UL Brand Governance Policy

Contents

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Purpose 1

1.2 Scope 1

1.3 Definitions 2

2 Context 4

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context 4

2.2 Other Context 5

3 Policy Statements: Marketing Principles 7

4 Related Procedures for Brand Governance 8

5 Related Documents 8

6 Document Control 8

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out a campus-wide approach to the application of and compliance with the University of Limerick (UL) brand. The document outlines the contexts in which the policy applies and the principles to which UL will adhere when establishing, communicating and monitoring its brand identity. Implementation of this policy and related procedures will ensure that the representation of the UL brand and marketing campaigns and content will be at the highest standard and conform to brand guidelines and best practice.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all UL staff and students, contractors, third-party agents and other affiliate associates and users who carry out work on material related to the UL brand. The policy applies to all UL faculties, departments, support units, centres and institutes.

1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply?

Along with relevant Marketing and Communications supporting policies and procedures, this policy relates to any material, media, advertising or promotional documentation that represents the UL brand. The policy encompasses internal and external promotional documents, be they digital (including social), print, web or visual assets online promotion and advertising, radio and digital audio including external facing campus dressing materials and campus communications, that represent UL's brand identity, mission, vision and values.

The policy applies in situations where content is developed by individual departments, divisions, faculties or organisations, promoting the activities, narratives and offerings of UL to external audiences through marketing, communication, promotion, student recruitment, web or digital activates, including any adaptation of central marketing campaigns. This includes contracted agencies for activities such as media buying, media partnerships and digital campaigns.

1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The Marketing and Communications Division's Head of Marketing and Campaigns is responsible for enforcing this policy and its related procedures. Ultimate responsibility for enforcing the policy rests with the Director of Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs.

The UL Executive Committee approves the policy and, where necessary, supports the Director to enforce the policy.

Faculty deans and directors of administrative areas are required to familiarise themselves with the policy. Where a breach of the policy is highlighted, faculty deans

and directors of administrative areas must cooperate in ensuring that appropriate action is taken.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Brand Governance Framework

A brand governance framework will guide our brand's standards, processes and resources and keep everyone informed and engaged. An effective brand governance framework includes:

- Brand strategy
- Brand architecture
- Brand guidelines
- Brand monitoring
- Brand management
- Brand training
- Brand compliance with processes to ensure that brand-related activities align with UL brand and legal and regulatory requirements

1.3.2 Marketing

Marketing is the process of promoting the institution's brand, values and offerings to various stakeholders, including prospective students, current students, alumni, staff and the broader community. This includes creating and disseminating engaging and authentic content across multiple platforms to enhance UL's profile and attract target audiences. UL's marketing efforts encompass strategic campaigns, market research, digital content creation, and the management of social media channels to ensure the communication of the University's identity and achievements is both consistent and effective.

Digital marketing involves to the use of online channels and digital technologies such as social media, email, search engines and websites. The goal of digital marketing is to enhance UL's visibility, reputation and level of engagement by leveraging digital tools and strategies.

1.3.3 Communication

Communication is the process of exchanging information through speaking, writing or a visual medium, such as video or photography. The language used in spoken and written communication should be understandable and inclusive. Communication takes place via multiple channels and platforms, including, but not limited to, press releases, media engagement, briefing materials, printed and online publications, digital platforms and social networking sites.

1.3.4 Student Recruitment

Student recruitment involves the process of promoting UL and its associated activities to prospective students. This includes institutional open days, graduations, recruitment

fairs, webinars, student panels, information sessions on how to apply, visits to schools, workshops, taster lectures and masterclasses.

1.3.5 Social Media

Social media comprises websites and applications through which users can create and share online content or participate in social networking. Social media enables UL to promote its brand across platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and TikTok and to connect with various audiences, including prospective and current students, alumni, staff and the wider public. Social media is used to share news, promote events, highlight academic achievements, showcase campus life and support recruitment efforts. It also serves as a channel for real-time interaction, community-building and crisis communication, thereby helping to enhance the University's visibility and reputation online.

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

This policy is based on the fundamental principles of freedom of expression, a plurality of diverse views, academic freedom, critical thinking, transparency and ethical conduct as well as a rejection of any form of advocacy or discrimination based on race, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or other grounds of discrimination prohibited under Irish or EU law.

2.1.1 Data Protection Laws and Legislation in the Jurisdiction

UL is committed to complying with all applicable data protection, privacy and information security laws and regulations in the locations in which it operates. Where the University processes personal data, it is subject to the obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation, 2016/679 (GDPR) as well as related guidance issued by supervisory authorities, including the Data Protection Commission (Data Protection Legislation).

2.1.2 ePrivacy Laws and Legislation in the Jurisdiction

UL is committed to complying with the EU Electronic Privacy (ePrivacy) Directive. In Ireland, the ePrivacy Directive is transposed into the law of the State by Statutory Instrument No. 336 of 2011, the European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Privacy and Electronic Communications) Regulations 2011 (the ePrivacy Regulations).

2.1.3 Accessibility Laws and Legislation in the Jurisdiction

UL is committed to complying with the Web Accessibility Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/2102), which provides people with disabilities with better access to online digital content posted by public bodies. In Ireland, the Web Accessibility Directive is transposed into the law of the State by Statutory Instrument No. 358/2020 – European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020.

2.1.4 Irish Language Laws and Legislation in the Jurisdiction

UL is committed to complying with all applicable Irish language standards, laws and regulations as laid out in the Official Languages Act 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

2.1.5 Copyright

UL is committed to complying with all copyright laws and ensuring that any content used on the UL News site or social media channels is either original or, if applicable, appropriately licensed for use.

2.2 Other Context

2.2.1 Brand Compliance

UL is committed to ensuring that all UL marketing campaigns and marketing content conform to the guidelines laid out in the UL Brand Guidelines. Brand compliance relates to the best practice standards being met in the visual representation of our brand across all print and digital materials. All front-facing public brand applications need to be designed at the highest standards by one of our procured designers and must meet the marketing department's standards.

Brand compliance leads to

- greater relevance and impact in the marketplace
- consistent, appropriate use of brand elements, including voice, tone and design, to ensure a seamless, high-quality brand experience for all UL audiences
- reinforcement of reputation, positioning and credibility
- more effective and efficient advertising from a resource and financial perspective
- cost efficiency and potential savings due to reduced advertising bid competition and greater buying power with coordination among UL entities
- a reduction in market cannibalisation and competition among UL entities
- conflict and agreement avoidance, which ensures that services do not violate existing campus-wide contracts or agreements
- mitigated risk, protecting misrepresentation of brand name and adherence to any institutional policies and/or legal obligations

2.2.2 Marketing and Communications Strategy

This policy is implemented in alignment with the strategy specified in the Marketing and Communications Division 3x3 Strategy and Implementation Plan 2023–2026.

2.2.3 UL Risk Management Framework

As is the case for all UL policies, this policy must operate within the parameters of UL's Risk Management Framework.

2.2.4 Devolved Marketing Model

UL operates a devolved marketing model. In practice, this means that while the Marketing team leads on brand awareness and reputation-building activities, individual faculties, departments and support units have their own marketing budgets and priorities. Typically, these decentralised units focus on student recruitment efforts, such as promoting open days, encouraging prospectus downloads, generating awareness of access routes, course promotion and, ultimately, driving student applications and conversions. The principles specified in section 3, Policy Statement: Marketing Principles, apply to all such devolved marketing activities.

The Department and Faculty Adaptation of Central Marketing Campaigns Operating Procedure was developed by the Marketing team to address the need for greater alignment and collaboration between the Marketing team and decentralised units. The procedure seeks to provide clear guidance on how units can adapt institutional marketing and brand campaigns and strategies to suit their specific objectives while still maintaining the integrity and standards of the UL brand.

2.2.5 Roles and Responsibilities

Marketing Team

The Marketing team of the Marketing and Communications Division is responsible for developing and maintaining policies, standards, guidelines and associated procedures relating to the UL brand.

With a view to strengthening the profile of UL as a research-intensive university and in line with the University's strategic direction and values, the Marketing team designs institutional campaigns, leads on market research and sets advertising standards.

The Marketing team is responsible for communicating UL's brand values to target audiences. It does this by developing creative, engaging and authentic content and strategically delivering it through established and emerging platforms.

As owners of the UL brand, the Marketing team oversees the application and representation of the brand and marketing campaigns by providing leadership, advice, guidance, documents and training. Overseeing the brand includes overseeing brand approvals and managing brand assets, including photography and video materials. In addition, the team develops and supplies campaign assets and toolkits to support marketing initiatives across UL. The team is also responsible for approving branded merchandise so that all representations of the UL brand are consistent in appearance and quality.

Operational Marketing Group

In recognition of the value of collaboration, the Operational Marketing Group (OMG) was established as a voluntary forum at which UL staff and departmental marketing representatives could meet with the Marketing team on a monthly basis. The purpose of the OMG is to share plans, provide insights and discuss campaign performance in a structured and cooperative manner.

By aiming to reduce duplication and enhancing the overall impact of marketing efforts across the University, the OMG fosters a more coordinated approach to marketing within the devolved model. This, in turn, aims to reduce UL's overall marketing spend and ensure that all marketing activities are aligned with and support UL's broader strategic objectives.

3 Policy Statements: UL Brand Governance Principles

3.1 UL is committed to ensuring that all representations of its brand and marketing campaigns are fully compliant with regulations around GDPR, ePrivacy, accessibility, Irish language and copyright law.

3.2 UL is committed to ensuring that all representations of its brand and marketing campaigns are of the highest standard and conform to established brand guidelines and best practice.

3.3 UL is committed to ensuring that all campus-wide marketing staff are aware of and fully compliant with the relevant responsibilities and best practices around content creation and brand representation as set out in guidelines and procedures maintained by the Marketing team.

3.4 External representations of the UL brand or application of brand campaigns must first be approved by the Marketing team. Decisions made by the Marketing team on brand are final.

3.5 UL recognises that the Marketing team is the custodian of the UL Brand and, as such, retains the right to amend or remove images, digital content, printed material, sections of a website, web components, web content or social media posts and advertising among other external, high impact visuals to ensure compliance with regulations and best practice. The Marketing team may recommend design adjustments during the review process where such changes would enhance brand representation, visual impact, or accessibility. Where these recommendations are necessary to meet compliance with accessibility requirements or established guidelines, their implementation may be required as a condition of approval. Final decisions regarding brand compliance rest with the Brand Officer.

3.6 Persistent breaches of this policy will be escalated by the Director of Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs to the relevant member of the UL senior management team.

3.7 UL recognises that the Marketing team is a finite resource and that any project work undertaken by the team must align with the University's strategic goals. The team reserves the right to prioritise support and level of engagement with projects.

4 Related Procedures for UL Brand Governance

- UL Brand Guidelines
- Adaptation of central marketing campaigns operating procedure
- YouTube content submission and publishing procedure
- Brand Signoff Timeline
- Brand Style Sheet_2024
- Stay Curious Toolkit
- Best Practice in Pop-Up and Nomadic Display
- Web content operating procedure
- Social media best practice

5 Related Documents

UL Documents

- Current UL strategic plan
- Social and Online Media Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Risk Management Framework

Marketing and Communications Division Documents

- Marketing and Communications Division 3x3 Strategy and Implementation Plan 2023–2026
- External Communications Governance Policy
- Web Governance Policy

6 Document Control

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