Information

Sponsorship

Effective

October 2013

Number

OCM-1.01

Applicability

This policy applies to University administrators, faculty, and staff.

Administrative Authority

Vice President for Communications and Marketing

Responsible Unit

Office of Communications and Marketing

2323 South Brook Street, Suite 124, Louisville KY 40208

502.852.6171

cmoffice@louisville.edu, sponsorship@louisville.edu

History

Revision Date(s): June 30, 2016; June 15, 2022 (minor revision); December 3, 2025

Reviewed Date(s): October 22, 2021; December 3, 2025

Categories

Reason for Policy:

The University of Louisville is a nationally recognized metropolitan research university with a brand that conveys excellence in educational, social, healthcare, cultural, community and economic development. As such, the brand has significant value for both the university community and for external entities seeking to partner with the university.

UofL has instituted a centralized sponsorship program to:

- Create added value for the institution and its community and ensure the university is realizing the maximum opportunity from every sponsorship agreement.
- Maintain a central repository of marketing sponsorships to avoid legal conflicts or agreements that devalue the institution. Units entering into independent sponsorship agreements without prior approval from OCM and/or Purchasing may violate existing, university-wide contracts or sponsorship agreements.
- Protect the university from misrepresentation of its name and harm to its reputation; and safeguard the integrity of the UofL brand. This includes protection of our students by vetting companies that want to directly market to our campus community; and ensuring sponsorship partners align with the university and its values.
- Provide guidance to university units and programs; help prevent conflict-of-interest issues; and ensure compliance with university policies.

Statement:

The university recognizes that many of its activities and programs provide potential sources of revenue or non-financial benefits through the creation of private-sector partnerships and sponsorship opportunities. It's also important to recognize that, as a public institution, the University of Louisville's reputation and brand must be protected and that activities and organizations associated with the university must align with the university's mission and pursuit of excellence and inclusiveness. The

university has the right to and will refuse sponsorship from unacceptable sources, or entities wishing to communicate an unacceptable message.

All current or future sponsorship marketing agreements, inclusive of extensions and renewal of grandfathered agreements, must be communicated to, reviewed by and approved by OCM. OCM is the only department with authorized signatory authority on sponsorship agreements. Individual units or departments should not contract directly (unless a policy exception is granted) with a sponsor on behalf of the university.

Related Information:

Unrelated Business Income Tax policy

Brand Graphics policy - Note: Non-university entities may only use a university name, trademark, logo, or mascot with permission from the University of Louisville Office of Communications and Marketing or its exclusive sponsorship broker.

Department of Purchasing - Bids/RFPs; Policies

Public Information policy

Digital Media policy

Use of Grounds policy

Additional information, including sponsorship frequently asked questions, is available at https://louisville.edu/sponsorship.

Definitions:

Sponsorship marketing - a business agreement and marketing strategy in which there is a mutual exchange of value (e.g., tactical efforts in exchange for cash or barter). To sponsor something is to leverage a property, event, activity, person/people, or organization with the goal of meeting the sponsor's marketing objectives and goals. A sponsor is the individual or group that makes that marketing investment.

Gift or donation - a contribution received by an institution for either unrestricted or restricted use in the furtherance of the institution for which the institution has made no commitment of resources or services other than, possibly, committing to use the gifts the donor specifies. The contribution is a nonreciprocal transfer in that there is no implicit or explicit statement of exchange, purchase of services, or provision of exclusive information. If the donor receives benefits in return for the contribution, the amount of the gift recorded and reported is reduced by the fair market value of all benefits given. The institution has no obligation to report to the donor how the gift is used or invested, but institutions are not prevented from providing such reports as part of donor stewardship.

Advertising - "Includes messages containing qualitative or comparative language, price information, or other indications of savings or value; endorsements; and inducements to purchase, sell or use the products or services" *[IRS publication 598 (01/2015), Tax on Unrelated Business Income of Exempt Organizations]*. OCM's exclusive sponsorship broker works with non-university entities on sponsorship agreements where there is no arrangement or expectation sponsor will receive substantial return benefit other than the use or acknowledgement of the name and logo (or product lines) of the sponsor's trade or business; and works to ensure sponsorships do not incorporate "call to action" advertising in marketing elements associated with sponsorship.

Responsibilities:

Agreements that provide marketing access to university audiences en masse — including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors — are managed and executed by OCM in partnership with the Department of Purchasing. OCM will be present on any department-specific Request for Proposals where sponsorship or marketing value could be a portion of agreement with the potential vendor, as determined by OCM and Purchasing. Anyone responsible for compliance of any type is responsible for notifying OCM of any prohibitions relative to sponsorship.

This policy is monitored by the Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) in cooperation with the Department of Purchasing. Any exceptions to this policy must have prior approval from OCM. Such exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.