UW Imprint Volunteer Guide

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Introduction

So…you want to volunteer with *Imprint*. That's great! Thank you so much for wanting to get involved with your campus newspaper to help inform the University of Waterloo student body. In order to help you get better acquainted with *Imprint*'s production process and what it means to be a volunteer contributor, we've compiled a guide that you can refer to throughout your time as a volunteer.

For guides to volunteer for a specific section, graphics or as a copy-editor, click here or scroll down.

What does it mean to be a volunteer contributor?

As a volunteer, you can write for any section (News, Arts & Life, Sports & Health, Science & Tech, Opinions), submit comics or games such as crosswords or Sudoku for our Distractions section, copy-edit stories, and/or create graphics or take photos to add visual elements to our articles. You are also able to call yourself a volunteer, a contributor or a volunteer contributor on your résumé, LinkedIn or social media bios. Most importantly, as a volunteer, you are able to control your relationship with *Imprint* — you can write/design as frequently as you want and take breaks when you need to.

Being assigned stories

Not sure what you want to write about? Not a problem! Once you sign up through the volunteer intake form and indicate which section you're interested in volunteering for, the section editors will reach out to you each week and let you know which stories are available for you to take on from that section. If you're not interested in volunteering, say so! We can take you off our mailing list. Or, if you're unable to volunteer that particular week but still want to contribute otherwise, just kindly let us know so we can reach out to someone else!

Coming up with your own ideas

➔ What interests you? What interests your friends and/or classmates?
➔ Turn on Google alerts for everything you wanna cover + UWaterloo-related
➔ Keep an Eye on Waterloo News/UW's bulletin/Faculty news emails
➔ The odd PR email might have a student angle
➔ Using Twitter and Tweetdeck: make columns on Tweetdeck. You could also make Twitter Lists that you can keep track of easily on the app; Also follow the many UW Twitter accounts
➔ Join bigger but also the niche FB groups where people post things! See what people are talking about and lurk! Also look at r/uwaterloo!
➔ Follow up on what the section you're interested in writing for published last term
➔ Ask "what's happening with [xyz]?"

- ➔ Stories about a broken promise or delay or just if there's more that we initially missed
- ➔ Go to events and meetings where there might be a story!
- ➔ Read other student newspapers (!!!!!) and ask "How can this work at UW?"
- ➔ 99% of people are super nice and will become your Twitter friends!

Finding sources

- ➔ **Students:** Share a callout on Reddit (r/uwaterloo), Facebook groups for specific years or programs, reach out to socialmedia@uwimprint.ca to get a post up on Imprint's handles
- ➔ **UW Admin:** Pamela Smyth (psmyth@uwaterloo.ca), Chris Wilson-Smith (chris.ws@uwaterloo.ca)
- ➔ **Professors, staff, faculty:** Direct email (find contact info on UW faculty websites)
- ➔ **WUSA:** Stacey Sage (s3sage@wusa.ca), 226-243-8112
- ➔ **Experts:** Expertise Finder, Informed Opinions
- ➔ **Waterloo Police Communications:** Constable Andre Johnson (andre.johnson@wrps.on.ca; 519-570-9777 ext. 8106) Jen Condick (jen.condick@wrps.on.ca; 519-570-9777 ext. 8118)
- ➔ **Waterloo Fire Services:** (general number: 519-884-2121)

How to interview

- ☐ Send an email or DM introducing yourself, *Imprint*, and the story you hope to include them in
- ☐ Explain that you'll only need about 5-10 minutes* of their time, in-person, over the phone or video call (*can be longer for longer stories; NO TEXT MESSAGE INTERVIEWS)
- ☐ Prepare questions and research in advance
- ☐ RECORD THE INTERVIEW AND TAKE NOTES (if it's over the phone, record on your laptop; if it's on your laptop, record on your phone — note down the timestamps for important points to refer back to later on)
- ☐ Conduct follow-ups if necessary

RE: INTERVIEW REQUEST: *(insert topic/reason for request)* for UW Imprint

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is *(insert your name)* and I am the *(insert your position)* at Imprint, UWaterloo's student newspaper. I am reaching out to see if you'd be interested in speaking to me about *(insert your topic here, and add any additional context or background that you feel is necessary for your source)*.

Please let me know if this would be possible, and we can set up a date and time to chat accordingly. My deadline for this piece is *(insert your deadline here)*.

Thank you and all the best,

(your email signature)

What to ask
- ➜ Again, **conduct some background research** on the topic at hand and/or on the individual you will be interviewing if they are an expert source
- ➜ Ask them to **spell out their name** and for their **job title, year/program** if they are students, as well as their **pronouns**
- ➜ What do you want to know about this person:
  - ◆ Their opinion on an issue?
  - ◆ Talk about their lived experience?
  - ◆ Provide their expertise?
  - ◆ Are you holding them accountable for something they did or promised to do?
  - ◆ Ask open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions:
    - ● Do you like working at Imprint? vs. What is it like working at Imprint?
- ➜ If you need help coming up with questions, ask your section editor for direction
- ➜ "Is there anything you would like to add?" (*Note:* This is one of the most important questions and where you might get the best answers or even ideas for other stories!)

ANONYMITY: should the source request to be anonymous, this MUST be approved by the Executive Editor and/or Managing Editor and a **valid reason** must be provided

How to write a news article
THE LEDE
The newest information that sets the story up for success. Clear and concise. May include a "hook" to pull the reader in. Who, What, Where, When.
Note: If you're covering an event, the lede isn't that the event happened; what was the most interesting thing that came out of the event?

THE NUT GRAF
More details related to the lede, adds context by answering the Why and more of the What.

BODY GRAFS
The third graf is usually a quote; followed by more details pertaining to the story (background, voices).

CONCLUSION
Not your typical essay conclusion; ending the story rather than summing up everything you've talked about. You can end on a strong quote or lead into the next steps the story may have, if any.

News writing tips
- ➜ Use "said" not "says"
- ➜ Introduce speaker in first mention, then use last name in second and third mention
- ➜ Choose a quote that POPS!

➔ Break up quotes so that they're not one thicc graf by paraphrasing and dividing it up
➔ Add context to stories: What is behind this story? Anything your readers need to know?
➔ Hyperlink previous coverage or relevant resources of information
➔ Write as if you are explaining it to your grandparents: simple, precise and clear!

Canadian Press Style

This is the most common style journalists use in print/online media. For a more in-depth breakdown of CP stylings, check out [this document](#).
When you're writing your article, make sure things are up to par with CP:

➔ How we spell colour with OUR and not COLOR, CENTRE not CENTER (unless a place is literally named The Gramme Center), capitalizing certain things like the Ontario Ministry of Labour, etc.
➔ Dates are Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022; March-July are spelt out, Aug.-Feb. are abbreviated (when writing out the full date)
➔ Ontario (ON) is Ont. (places with hockey teams/capital cities do not take the province afterward)
➔ Numbers 1-9 are spelt out (one, two, three); 10+ are digits (unless the number is at the beginning of a graf, then it is spelt out regardless)
➔ NO OXFORD COMMAS. Unless they are warranted in specific circumstances

Note: If you don't have a CP style guide to check, highlight it and leave a comment for someone else who has access to it!

The *Imprint* editing process

☐ **STEP 1:** You submit your article to the section editor as a Google Doc (make sure permissions are set to Anybody with the Link can EDIT). The section editor will edit the article first and communicate with you about any changes that need to be made.
☐ **STEP 2:** The Managing Editor or Executive Editor will review the piece for structure, sources and overall clarity.
☐ **STEP 3:** Once the Managing Editor or Executive Editor reviews the piece, you and the section editor will go in and make the necessary changes.
☐ **STEP 4:** The story goes through a series of copy edits to catch grammatical errors and make sure the piece is up to CP style standards.
☐ **STEP 5:** The section editor will make the necessary copy edit adjustments and keep you, the writer, involved in the process.
☐ **STEP 6:** Finally, the article comes back to the Executive Editor where it is finalized before going online and/or in print.
☐ **STEP 7:** The article is ready to be laid out on the page in InDesign and/or online with a graphic.

Note: Once the article has been reviewed by the Managing Editor or Executive Editor for the first

time, the section editor is in charge of fact-checking points in the article with the sources you used. In this case, it is a good idea for the volunteer to keep track of the contact information of the sources they spoke to in order to ensure the story is accurate.

Tips for working with edits
➔ If your page is marked up, don't be scared! It can look intimidating but lots of edits just mean your piece will be really strong
➔ Be prepared to go through several rounds of edits. Your section editor should set a timeline that works for both of you in terms of turning the piece around in time for publication
➔ If you disagree with an edit, talk to your editor about it, don't automatically reject it. We do edits in suggest mode to make sure you can see what's happening with your work but you should be taking suggestions from your editor seriously
➔ Keep in mind that having someone edit your work is a good thing and we're all here to help you publish the strongest piece possible!

General expectations
☐ Communicating with the section editors/Managing Editor/Creative Director regarding your interest in volunteering as well as updates on your article (please don't ghost us <3)
☐ An eagerness and willingness to learn, develop your skills as a writer/copy-editor/designer, and understand it's OK to make mistakes (and learn from them, too!)
☐ Ask questions if you aren't sure about something or are interested in trying something new
☐ Setting boundaries and making time for yourself, school, work, extracurricular activities, etc. while also contributing to *Imprint* when you want to!

Section-specific guidelines
Curated by the fall 2021 section editors

News
When volunteering as a news reporter, you'll often get the chance to work on breaking news stories and articles about UW campus life. After getting the pitch, you have one week to research the story, conduct interviews to get relevant voices, and put your piece together. If you prefer, you can also work on evergreen stories that cover less time-sensitive topics. Focus on clearly conveying the importance of the news, with a particular emphasis on how it impacts UW students. Try to incorporate student voices as much as possible in articles 400-600 words in length (can be longer depending on the topic).

Science & Tech
Writing for Science and Tech, you can expect to cover topics from the latest medical technology advancement on campus, to startups that are gaining traction by recent graduates, to the latest

research breakthroughs and publications on climate change, vision science, and more by professors.

Articles are expected to be around 600 words in length, have a strong tie to the University of Waterloo, and ideally have quotes from an interview from a current student, alumni, professor or associated researcher included. Articles are grounded in research and go further to show how said research is important and necessary.

Science and Tech stories always start with a captivating lead — a sentence or two that summarizes the most important takeaway from the article and is written in a way that hooks the reader. Articles are written in an inverted pyramid format similar to news. The most important and broad information appears first, followed by the details and specific information as you continue reading toward the end.

Be sure to consider your audience and overall topic when creating your lead and writing your story. Remember, if you're passionate, others will be drawn into your writing and the research or innovation you're reporting on.

Sports & Health

Volunteering as a Sports & Health reporter allows you to explore a variety of topics — from attending and covering games and events, to writing in-depth athlete profiles, to sharing healthy recipes, to breaking down studies produced by UW professors and researchers. Whatever topic you're interested in, expect to write a 400-600-word article (can be longer for athlete profiles; shorter for game recaps and recipes) and include interview sources as well as research if it's applicable to help strengthen your article. A UW angle is important when pitching your own sports & health stories — even if the study or sporting event isn't UW-related, have UW professors contribute as expert voices or include student reactions.

Arts & Life

As a volunteer for the Arts and Life section, you will have the opportunity to profile artists, cover events, review artwork etc. Writing for Arts will allow you to attend exhibitions, shows, films and interact with many different artistic clubs and people across the Waterloo community. As an arts & life writer, you get to share with the UW community, the different facets of cultural events and activities taking place at the University and in the KW region.

Opinion

Op-ed or Opinions piece: An op-ed is an opinionated article submitted by readers of the paper, not regular contributors or editors. It allows the community to put forward their viewpoints on important or timely issues. These should be limited to 600 words. The writer should be identified by name and affiliation to the university (alumni, student with year and program, staff, faculty, or community member). Preference for publications is given to current students and then to those with

affiliation to the university.

Letter to the editor: A letter to the editor is a short response to an article previously printed in the paper. These are submitted by general community members. They are short and should aim to be under 300 words. The writer should be identified by name and affiliation to the university (alumni, student with program, staff, faculty, or community member). Preference for publications is given to current students and then to those with affiliation to the university.

Column: A column is an opinion piece written by a regular contributor or editor of the publication; they can be recurring with a theme or one-offs. These should aim to be 600 words and the writer should be identified with the title they hold at Imprint.

Editorial: An editorial is written as a collective from the Publication's editorial team. These are generally done on important community topics. The best examples of these are endorsements of candidates during an election. While *Imprint* does not do political endorsements, a similar example of an editorial could be on the importance of voting. The writing of the editorial needs to be approved by the editorial board. An editorial should aim to be 600-800 words. The author in this case should be noted as the Editorial Board.

Distractions

Distractions make up the last page of each *Imprint* issue. This is where you can submit a crossword, Sudoku puzzle or comic to be featured in the paper. Crosswords can be themed or created at random, as long as the hints are easy to understand and grammatically error-free. Comics can also be timely and/or related to the news, or just a general funny (but appropriate) visual to lighten up the weekly paper. If you're interested in how to create a crossword, Sudoku puzzle or comic, reach out to our [layout team](#).

Graphics and photo guidelines

Graphics

➔ Sign up to create graphics for stories on the [Current Edition](#) sheet for the upcoming week (make sure to also put your name down for the same story on the [Story List](#) — this is also where you can see some stories planned ahead of time)
➔ You can use any digital drawing or design software (ex: Illustrator, Photoshop, Procreate, Medibang, Krita, etc.)
➔ Please create original work (combining free graphics you find online is not ideal)
➔ Make sure there is enough contrast in the colours you're using (since most graphics are printed in black & white). Test your graphic by putting a black & white filter on it, then edit the colours if needed

- ➔ If you'd like feedback on your work or help, feel free to message the Graphics Editor or Creative Director!
- ➔ Please upload your graphic by Fridays at 9 p.m. (or message the Creative Director ASAP if you need an extension)

Photos

- ➔ Sign up to take photos for stories on the Current Edition sheet for the upcoming week (make sure to also put your name down for the same story on the Story List — this is also where you can see some stories planned ahead of time).
- ➔ Sometimes we need last-minute photos or a photographer to cover an upcoming event, so please respond ASAP with your availability!
- ➔ Please upload your photos by Fridays at 9 p.m. (or message the Creative Director ASAP if you need an extension)

Tip: If you do not have your own camera and would like to use a DSLR, contact the Creative Director to arrange a time for you to go to the office to borrow one. If you can get high-quality photos on your phone, that works too.

Tip: Try to get photos of people. These are great for the cover page.

Tip: Make edits (ex: remove litter) or lighting adjustments in Photoshop, Lightroom, or a photo editing app.

Copy-editing

To access *Imprint*'s copy-editing and style guide, click here.