President's
Policy Statement
University Policy Library

Operational Area	Information and Technology
Responsible Executive	Associate Vice President of Marketing and Brand
Responsible Office	University Communications and Marketing
Effective	May 1, 2025

MSU Denver Brand Policy: Paid Advertising Policy

Information and Technology

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I. OVERVIEW

A. **Purpose**: This policy defines the rules and procedures for the creation and use of all forms of official paid Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver or University) advertising in accordance current WCAG Accessibility Guidelines, federal and state law, and other University policies. Additionally, this policy provides MSU Denver employees, departments, programs, and organizations guidance on University standards for purchasing, creating, and launching paid advertisements.

1. All University advertising should be coordinated with University Communications and Marketing (UCM). No advertising commitment should be executed without consultation with UCM. UCM works to uphold brand integrity by ensuring all design and copy standards are met.

B. **Scope**: This policy applies to all University employees, students, organizations, and others who research, plan, create, launch, maintain, and report any marketing and/or paid advertising of a department, program or event, to conduct official University business. This policy applies to entities engaged in marketing and paid advertising activities, including but not limited to:

1. Print advertising, such as newspaper and magazine ads, flyers, brochures, and posters, including any digital display opportunities through these outlets.

2. Broadcast and over-the-top (OTT) advertising, such as television and radio commercials.
3. Outdoor advertising such as billboards, bus shelters, train wraps, and other signage.
4. Direct mail advertising such as letters, postcards, and catalogs.
5. Promotional materials such as giveaways, branded items, and sponsorships.
6. Digital advertising such as display ads, search engine marketing (SEM), keywords, and social media advertising or influencers.
7. Other marketing activities that involve the use of University resources or branding.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. **Operational Area:** Information and Technology

B. **Responsible Executive**: Associate Vice President of Marketing and Brand

C. **Responsible Administrators**: Associate Vice President of Marketing and Brand Strategy, Director of Digital Marketing and Content Strategy, Director of Advertising, Marketing Coordinator, and Brand Manager

D. **Responsible Office**: University Communications and Marketing

E. **Policy Contact**: Director of Advertising: marketing@msudenver.edu

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Paid advertisements and related terms** (e.g., Advertisement, Advertising, Ad) means a paid insertion of a University message in local, regional, national, or international media such as, but not limited to: newspapers, magazines, online publications, digital media (including paid key words, search engine marketing, geofencing and geotargeting, over-the-top, Spotify, Pandora, etc.), broadcast media, social media, outdoor advertising, and direct mail.

B. **Over-the-top (OTT) advertising** refers to a type of advertising that is delivered through streaming platforms or devices over the internet, rather than through traditional broadcast or cable TV networks.

C. **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** is a form of online advertising that involves promoting websites by increasing their visibility on search engine results pages (SERPs) through paid advertising.

D. **University media** includes all print and electronic publications and communications of MSU Denver, whether published or transmitted by the University or by anyone acting on behalf of or in concert with the University.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

A. The University Communications and Marketing (UCM) team continuously works to advance the MSU Denver brand through a strategic approach to communications and marketing. A collaborative and centralized advertising strategy is essential to presenting a strong and unified brand to the public.

B. The University encourages collaboration between programs and departments and the UCM team to develop effective paid advertising strategies that are aligned with each program/department's goals and target audience(s). By collaborating on the advertising process, programs/departments and the marketing and brand team can develop more effective and targeted paid advertising strategies that help meet departmental goals and advance the University's overall mission.

C. To ensure that all paid advertising on behalf of MSU Denver appropriately portrays, promotes, protects, and represents the University's best interests. Any paid advertising commitment representing MSU Denver must be executed through close consultation and collaboration with UCM. All paid advertising efforts must adhere to MSU Denver policies and to appropriate laws that govern the dissemination of public information.

D. Consultation and collaboration with UCM on paid advertising initiatives may include ideation, creative development, creative approvals, implementation, maintenance, and data reporting. UCM will work with departments to create a marketing plan, identify goals and key performance indicators (KPIs), review and approve creative assets and messaging in accordance with digital accessibility standards, and advise on the advertising budget.

E. Collective departments and UCM will be responsible for ensuring all advertising creatives are compliant with all MSU Denver policies, including current WCAG Accessibility Guidelines, as well as federal and state laws.

F. Based on the established marketing plan, there will be a designated person from each collective team to place the ad on the approved launch date and platform(s). For data and reporting purposes, UCM will schedule a meeting to discuss the performance of the campaign. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the department to monitor and maintain records of the performance of their goals and provide performance updates as agreed upon in the marketing plan.

1. **Privacy and Intellectual Property:** Privacy and intellectual property laws/policies regarding privacy of student information and fair use of copyrighted material apply to all University advertising. Employee and student management of ads must adhere to these laws and policies.
2. **Personal and Political Endorsements**: MSU Denver does not endorse any personal opinion, product, private business cause, nor political candidate (except for private entities affiliated with MSU Denver, e.g. the Alumni Association). Representation of personal opinions as being endorsed by the University or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited.
3. **Additional Policies**: All paid advertising efforts are also subject to the University's brand policies, accessibility policies, and social media policy when applicable.

V. USE OF EXTERNAL VENDORS

A. **Approval Process:** All materials created by external vendors, including others not within the UCM team (e.g. outside agencies, contractors, freelancers, programs/department designers, and students), for paid advertising must be reviewed and approved by UCM before distribution.

VI. POLICY HISTORY

A. **Effective:** May 1, 2025

B. **Enacted:** May 1, 2025

C. **Review:** This is the inaugural enactment of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years or as deemed necessary by University leadership.

VII. POLICY APPROVAL

Janine Davidson, Ph.D.
President, Metropolitan State University of Denver

N/A
Chair, Board of Trustees, Metropolitan State University of Denver