



## Policy on the Usage of the University Name

### No. 12000

**Policy Effective Date:**  
4/14/1992

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**Policy Owner:**  
Charles Phlegar

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**Affected Parties:**  
Faculty  
Staff

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### 1.0 Purpose

It is generally recognized that universities must operate in the marketplace under the same communications maxims as corporations, government agencies, and major institutions. In order to maximize name recognition and to consistently identify the university to various publics, this policy establishes the accepted references to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

#### 1.1 Background

The university has had difficulty for many years with the unusual nature of its name. Long before the phrase "and State University" was added in 1970, the institution was popularly known as Virginia Tech for a shorthand reference. Two committees met in the 1980s to consider a name change or to deal with the problems surrounding confusing references to the university and the difficulty of using a six-word polysyllable name. The committees decided in favor of retaining the name but have indicated the major problem lies in the variations and abbreviations of the name applied by the university community and unknowing media agents.

### 2.0 Policy

#### 2.1 Accepted References

The accepted references to the university are (a) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and (b) Virginia Tech. We refer to ourselves primarily as Virginia Tech. This should be used in all but the most formal applications.

Unacceptable references are Virginia Polytechnic Institute, VPI, Virginia Tech University, Tech, Va (or VA) Tech, or VPI&SU and should not be used. VT is used in our visual brand but is not allowed to be used editorially.

Detailed description of applications will be found in the university *Brand Guidelines*. The *Brand Guidelines* visually defines any public name usage such as, but not limited to, letterhead, business cards, signage, publications, forms, promotions, badges, vehicle stickers.

Only approved logos, logotype, and the university seal should be used on documents, publications, signs or any other editorial or graphic application. Please refer to the *Brand Guidelines* for specific guidelines and detailed information. The *Brand Guidelines* is university policy.



## 2.2 Use of Visual Brand

As the primary identifier of the university, the university's visual brand should be used only for appropriate university business. As such, use of university visual brand should not be used for personal business or where personal gain would result. Endorsements of political personages, businesses, or products should be avoided. Discretion is advised if correspondence that displays the university's visual brand could be construed as a university endorsement.

## 2.3 University Colors

The university colors are burnt orange and Chicago maroon. Realizing there is an infinite range of colors, every attempt should be made to be consistent. For official university color instructions based on medium, refer to the *Brand Guidelines*.

## 2.4 Responsibilities

The Senior Vice President for Advancement is responsible for ensuring adherence to the policy. The Vice President for Communications and Marketing is responsible for implementation of established graphic identity standards and approving new or unusual applications not specified in the *Brand Guidelines*.

The Senior Vice President for Advancement, and through delegation the Vice President for Communications and Marketing, is responsible for all licensing of usage of the university name, icons, symbols, or seal, whether or not such marks have formal trademark registration. As noted in [Policy 3015, University Contract Signature Policy and Procedures](#), the Vice President for Communications and Marketing has been delegated authority by the Chief Contracting Officer to sign all licensing and trademark agreements on behalf of the university.

This policy, the *Licensing Guidelines*, and the *Brand Guidelines* will guide licensing usage.

## 3.0 Procedures

Use only approved references to the university in memoranda, documents, reports, books, dissertations, papers and articles. Use only approved logos or logotype on publications, signs, uniforms, posters, certificates, or other printed material. Use only approved format for letterhead, envelopes, and business cards.

Usage applications not covered by the university *Licensing Guidelines* or *Brand Guidelines* should be referred to the Vice President for Communications and Marketing.

## 4.0 Definitions

1. A logotype is an arrangement of typography, graphics, or line rulings, usually of an institution name, in such a way that it becomes the unique identifier for an institution.
2. A logo, symbol, or icon is a graphic representation of a person, place, or thing in such a way that it becomes a unique identifier for an institution.



## 5.0 References

Licensing Guidelines

<https://vt.edu/brand/licensing.html>

Brand Guidelines

<https://vt.edu/brand.html>

## 6.0 Approval and Revisions

Approved April 14, 1992, by Charles M. Forbes, Vice President for Development and University Relations.

- Revision 1 Section 2.4. Changed title from Director to Associate Vice President, University Relations. Vice President for Business Affairs changed to Executive Vice President.  
Approved February 14, 1999, by Charles W. Steger, Vice President for Development and University Relations.
- Revision 2  
Updated to reflect change in position title to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.
- Revision 3  
June 26, 2008: Updates to position titles and/or responsibilities due to university reorganization.
- Revision 4  
Clarification of primary use of “Virginia Tech” added to Section 2.1.  
Approved February 2, 2011 by Vice President for Development and University Relations, Elizabeth A. Flanagan.
- Revision 5  
Clarification of responsibility for licensing of usage of university marks, whether or not such marks have formal trademark registration.  
Approved October 24, 2011 by Vice President for Development and University Relations, Elizabeth A. Flanagan.
- Revision 6  
Technical updates to department titles and references.  
Approved November 15, 2018 by Vice President for Advancement, Charles Phlegar.
- Revision 7  
Technical updates to position titles and references in Sections 2.4 and 3.0.  
Approved June 12, 2023 by Vice President for Policy and Governance, Kim O’Rourke.