EXT-015

Endorsement of External Entities and Products

Effective Date Tuesday, December 20, 2022

Status Final

Last Revised Friday, September 26, 2025

Policy Type University

Contact Office University Communications

Oversight Executive
Vice President for Communications and Chief Marketing Officer

Applies To Academic Division, the Medical Center, the College at Wise.
This policy also applies to UVA Medical Center Affiliates as defined below.

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Compliance with Policy

Reason for Policy

The names and trademarks used exclusively by the University are intellectual property of the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. Use of this intellectual property for the benefit of external entities carries legal and reputational risk, may give rise to the appearance of unethical conduct, and may conflict with institutional goals and strategies.

Definition of Terms

Advertising

Description

Any situation in which the University or one of its units receives payment or in-kind gifts from an external party (other than a University Associated Organization) in exchange for brand placement or promotional exposure (including an Endorsement, Promotion, or Testimonial) in University communications channels (including print, image, video/audio, digital, or social media).

Brand Assets

Description

Property, tangible items, programs, services, or activities owned by the University that could provide a benefit to a third party. These include, but are not limited to, University names, trademarks, service marks, logos, signage,

social media channels, content platforms, websites, and University-owned property.

Endorsement

Description

Any action that suggests or implies the University's public approval or support of other organizations, companies, products, services, political parties or views, or religious organizations or beliefs.

Promotion (or Publicity)

Description

The act of raising public awareness of an organization, company, product, service, political party or view, or religious organization or belief.

Testimonial

Description

A formal, public statement testifying to the qualifications of a third-party organization or the efficacy of the organization's products, goods, services, views, or beliefs.

UVA Health

Description

Refers to the UVA School of Medicine, UVA School of Nursing, the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, the Health System Development Office, UVA Medical Center, and UVA Medical Center Affiliates.

UVA Medical Center Affiliates

Description

Refers to any operating entity or affiliated or subsidiary organization, whether now existing or hereafter created or acquired, that is/are an owned and controlled affiliate of the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia on behalf of its Medical Center ("UVA Medical Center"), including, without limitation, UVA Community Health, Inc., and its controlled affiliates and the Monticello Community Surgery Center.

Policy Statement

Absent approval from the Vice President for Communications and Chief Marketing Officer, University employees and employees of the UVA Medical Center Affiliates, may not participate in any testimonial, endorsement, promotion, or similar activity, in any form of media—including, but not limited to print, radio, TV, digital, and social media—in a manner that either directly or indirectly:

(1) indicates that such employee is doing so on behalf of the University; or
(2) uses University Assets.

Employees may provide factual information about the University's use of commercial products or services, or about relationships between University employees and representatives of external entities. They may not,

however, offer any value judgment about the quality of the commercial product, service, organization, or person on behalf of the University unless specifically authorized to do so.

Exceptions may be granted in agreements with third parties, such as academic program agreements or athletic sponsorship agreements, consistent with the approval process set forth herein.

The University communications channels, including print, digital, and social media, may not contain Advertising content. However, provided the reference does not constitute an Endorsement or Testimonial, references to suppliers or partners (in the form of a name, link, logo, or graphic) may be made in the following situations:

- Indicate licensed software on which a core function of a web page is based.
- Refer to a supplier or other entity separately contracted to provide goods or services to the University.
- Acknowledge an external party's support of mission-related activities through sponsorship. Payment may not be accepted for such links or logos.
- Provide information for educational or other mission-related purposes (including prize giveaways), provided the University has received no consideration for such references.

Procurement contracts must include a provision to prohibit suppliers from engaging in promotional activity in conflict with this policy. The University may not negotiate a pricing discount in exchange for participating in a Testimonial, Endorsement, Promotion, or similar activity. Promotional communications that truthfully identify the University or one of its units as a customer or client but that do not give an opinion about the quality of the product or service are permissible. Procurement contracts may grant suppliers a limited, nonexclusive license to use approved University names and trademarks to identify accurately the University as a customer.

Before granting approval for any third party to use Brand Assets in any Testimonial, Endorsement, or Promotion, the University reserves the right to examine a copy of the text, images, and context of the project in advance to confirm that it contains no inaccurate or misleading references. The University has the right, at its sole discretion, to refuse to grant such approval and to deny participation by University employees or representatives in cases where the project does not benefit the University.

If the Vice President for Communications and Chief Marketing Officer approves participation by a University unit or employee in a Testimonial, Endorsement, or Promotion, it is the responsibility of all University employees involved to comply with all applicable laws as well as University policies and procedures, including those concerning ethics and conflicts of interest.

Employees of the UVA Medical Center Affiliates must seek approval from the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer for UVA Health for all endorsement requests arising from within or relating to UVA Health. In advance of providing such permission, the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer for UVA Health is responsible for consulting with the Vice President for Communications and Chief Marketing Officer for alignment and written approval to the extent the endorsement request is submitted by or implicates a University unit or employee. Faculty and staff in UVA Health are also responsible for knowing and complying with Health System Policy Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit or limit an employee's right to free speech as a private citizen, nor to prohibit or limit faculty members' academic freedom. For example, faculty may use titles and the University of Virginia name to identify themselves accurately (e.g., "Jane Doe, Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia"), including authoring or reviewing a book, and participating in conferences, interviews, or other speaking engagements, in circumstances where it is generally apparent that faculty are expressing personal views, not those of the University. As much as possible, faculty should assure that their use of the University's name is not seen to imply University endorsement or responsibility for the particular activity or expression

involved.

Compliance with Policy:
Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies.

Direct questions about this policy to University Communications.

Related Information

FIN-054: Employee Obligation to Report Potential Conflicts of Interest
GOV-004: Use and Licensing of the University's Trademarks
RES-005: Financial Conflicts of Interest for Research Investigators
PROV-007: Faculty Conflicts of Interest
Health System Policy: BEH: Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment
SOM Policy 2.600 - Endorsement of External Entities and Products
UVA Code of Ethics for Faculty and Staff
UVA Compliance: Conflict of Interest

Major Category External Relations

Next Scheduled Review Tuesday, September 26, 2028

Revision History

Confirmed 9/26/25.

Policy Summary

Absent approval from the Vice President for Communications and Chief Marketing Officer, University employees or employees of University units or affiliates, including employees of the UVA Medical Center Affiliates, acting on behalf of the University may not make public endorsements of external parties or their goods or services. Requests from UVA Health shall be submitted to the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer of UVA Health for approval as set forth herein. The purchase of a product or service by the University does not imply that the University endorses the product or service. Suppliers to the University may not engage in promotional activity that includes opinions explicitly or implicitly attributed to the University about the quality of the goods or services provided to the University. This involves statements that are evaluative, either positive or negative, or that imply exclusivity (such as an “official” product or service).

Supercedes Policy Text

IRM-001: Web Site Advertising.

Approved By Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

Approved Date Tuesday, October 25, 2022