



Policy on the Naming of Ulster University Buildings and Spaces

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to describe the principles that Ulster University will follow to name or rename buildings and facilities. The naming of buildings should facilitate the orientation and movement around the campus.

- 1.1 The naming of buildings is generally associated with three scenarios:
- To honour individuals for particular achievement;
 - To recognise significant benefaction;
 - As part of a commercial contract or agreement.

Ulster University is including one further scenario to the above:

- To reflect the brand, ethos, history and heritage and the connections (local and global) of the University (e.g. Aberfoyle House, The Orpheus Building, The Loughview Suite)¹.

This policy describes the principles that the University will follow to name or rename buildings and spaces and outlines, for each of the above scenarios, the line of responsibility for the final decision of naming a building or space.

- 1.2 Naming or changing the name of a building is something that should be considered thoroughly, and not based on a strong sentiment that may fade over time due to:
- The cost of signage and associated literature;
 - The confusion arising from the need to re-orientate staff, students and visitors;
 - The relatively small number of naming opportunities available;
 - Any potential embarrassment arising from name changes.
- 1.3 The use of a person's name for a building can be problematic:
- Strong attachment to the name of an institutional personality can evaporate over time;
 - Individuals with whom the institution is proud to be associated, or from whom benefaction has been gained, can become problematic when circumstances change e.g. criminal prosecution.

¹ A further good example of this would be 'The Forum' at Exeter University.

N.B. Changing the name of a building under any of the above circumstances can compound the problem by drawing undue attention, leaving the institution no choice but to retain an undesirable name.

- 1.4 Company names have relatively short lifespans and careful consideration should therefore be given to naming buildings after companies in order to minimise renaming and the associated costs identified at 1.2 above.
- 1.5 The principle of naming buildings has implications for:
 - The name of rooms and facilities within buildings, e.g. the Martha Magee Room
 - The naming of events, such as the Smyth Memorial Lecture
 - The expectations that donors may have in terms of recognition of their gifts (where clarity in advance is of the utmost importance)
 - The management of donors and stewardship of their gifts;
 - Local authorities and emergency services.
- 1.6 In general, the naming of buildings or spaces should not be discipline-specific due to the fluid nature of occupancy. The estates strategy and programme should be taken into consideration.
- 1.7 In the same way that the physical appearance of the campus and the behaviour of its staff and students can add to or detract from the institutional brand, so too can the naming of buildings, spaces and events.

In light of these issues, the following policy on the naming of buildings is proposed.

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 Building names should enhance the brand of the University, ensuring that names are consonant with the mission, values and goals of the University. Nominations that might enhance the University's profile in reference to various priorities (e.g. international, diversity etc) via our building names would be particularly welcome.
- 2.2 Building names must have clarity and simplicity, aiding orientation and movements around all University sites.
- 2.3 Names used for existent structures such as buildings or facilities, on campus or in surrounding areas, should not be reused.
- 2.4 Care should be taken when using names for buildings which are also associated with major events, to avoid confusion.

- 2.5 The naming of a building must comply with any legal agreements entered into by the University, for example, with funding bodies or planning authorities, or written agreements reached with benefactors, and other internal policies.
- 2.6 The naming of a building will be assessed in terms of the impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

Guidance for honorary naming of buildings or facilities

- 2.7 Names of staff, students or lay-members of the University should not normally be used to name buildings, unless associated with major change within the University or academic achievement of the highest excellence. In either case, it is expected that names would feature prominently as part of the historical record of the University or be associated with significant, landmark achievement in a relevant academic discipline. It would normally be expected that such achievements would have clear recognition outside the University, for example, by the award of a Nobel prize or recognition of an equivalent status. Such names should not be used whilst the individual remains an active member of the University.
- 2.8 Names of people from outside the University can be used as building names only where they have been associated with events or achievements of major significance, such as a landmark achievement in an academic discipline or major humanitarian contribution, compatible with the University's mission and goals. It would normally be expected that such achievements would have clear recognition outside the University, for example, by the award of a Nobel prize or recognition of an equivalent status.

Guidance for philanthropic naming of buildings or facilities

- 2.9 Buildings and facilities named in recognition of a major benefaction linked to that building should normally be made only when at least 20-25% or more of the cost, of the building or facility has been met by the donor. Where refurbishment to an existing structure is being carried out and naming of an existing structure, room or facility is proposed, a different set of judgements will be necessary. It is appropriate to set the proportions of the refurbishment cost to be covered at a higher level, e.g. 50% - 75%.

It may very occasionally be appropriate to name a building in recognition of extraordinary contributions made by long-standing benefactors to the University, where no gift has been made towards the cost of the specific building in question.

Guidance for commercial naming of buildings or facilities

- 2.10 Buildings should, in general, not be named after specific disciplines. However, in the case of commercial partnerships or agreements it may be appropriate. These require a thorough degree of due diligence to avoid any appearance of commercial influence or conflict of interest.

NB In relation to 2.9-2.10 in particular, a detailed gift agreement should be developed to ensure that the parameters of the naming are clearly understood by all parties. This will note any time limit agreed with the donor with regards to the naming.

Guidance for naming of buildings or facilities to reflect the brand and ethos of the University

- 2.11 Naming of buildings or facilities to reflect the brand, ethos, history and heritage and the connections (local and global) of the University may occasionally be deemed appropriate only when it is deemed to be compatible with the University's brand, mission and goals.

Approval process

2.12 Proposals for naming of buildings and facilities should be submitted in the first instance to the Director of Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) for consideration who, once reviewed, will then submit to the Provost responsible for the campus at which the naming potential relates for her/his initial consideration and approval.

The Director of DARO will then seek the endorsement of:

- The Director of Marketing and Communications
- The Director of Physical Resources
- The Director of People and Culture

The Director of DARO will then submit the proposal to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for review and approval.

- 2.13 Ultimate responsibility for approving proposals brought forward under this policy lies with the SLT. Once approved by SLT, any agreed naming rights should then be reported to Council.
- 2.14 The naming of a building or a facility is in the gift of the University and entirely at its discretion. All building and facility names will be reviewed by the University every five years. The University reserves

the right to terminate the naming rights at any time, if for any reason it considers the association with the name to be damaging to its reputation or if the donor or commercial partner is in breach of the agreement. Termination of naming rights shall be managed by SLT and reported to Council.

Honorary naming

- 2.16 Naming opportunities which aim to recognise outstanding achievement or service should be submitted in writing on the relevant Pro forma to the Director of Development and Alumni Relations for information and guidance. Those proposals that fall within the policy guidelines will then be forwarded to Provost, and subsequently the Director of Marketing and Communications and the Director of Physical Resources for their review and report and then on to the SLT for review and approval.

Philanthropic naming

- 2.17 Naming opportunities which aim to recognise philanthropic donations should be submitted in writing on the relevant Pro forma to the Development and Alumni Relations Office for information and guidance. Those proposals that fall within the policy guidelines will then be forwarded to Provost, and subsequently the Director of Marketing and Communications and the Director of Physical Resources for their review and report and then on to the SLT for review and approval.

Commercial naming

- 2.18 Naming opportunities which aim to recognise a corporate donor should be submitted in writing on the relevant Pro forma to the Development and Alumni Relations Office for information and guidance. Those proposals that fall within the policy guidelines will then be forwarded to Provost, and subsequently the Director of Marketing and Communications and the Director of Physical Resources for their review and report and then on to the SLT for review and approval.

Brand/ethos naming

- 2.19 Naming opportunities which aim to reflect the brand and ethos of the University should be submitted in writing on the relevant Pro forma to the Development and Alumni Relations Office for information and guidance. Those proposals that fall within the policy guidelines will then be forwarded to Provost, and subsequently the Director of Marketing and Communications and the Director of Physical Resources for their review and report and then on to the SLT for review and approval.

Term of Naming Rights

- 2.18 In approving naming decisions, consideration requires to be given by SLT based on a recommendation from the Director of Development and Alumni Relations, to the term for which the naming rights should be conferred.
- 2.19 Where a benefactor has made a substantial donation, it may be appropriate to confer the name “in perpetuity” i.e. for the life of the building, room or other facility. Where the building, room or other facility then undergoes demolition or redevelopment, the use of the name will cease at that time.
- 2.20 Where a facility has been refurbished, it may be appropriate to name the facility until such times as it next requires refurbishment.

Approval flowchart

- Step 1 Submit pro forma to Director of Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO)
- Step 2 Director of DARO to review and make recommendations (value, term, rationale) for the Provost;
- Step 3 Once approval received from the Provost, Director of DARO will submit to the Director of Marketing and Communications, the Director of Physical Resources and the Director of People and Culture to approve;
- Step 4 Director of DARO to submit recommendations to SLT;
- Step 5 If approved by SLT, the agreed naming right will be reported to Council.

Policy compiled by:

Development and Alumni Relations Office in consultation with COO, Provosts, Director of Marketing and Communications and Deputy Director of Physical Resources.