreement about how to identify the person. Be as specific as possible to tell readers why they should trust this information. The content of this interview can be published.

On the record interviews comprise the vast majority of the work we do.

Before any interview where these definitions could be in question, define them. People understand these terms differently, and make sure all parties are on the same page.

Using information from other news sources

Avoid using information reported solely by another news source, but when this is unavoidable, give credit to the news organization who reported the information. We will still fact check this information based on other outlets’ reporting and our own knowledge.

Lean toward overattributing your information to be absolutely clear about where it is reported from. Any instance of plagiarism constitutes a major ethical violation and will be investigated by a senior editor. Fabricating sources and information is grounds for immediate dismissal.

The ability to attribute to other news sources is not grounds for publishing rumors.

Corrections

If we get a fact wrong, we correct it promptly. Staff members do not decide alone that something does or does not need to be corrected. If contacted about an error, relay that message to the editor-in-chief, who holds responsibility for The Dartmouth’s published content. The editor-in-chief will then run a correction online and in print, should he or she finds the correction

warranted. This correction must include the date it was appended.

We encourage readers to tell us their objections to our content. Journalists who find errors in their own work and bring those errors forward deserve our gratitude — we do not wait for readers or sources to find mistakes to issue corrections.

Photo and video:

Our photo and multimedia content is held to the same standards as our written content. Captions and labels must accurately convey what the picture's content. If current sports photos are not available and a photo from a previous season is used, this fact will be indicated in our caption and we will ensure that the athletes pictured are still on the team.

Images should be used to illustrate a story, not to alter a perception of a topic that the facts do not support. Do not reenact a scene or a photo for the camera.

Layout and graphics

Take care that headlines do not skew a story's meaning or oversimplify its content. Identify the source of information in every graphic and double-check the information's accuracy. Note that numbers and percentage points tell different stories, and make sure your choice makes sense in the context of the information.

Layout staff members both place news articles and advertisements across sections. The design editor should take care to distribute advertisement templating assignments to staff members who may possibly cover or place stories regarding the companies who advertise with The Dartmouth.

Reprints

If you are contacted about a reprint, forward that message to The Dartmouth's publisher.

Delaying publication

The Dartmouth will only delay publication of stories with legitimate journalistic reason. If the embargo on a story is broken elsewhere, we will report it.

Sources paying

People we cover will give no compensation to The Dartmouth — this includes meals and gifts. Pay your own way when meeting a source for a meal, unless it is unavoidable (say, you meet a source at his or her house).



The Dartmouth

America's Oldest College Newspaper. Founded 1799.

I have read and pledge to abide by The Dartmouth's ethics code. I will approach my section editor, executive editor, or the paper's editor-in-chief with questions or concerns.

Signature

Date

(Printed Name)