

POLICY 1.12 – Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity

Policy Category:	General
Subject:	Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity
Subsections:	Purpose, Definitions, Policy
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors
Responsible Officer:	Vice-President (Western Advancement) and Chief Communications Officer
Responsible Office:	Western Advancement and Western Communications
Related Procedures:	Procedure for MAPP 1.12 - Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity
Related University Policies:	1.1 Use of University Facilities 1.15 Corporate Use of University Name or Trademarks 1.16 Policy on Smoking, Vaping and Tobacco Use 1.33 Campus Alcohol Policy 1.44 Namings 2.1 Gift Acceptance 2.2 Fundraising
Effective Date:	February 5, 2026
Supersedes:	June 24, 2008; September 25, 2003

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to guide the University on business relationships between the University and an Entity wishing to contribute, financially or in-kind, to the University in return for specified Acknowledgement or other promotional considerations.

The University recognizes that many of its activities provide potential resources or other non-financial benefits through legitimate opportunities for Advertising, Sponsorship and other Promotional Activity. This revenue and in-kind support can be beneficial to the University, its programs, and its community. It is also necessary to recognize that the University is a public institution, and that its reputation and image must be protected.

This Policy shall apply to Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity:

- a) on University property, whether owned or leased, in or outside physical structures;
- b) in University digital property;
- c) at University events or other activities, whether on or off University property;
- d) of University programs or groups, including, but not limited to, student groups, sporting events, conferences, meetings, athletic teams, and employee groups.

This Policy shall not apply to the following circumstances:

- a) Funding obtained from a government through formal grant programs;
- b) Gifts or Grants;
- c) Research contract and partnerships;
- d) Events and activities requested by third parties and initiated, organized, or led by the Division of Housing & Ancillary Services;
- e) Activities approved by the University Students' Council (USC) in its digital property and/or occurring within its leased space inside the University Community Centre, as outlined in the Western/USC Occupancy Agreement; and
- f) Advertising, sponsorship or promotional activity related to alcohol.

II. DEFINITIONS

Acknowledgement: Recognition of sponsorship support. A typical acknowledgement of sponsorship is the placement of the Entity's trademark, and/or certain information about an Entity, in the promotional material for a University event or activity. This might include, but is not limited to, signage, websites, or marketing and promotional material for an event. An Acknowledgement on a University website may contain a link to the Entity's website or other digital property.

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- Advertising:** The purchasing or leasing of space in University materials (printed or electronic) or signage in order to promote such Entity's goods or services. It is most often associated with a corporation or its products.
- Affinity Partnership:** A corporation with which the University has a contractual relationship to offer benefits to University alumni who use their products.
- Business Receipt:** [As defined in MAPP 2.1 - Gift Acceptance](#)
- Endorsement:** Any statements or depictions which can reasonably be construed to contain or imply a preference by the University, or by any of its faculties, departments, units, or employees who are speaking or acting as representatives of the University.
- Entity:** An individual, corporation, non-governmental organization, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other legal entity.
- Policy:** This Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity Policy may be amended from time to time.
- Procedures:** The procedures to this Policy as may be amended from time to time.
- Promotional Activity:** Any activity conducted by an Entity on University property, or associated with a University program or activity off University property, that is intended to increase awareness, visibility, or engagement with an Entity's brand, products, or services, excluding Fundraising activities. Examples may include, but are not limited to, product sampling, branded giveaways, account/service sign-ups, interactive displays, tabling, demonstrations, or other experiential marketing efforts.
- Sponsor:** An Entity who provides funds and/or an in-kind contribution of goods and/or services in support of a University program or activity and, in exchange, receives an Acknowledgement by the University.
- Sponsorship:** A provision of funds and/or an in-kind contribution of goods and/or services by a Sponsor in support of a University program or activity, where in return, the University provides an Acknowledgement to the Sponsor. Sponsorships are not Gifts or Grants as defined by [MAPP 2.1 - Gift Acceptance](#).

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Tax Receipt:	As defined in MAPP 2.1 - Gift Acceptance .
Third Party:	Any individual not employed by the University, but excluding agents, contractors and subcontractors hired by the University to perform a service.
University:	The University of Western Ontario operating as Western University.

III. POLICY

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1. All Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity shall be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

1.1.1. Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity must not jeopardize the University's registered charitable status.

1.1.2. The University values and will protect its integrity, autonomy, and academic freedom. It will not approve Advertising, Sponsorship or Promotional Activity that would compromise these fundamental values.

1.1.3. The University will not approve Advertising, Sponsorship or Promotional Activity that will compromise its reputation, its commitment to the academic mission, or its essential values, as articulated in its strategic documents. These include values respecting Indigeneity, equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism.

1.1.4. The University reserves the right to refuse Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity that requires conditions or restrictions that the University deems unacceptable.

1.1.5. The University solicits and accepts Advertising and Sponsorship revenue or in-kind support for priorities that are approved in accordance with established procedures for University planning and University initiatives.

1.1.6. Advertising and Sponsorship must comply with procurement processes applicable to the University.

1.1.7. Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity shall generally be non-exclusive; however, limited forms of exclusivity may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

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- 1.1.8. Acknowledgements, Advertising and Promotional Activity will not occur in classrooms, libraries, or laboratories, or any other space specifically devoted to academic purposes.
- 1.1.9. Acknowledgements, Advertising and Promotional Activity must not materially impede ordinary pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow and should comply with Universal Access principles.
- 1.1.10. Acknowledgements, Advertising and Promotional Activity will not alter or detract from the normal architectural appearance, visual beauty, or environment of University property.
- 1.1.11. The request for Advertising, Sponsorship or Promotional Activity is made with the full knowledge and support of the Dean and/or Department Chair, Vice-Provost (Students), Associate Vice-President, or Director of the University unit that will benefit from the proceeds of the revenue, if applicable.
- 1.1.12. Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity will comply with the University's Manual of Policy & Procedures and applicable laws.
- 1.1.13. Advertising, Sponsorship or a Promotional Activity must not expose the University to unacceptable risk or liability. This means that:
- Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity should not be difficult or costly to administer;
 - Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity should not be funded by illegal or unethical activities.
- 1.1.14. It may be advisable to decline Advertising and Sponsorship revenue or in-kind support from a particular Entity. The following are specifically prohibited:
- anything promoting illegal activity;
 - anything that is inconsistent with University policies including but not limited to those dealing with discrimination and harassment, or contrary to provincial human rights legislation;
 - all political or advocacy advertisements, except those whose sole purpose is to promote education;
 - any Acknowledgement or Advertising promoting smoking (includes cannabis), vaping, and tobacco products as defined in [MAPP - 1.16 Policy on Smoking, Vaping & Tobacco Use](#);

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- any Acknowledgement or Advertising promoting the sale of sexual services;
- any Acknowledgement or Advertising promoting gambling.

1.1.15. Acknowledgement or Advertising of an Entity is not an endorsement of that Entity, or the goods it produces, or services it provides.

1.2. Approval of any Advertising, Sponsorship or Promotional Activity may be reviewed, changed, or revoked by the University at any time to ensure adherence to these principles.

2. APPROVAL AND DOCUMENTATION

The Divisions of Western Advancement and Western Communications, under the direction of the Vice-President (Western Advancement) and Chief Communications Officer, have the authority and responsibility to develop operational guidelines and Procedures to support the approval and acceptance process for Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity in compliance with this Policy.

2.1. The authority to approve Promotional Activity and/or accept Advertising or Sponsorship rests with the Board or its delegate(s).

2.1.1. The Chief Communications Officer, or their designate, is authorized to approve or revoke Advertising in University publications (including electronic publications or digital property), in other University media, and in/on signage, property, material, or facilities on or off University property, where funds are being raised to benefit the University.

2.1.2. The Vice-President (Western Advancement), or their designate, is authorized to approve or revoke Sponsorship in University publications (including electronic publications or digital property), in other University media, and in/on signage, property, material, or facilities on or off University property, where funds are being raised to benefit the University.

2.1.3. The Chief Communications Officer, or their designate, is authorized to approve or revoke Promotional Activity in University publications (including electronic publications or digital property), in other University media, and in/on signage, property, material, or facilities on University property.

2.2. Subject to Section 2.1, the Vice-President (Western Advancement) and/or Chief Communications Officer can grant limited forms of exclusivity on a case-by-case and time limited basis.

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2.3. Subject to Section 2.1, Western Advancement, Western Communications and other units or individuals designated by the Vice-President (Western Advancement) and Chief Communications Officer are authorized by the Board to negotiate and finalize Agreements for Advertising, Sponsorship and Promotional Activity with prospective Entities.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

3.1. Tax Receipts are not issued for Advertising or Sponsorship; however, Business Receipts may be issued.

3.2. Acknowledgement will be commensurate with the level of financial and/or in-kind support received by the University.

4. PHYSICAL SIGNAGE

4.1. All physical signage or displays that include Advertising, Sponsorship or Promotional Activity shall be consistent with University Policy [1.50 - Signage and Election Posters](#) and related procedures.

4.2. Distribution of non-university Advertising, Sponsorship or Promotional Activity materials through the campus mail or email system is prohibited, with the exception of communication related to Affinity Partnerships, University publications that may contain Advertising, and communication concerning a charitable cause promoted by the University.