

Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance on the principles and procedures relating to any advertising or sponsorship carried out by, or on behalf of, UCAS.

For this policy, the term “UCAS” refer to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and its trading subsidiary UCAS Media. This policy applies to all UCAS employees (irrespective of whether they are employed on a permanent, temporary or fixed term basis), officers, contractors, consultants, outsourced providers and any agents or third parties acting on behalf of UCAS, as well as UCAS Trustees.

UCAS is committed to operating ethically, demonstrating integrity, and acting responsibly to its charity beneficiaries, customers and wider stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance on the principles and procedures relating to any advertising or sponsorship carried out by or on behalf of UCAS. The policy aims to ensure that our advertising and sponsorship activity supports UCAS’ charitable objectives (i.e. will only seek to promote products and services and carry campaign messages where they have a clear link with the goal of helping students access and succeed in education) and that our position and reputation are adequately protected in advertising and sponsorship agreements.

This policy makes clear the type and nature of advertising UCAS will consider.

2. Scope

The policy covers advertising on all of UCAS’ assets including ucas.com, UCAS events, UCAS surveys, UCAS’ data insights and consultancy, and UCAS Media’s marketing channels such as paid media and display advertising.

This policy covers activity by UCAS as an advertiser or sponsor; as well as UCAS as a service provider of an advertising and sponsorship opportunities which an external individual or organisation may wish to take up such as direct mail, paid media, display advertising, newsletters, and events.

This policy also applies to UCAS when working in formal partnership or collaboration with another body.

3. Aims and objectives

UCAS welcomes all opportunities to work with sponsors or advertisers (or consider acting as a sponsor or advertiser) where such arrangements support its values, strategic goals, corporate objectives and/or helps drive forward UCAS’ charitable objects. UCAS values

advertising revenue and will work to maximise this income stream, but only provided it is undertaken strictly in accordance with its strategic priorities and core values.

Aims

The policy aims to set the standard for advertising activities across UCAS, including services offered via UCAS Media.

Advertising will need to comply with the relevant industry codes as detailed in the policy and will not be accepted if it seeks to promote:

- Weapons, violence or anti-social behaviour of any description.
- Pornography and sexually explicit services and products.
- Loans (including payday loans/cash/private loan companies) and speculative financial products such as currencies and cryptocurrencies.
- “Regulated activity” under section 19 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.
- Gambling products, services or organisations.
- Cosmetic surgery.
- Tobacco and related products, including e-cigarettes / vaping.
- Alcohol.
- Unproven health and weight loss products e.g. weight loss pills.

Advertising will not be accepted if, in UCAS’ opinion, it is reasonably objectionable on the grounds that it:

- does not comply with the law or incites, provokes or condones someone to break the law (particularly crime, violence and antisocial behaviour).
- discriminates on the grounds of age, race, colour, national origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender or disability.
- poses a health and safety risk.
- it is likely to cause widespread or serious offence to reasonable members of the public on account of the nature of the product or service being advertised, the design of the advertisement, its wording or by way of inference.
- it in some way touches on socially contentious issues, contains messages which could be regarded as contentious or a subtext which could cause offence.
- it can be considered as mocking of a group or citizens.
- it depicts adults or children in a sexual manner or displays nude or semi-nude figures in an overtly sexual context.
- it depicts or refers to indecency or obscenity or uses obscene or distasteful language.
- it is inappropriate to display because it is of a sensitive, indecent or offensive subject matter and/or content. For example, it is of a racial, religious or political nature.

Conflicts with UCAS in so far as it:

- a. appears to compete directly with a UCAS service or objective and/or income stream.
- b. associates UCAS with organisations in financial or legal conflict with UCAS contains negative references to UCAS’ services.
- d. is unacceptable for some other substantial reason which UCAS identifies.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance on the principles and procedures relating to any advertising or sponsorship carried out by or on behalf of UCAS, however, the application of the principles of this policy are context dependent and will at times require subjective

judgements. These will be communicated to advertisers and sponsors as reasonably required.

The standards and procedures contained here are consistent with UCAS' advertising and sponsorship objectives:

- i. To ensure that our advertising and sponsorship activity support UCAS' charitable objectives.
- ii. To ensure that our position and reputation are adequately protected in advertising and sponsorship agreements.
- iii. To ensure that we adopt a consistent and professional approach towards advertising and sponsorship.
- iv. To ensure that there is evidence of advancement of education in sponsorship arrangements, including any arrangements made where we receive either money or a benefit in kind.
- v. To protect Trustees and individual officers from allegations of inappropriate dealings or relationships with advertisers and sponsors.

4. Advertisements

Advertising and sponsorship encompass goods, services, ideas, causes, opportunities, prizes and gifts. Advertising is a form of communication used to raise awareness, encourage, or persuade an audience – viewers, readers or listeners or a specific group of people – to do or believe something. Advertising is usually paid for.

Advertising messages can take a variety of forms and can be viewed via a variety of media channels (e.g. newspapers, magazines, advertising at events, websites, social media and text messages etc.) A person who consumes advertising is anyone who is likely to receive a given marketing communication, whether in the course of business or not.

Advertising is defined within this policy as:

“an agreement between UCAS and an advertiser, whereby UCAS receives money from an organisation or individual in consideration of which the advertiser gains publicity in the form of an advertisement in UCAS-controlled print, at an indoor event or electronic media.”

The regulation of advertising in the UK is the responsibility of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA applies the Advertising Codes. Any requirements listed herein are to be regarded as in addition to those required by the ASA UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing (CAP Code).

The appearance of an advertisement on any UCAS publication is not an endorsement by UCAS of that company, product, or service. To make this clear all publications with advertising must carry a relevant disclaimer.

UCAS holds personal data of service users and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 must be adhered to in all cases. Careful consideration will be given to whether it is appropriate and legal for specific data to be used for any advertising or direct marketing purposes. When required, people will be asked whether they are willing to 'opt in' to receive news, information, or advertising messages from UCAS to ensure compliance when personal data is gathered and used.

5. Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and an individual, event or organisation which offers in return rights and association that may be used for commercial advantage in return for the sponsorship investment.

There can be cross-over between how advertising and sponsorship works in practice. For the purposes of this policy, sponsorship is defined as the following:

“an agreement between UCAS and the sponsor, where we receive either money or a benefit in kind for an event, campaign, or initiative from an organisation or individual which in turn gains publicity or other benefits.”

Sponsors carried by UCAS must operate within all relevant legislation and guidance. UCAS cannot put itself in a position where it might be said that a partnership has, might have, or may be thought to have:

- i. influenced UCAS or its officers or Trustees in carrying out its charitable objects in order to gain favourable terms from UCAS in any business or other agreement.
- ii. aligned UCAS with any organisation which conducts itself in a manner which conflicts with its aims or values.

UCAS is not able to enter into agreements for sponsorships which:

- i. are in direct conflict with UCAS' advertising policy.
- ii. are, at the sole discretion of the Chief Marketing Officer, considered inappropriate in regard to the organisation, individual or in respect of particular products.

Sponsorship materials must:

- i. not detract from UCAS' strong corporate identity; and
- ii. in their nature and content, be consistent with advertising policy as set out above.

Before seeking/considering sponsorship, staff must consider this policy document and follow the guidelines provided.

In accordance with our procurement policy and procedures we may advertise a sponsorship opportunity to potential sponsors. All sponsorship bids shall be approved by the Chief Marketing Officer, the UCAS will agree with the sponsor the nature and content of the publicity and will retain the right to approve all advertising material in line with the advertising policy.

Sponsorship agreements must be referred to Legal Services for review prior to signing.

Acceptance of sponsorship does not imply endorsement of products and service by UCAS. To make this clear all publications with sponsorship must carry a relevant disclaimer, including where it is appropriate a clear flag to students that they should conduct their own research into whether a particular product represents “best value for money” against any market comparators.