

Policy #1502
University Communications, Marketing and Branding

Date of Current Revision: February 2025

Responsible Officer: Associate Vice President, University Marketing and Branding

Secondary Officer: Assistant Vice President, University Communications

1. PURPOSE

Communications and marketing and branded content that are visually and editorially consistent create and maintain a strong cohesive institutional identity. To ensure that all official university communications and marketing and branded content preserve and promote a consistent image of the university, while accurately conveying its message, this policy provides for the establishment of the James Madison University Identity System and [Brand Guide](#). The online version is the authoritative source for the James Madison University Identity System and Brand Guide.

2. AUTHORITY

The Board of Visitors has been authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia to govern James Madison University. See Code of Virginia § 23.1-1600; § 23.1-1301. The Board has delegated the authority to manage the university to the president.

3. DEFINITIONS

James Madison University Identity System and Brand Guide

A system of editorial style, graphics, photography, school colors and Web presence representing James Madison University (JMU), found online at the James Madison University Identity System and [Brand Guide](#).

Official University Communications and Marketing and Branded Content

Official university communications and marketing and branded content includes, but is not limited to, advertising, printed and electronic communications and marketing materials, promotional items, signage, web sites, and social media. Examples include:

- All communications and marketing bearing the university name or subunit name as the publishing or sponsoring entity.
- All communications and marketing produced by people acting in their capacities as university employees or using university equipment.
- All communications and marketing for which production costs are paid for with budgeted university funds.
- All communications and marketing targeting media.
- Paid advertising.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all James Madison University employees and other non-university personnel and/or contractors and vendors who prepare official university communications and marketing intended for external dissemination.

5. POLICY

All official university communications and marketing must comply with all James Madison University Identity System and Brand Guide standards. Employees who prepare official communications are responsible for the following standards specified in the university's identity system.

University Marketing and Branding, a unit within the division of University Advancement, offers guidance and services to departments and offices to help ensure that all official university communications comply with the James Madison University Identity System and Brand Guide.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 University Marketing and Branding coordinates all university paid advertising. Refer to Policy [1501](#) – Advertising – for more detailed policy and procedure information on placing advertising.

6.2 University Communications, a unit within the division of University Advancement, coordinates all university interaction with news media and social media. Please refer to Policy [1508](#) – Media Relations and Social Media Publishing – for more detailed policy and procedure information on dealing with news media and social media.

6.3 University Marketing and Branding provides photographic images for official university communications, media relations, and other public relations uses. This office maintains the university's [photography and video library](#) and ensures that a broad base of high-quality images and video are on file. Please refer to Policy [1509](#) – Use of Images – for more detailed policy and procedure information on using university images.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the head of a unit to ensure that the information contained in an official communication is accurate and current, and that all official communications of that unit comply with the James Madison University Identity System and [Brand Guide](#) editorial and graphic standards and all other pertinent policies.

All departments, offices and employees that generate, receive, or maintain public records under the terms of this policy are also responsible for compliance with Policy [1109](#) – Records Management.

8. SANCTIONS

Sanctions will be commensurate with the severity and/or frequency of the offense and may include termination of employment.

Communications and marketing and branded content that do not conform to this policy can be restricted or terminated. The university also reserves the right to reject delivery of materials that violate or deviate from these standards.

9. EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to the following:

- Advertisements placed by the Office of Human Resources for employment-related activities are excluded from the provisions of this policy.
- Student communications serving journalistic functions and/or those that are paid for or produced using student activities funds (e.g., Panhellenic organizations, SGA, *The Breeze*).
- Any communication that is paid for by a grant and does not carry the university logo/name other than when JMU is used to indicate address and/or contact information for the publisher.
- Any communication that is produced by or for outside contractors such as Aramark and Follett.
- Any communication or item that is produced for sale in the university bookstore.
- Internal communications (i.e., e-mails and memoranda).
- Communications produced by JMU faculty, staff and students acting in their private capacities, not as university employees.
- Communications intended for internal purposes (for the campus community) and/or which are covered under the definition of “Official Communication” in Policy [1209](#) – Electronic Messaging – section 5.1.

10. INTERPRETATION

The authority to interpret this policy rests with the president and is generally delegated to the vice president for university advancement.

Previous version: December 2022

Approved by the president: December 2013