



BRAND POLICY

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BRAND POLICY

Preamble

Against the background of the vision to discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, thereby advancing our relevance and impact, the Council of the North-West University (“NWU”, “university”) adopted this policy on 19 November 2025.

1 Policy statement

The NWU recognises that its brand image and reputation are among its most valuable strategic assets. Therefore, a proper process and framework must be provided to ensure integrity, consistency, and impact. The NWU follows a holistic and institutionally integrated approach to brand governance, its identity and reputation by implementing this policy and related documents including the corporate identity (CID) manual, as referenced in paragraph 5.1.8. This policy and the related documents support the strategic positioning of the NWU, serving as the official framework for the visual, verbal, and experiential representation of the University.

The NWU therefore, it depends on its brand equity to build a consistent identity, and that the relevant assets must be protected. Secondary positioning messages (written and visual) should focus on the NWU’s brand attributes. The development and ongoing refinement of the NWU brand must be informed by systematic brand audit engagements with key stakeholders, including students, employees, alumni, partners, and community groups.

2 Interpretation and application

This policy must be interpreted and applied in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the Statute of the North-West University.

3 Definitions

In this policy –

“**brand**” refers to the NWU’s distinct identity and reputation (including its name or trademark), its products and offerings, its values, mission and achievements. It also refers to the emotional and psychological relationship that the University shares with its internal and external stakeholders through its brand attributes, associations and essence, which create a recognisable identity

“**brand ambassador**” refers to an individual who authentically represents and promotes the NWU’s values, identity and mission through their actions, communication and engagement, thereby assisting in building trust, enhancing the University’s reputation and fostering meaningful connections with internal and external audiences;

“**brand attributes**” are the core characteristics that define and differentiate the brand, - academic excellence, values-driven approach, vibrant student life, producing relevant graduates, and social responsiveness to consistently shape how the NWU is perceived by audiences

“**brand identity**” is the structured and intentional expression of a brand’s values, personality, and promise. This is communicated through visual design, messaging, tone, and behaviour in order to create a consistent and recognisable experience across all touchpoints.

“**branding**” refers to the strategic process of creating, communicating and managing a selection of assets that blend and utilise tangible and intangible attributes to differentiate the NWU, its products, and its services in an attractive, meaningful, consistent and compelling manner. This builds trust and fosters loyalty among key stakeholders;

“**corporate Identity (CID)**” refers to the strategic and cohesive expression of the NWU’s values, culture, personality and structure, utilised visually (including the logo and primary and secondary university

colours), verbally and behaviourally to identify and present the NWU to its stakeholders and to differentiate itself from other organisations

“digital footprint” refers to the collective presence and visibility of the NWU brand across digital platforms, including websites, social media, search engines and third-party online content

“the CID manual” means the comprehensive, strategic guideline document that defines and standardises the visual and verbal representation of the NWU brand. It includes guidelines for the use of the NWU logo, templates, style guides, concepts and visual language ensuring consistency, coherence and alignment with the NWU’s positioning across all touchpoints

“the NWU pay-off line” is a short memorable phrase that encapsulates the essence of our brand promise, positioning and value. It reinforces our identity and creates emotional resonance with our audiences: it is ‘It all starts here’; ‘Dit begin alles hier’; ‘Gotthe go simolola fano’;

“trademarks of the NWU” includes the formal name ‘North-West University’, the formal and acronym logos, the mascot name and logos and the NWU pay-off line. It refers to the legally protected signs, symbols, words, phrases and logos (or combinations thereof) that are registered in terms of the Trade Marks Act 194 of 1993;

“typography” refers to the intentional and consistent use of official typefaces, pertaining to font, alignment and spacing as stipulated in the CID manual to improve readability and ensure cohesive communication across all platforms; and

“visual language” refers to the cohesive system of design elements such as imagery, colour, iconography, illustration, photography, typography and layout used to visually express the NWU’s brand identity, values and personality visually across all platforms and other NWU touchpoints.

4 Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 This policy applies to the NWU Council and its members, committees and other governance structures, all permanent and contracted employees, associated organisations, students and other relevant stakeholders.
- 4.2 No one other than those referred to in 4.1 may be authorised to use the NWU brand or trademarks unless they have agreed in writing to comply with the requirements of this policy and the related CID.
- 4.3 All communications must reflect the University’s brand essence, identity and attributes, and strengthen its positioning.
- 4.4 This policy applies to all communication and visual language, including all forms of media, printed materials, digital representations, stationery, signage, clothing and representations created by and for the NWU.
- 4.5 The University Management Committee (UMC) is overall responsible for ensuring effective and responsible implementation and management of the NWU brand in accordance with this policy.
- 4.6 The Executive Director: Corporate Relations and Marketing is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy.
- 4.7 Regular training and orientation must be provided by the Marketing and Student Recruitment department to employees and students to ensure consistent and effective representation of the NWU brand.

5 Rules

5.1 Brand application

- 5.1.1 The NWU brand must not be associated with –
 - the abuse of addictive substances
 - the abuse of alcohol
 - sexually explicit imagery or references
 - profanity or inappropriate insensitive language
 - promotion of violence, hate speech or discrimination
 - misinformation
 - gambling, or
 - infringement of intellectual property rights
 - any form of exploitation, except for the purposes of combating or academically studying these

phenomena.

- 5.1.2 All logos and/or related assets used to represent any part of the NWU, its committees, student societies, faculties, divisions, departments, centres, subsidiaries and related entities or anything relating to the internal and external representation of the NWU must comply with this policy and the relevant guidelines set out in the CID manual and related documents.
- 5.1.3 Where faculties and divisions of the NWU do not make use of the central graphic design department in the Corporate Relations and Marketing division, their design concepts must adhere to the style prescribed in the CID. They must use approved NWU imagery and templates which are available on the intranet and the digital asset management system. All designs must be approved by the Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment or a person to whom this function has been duly delegated.
- 5.1.4 No NWU campus, faculty, division, institute or centre may use an identity, symbol or logo that is distinct from the NWU logo. However, research entities, units and centres may use their names in conjunction with the NWU logo.
- 5.1.5 As an exception, the NWU Business School, NWU Enterprises, NWU CHHP and spin-offs may use their own logos, provided they are used alongside the NWU logo and in accordance with the approved style guides.
- 5.1.6 All communication (internal and external) and student recruitment campaigns must align with the NWU's overall brand strategy and NWU Strategy.
- 5.1.7 All communications of the NWU must strengthen and reflect the University's brand essence and attributes.
- 5.1.8 The Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment is responsible to keep the CID manual updated under the supervision of the Executive Director: Corporate Relations and Marketing, and this is subject to approval by the University Management Committee (UMC).
- 5.1.9 The Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment is responsible for disseminating updates to the CID Manual via official NWU communication channels to all internal and external employees, students' structures and relevant stakeholders.
- 5.1.10 The Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment must be consulted by anyone wishing to use of the NWU brand or trademarks. This ensures consistency in all campaigns, concepts, visuals, advertising and communication material implemented across print, electronic and digital platforms.
- 5.1.11 All advertising campaigns using the NWU brand for institutional, faculty, divisional or departmental, or project-specific purposes must be submitted for review and receive formal approval from the Executive Director: Corporate Relations and Marketing or the Director: Marketing and Student recruitment prior to publication or dissemination to ensure consistency and alignment with the University's brand identity and accurate messaging across all platforms and target audiences.
- 5.1.12 In instances of reputational risk or crisis, all communications must adhere to the NWU's approved communication policy and crisis communication protocols to protect and uphold the integrity of the brand.

5.2 Merchandising

- 5.2.1 Merchandise displaying the NWU brand or logos may only be produced and distributed by vetted suppliers.
- 5.2.2 Contractual agreements with vendors and suppliers regarding branding and marketing may only be entered into on behalf of the NWU by the Corporate Relations and Marketing Division.
- 5.2.3 Where the use of the NWU logo alongside another logo is not covered by the CID, permission for such use must be obtained from the Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment.
- 5.2.4 Study material and academic projects are not subject to merchandising principles.
- 5.2.5 All merchandise bearing the NWU brand must comply with ethical sourcing standards and, where possible, be procured from environmentally responsible and socially compliant suppliers.

5.3 Student societies and residences

- 5.3.1 Registered student societies and residences may create and use their own icons or visual identifiers subject to the approval of the Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment.
- 5.3.2 Registered student societies and residences must always use the NWU logo alongside their icons and visual identifiers.

5.4 Co-branding

- 5.4.1 All co-branding must adhere to this policy and the CID guidelines, and all designs are subject to approval by the Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment.
- 5.4.2 All co-branding partners must undergo due diligence and have an agreement in place to ensure alignment with the NWU's values and reputation

5.5 Sponsorships

- 5.5.1 All sponsorship applications must be evaluated by the Marketing and Student Recruitment department to ensure alignment with the NWU's strategy and brand standards in line with the approved process.
- 5.5.2 It is the responsibility of the Marketing and Student Recruitment department to keep a record of all NWU sponsorships made or entered into.

5.6 Stakeholder Experience

- 5.6.1 All engagements must reflect a high standard of client experience, ensuring that interactions with students, staff, alumni, stakeholders and the broader public are professional, inclusive, timely and aligned with the NWU's brand values.
- 5.6.2 Continuous feedback mechanisms must be implemented to assess and improve the quality of brand touchpoints across all channels as set out in the stakeholder engagement framework.

6 Non-compliance with this policy

- 6.1 Any identified misuse of the NWU brand must be reported to the Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment who will take appropriate action, including legal proceedings if necessary.
- 6.2 Merchandise bearing the NWU brand that has been produced without proper authorisation must be treated as counterfeit and as an infringement of the NWU's intellectual property rights.
- 6.3 Repeated or serious breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the NWU Disciplinary Code for employees and students.

7 Related policies and other relevant documents

This policy must be read in conjunction with all related documents and policies, including the NWU Strategy, NWU Values, NWU Transformation Charter, the Communication Policy, Alumni Relations Policy, Stakeholder Engagement Framework, Social Media Framework, Behavioural Manual and Students Disciplinary Rules.

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