Outbound Sponsorship Policy

Section 1 - Background

(1) Outbound sponsorships play an important role in promoting ACU to target audiences, growing core business and reinforcing the brand, ACU Mission, Identity and Values and reputation of the University within the wider community.

(2) As an Australian public university, ACU receives much of its funding from the Australian government and through student contributions to deliver a quality educational and research program. ACU receives many requests for outbound sponsorships, and as such, it is imperative that these are formally assessed, managed and reported to ensure that funds are rigorously stewarded and to ensure that sponsorships entered into provide measurable benefits and outcomes.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) The purpose of this Policy is to provide a governance framework for outbound sponsorship. It provides information to assist ACU staff and external organisations in assessing whether a sponsorship opportunity is a good fit for ACU and direction on how sponsorship arrangements should be effectively managed in order to mitigate risk and provide value for money to ACU.

(4) Further information about applying, assessing, approving, declining, managing and evaluating outbound sponsorship arrangements is available in the Outbound Sponsorship Procedure. These resources provide direction on how outbound sponsorship agreements should be effectively managed and reported in order to mitigate risk and provide value for money to ACU, as well as mutually beneficial returns to our partner organisations.

Section 3 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Outbound Sponsorship	Outbound sponsorship is defined as a contractual business arrangement under which a sponsor (in this case ACU), for a specified term, provides a contribution in cash and/or in-kind value in return for specified negotiated commercial benefits. It is a mutually beneficial contract with the desired outcome of positive tangible returns to both parties. Sponsorship is not a gift, donation, hospitality (including purchasing a table at an event), grant or paid advertising, a stand-alone exhibition package or the supply of goods and services on their own. It is a package of benefits that may include some of these benefits in addition to branding and promotional opportunities.
In-kind Sponsorship	In-kind support refers to the use of ACU facilities, venues, equipment, and resources such as academics or student ambassadors to support an event, intellectual expertise, promotional tools, and the supply of branded merchandise.

Section 4 - Scope

(5) This Policy applies when ACU is sponsoring an external organisation or activity.

(6) Outbound sponsorship does not include:

a. in-bound sponsorships, i.e. ACU seeking financial support in exchange for delivering benefits to an external partner;
b. grants or direct funding provided to a recipient through a formally recognised program for a specified purpose;
c. funds paid through a bidding process to attract events;
d. endorsements, donations, philanthropic gestures, bequests or gifts, which impose no obligations on the receiver and offer little or no return to the donor. A sponsor expects to receive a reciprocal benefit beyond an acknowledgement;
e. purchasing goods or services for value, including advertising space, editorial comment or advertorials; and
f. sponsorship is not provided to individuals.

Section 5 - Policy Statement and Principles

(7) A set of Mandatory Requirements and Principles have been developed to ensure outbound sponsorships align with ACU strategies, ACU Mission, Identity and Values.

Mandatory Requirements

(8) All sponsorships with an external organisation must:

a. align and enhance ACU Mission, Identity and Values and brand attributes;
b. enhance the reputation of ACU;
c. deliver quantifiable benefits to ACU with mutually beneficial outcomes;
d. provide value for money;
e. provide promotional opportunities for ACU;
f. enhance relationships with stakeholders and/or communities in which ACU operates and/or is seeking to operate; and
g. consider ACU's national profile where conflict could arise with a locally based brand or organisation.

Principles

(9) The following principles should be considered:

a. Leverage the brand and mission
    i. Sponsorships aligned with the ACU Mission, Identity and Values can provide opportunities to see the mission in action through engaging with and providing tangible benefits to the community while engaging ACU stakeholders. They should build on the ACU brand to enhance identity and reputation, providing opportunities for ACU to connect with other audiences and promote brand messages.
b. Student experience
    i. Sponsorships can contribute directly or indirectly to the quality of the student experience, providing opportunities for student participation and other attractive benefits. These benefits may act to attract new students or benefit current students.
c. Stakeholder engagement

i. Sponsorships can promote our connection and value with community and industry. Benefits should provide ACU with opportunities to build relationships through engagement with key stakeholders including partners, industry, community, Church, students, staff and/or alumni.

d. Profile academics and/or research
    i. Sponsorships can provide opportunities to promote a specific ACU academic program, discipline, faculty, service or individual.

Exclusion Categories

(10) The University will not consider outbound sponsorship requests that fall under or support the following:

a. sponsorships that could be considered to be a conflict of interest including to the Catholic identity of the University;
b. products or services that denigrate, or unjustly exclude certain groups;
c. any political or overtly political campaigning organisation;
d. products or services consistent with the University's investment exclusions including alcohol, tobacco, gambling, pornography, weapons and/or technologies that place the University in conflict with Church teaching; and
e. sponsorship of individuals.

Section 6 - Criteria

(11) Outbound sponsorship proposals will be assessed in conjunction with a set of criteria:

a. Mandatory Requirements - must align with all;
b. Principles - must align with at least two Principles;
c. Target audience - reach to target audiences must be viable, relevant and offer benefits to ACU;
d. Leverage - present multiple opportunities to deliver key messages to target audiences in a way that has impact;
e. Appropriate lead-time - sufficient time for assessment, approval, planning, activation and implementation must be provided. Proposals received under the minimum lead times specified below may not be considered;
f. Sponsorships under $10,000 - proposals must be received at a minimum of six weeks prior to commencement;
g. Sponsorships over $10,000 - proposals must be received three months prior to commencement; and
h. Major sponsorships ($150,000 and over) – as a minimum, six months' notice must be given.

Section 7 - Applying, Assessment and Endorsement

Procedures

(12) Sponsorships must be proposed, assessed and endorsed in accordance with the steps outlined in the Outbound Sponsorship Procedure. Sponsorships can be funded by any area of the University however the endorsement of all sponsorships rests with executives identified in the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register.

Sponsorship Proposals

(13) All sponsorship requests should be accompanied with a proposal. Sponsorships under $10,000 may simply identify the suite of benefits in return for the sponsorship fee and details about the event and organisation. These details are the bare minimum expected for small investments. Sponsorship requests over $10,000 should supply a proposal including information on the following:

a. organisation, mission and values;
b. investment required for the sponsorship package outlined;
c. organisation's activities and reach;
d. summary of the event or activity to be sponsored; and
e. suite of benefits offered to ACU.

Assessing Requests

(14) All sponsorship requests should be assessed using the Outbound Sponsorship Assessment Application template. This template can be used by any staff member and provides a simple resource for effective assessment against ACU's sponsorship criteria.

(15) Sponsorship arrangements must align with all mandatory requirements and at least two Principles. While most of these seem straight forward, value for money may be more difficult to ascertain.

(16) Value for money can be determined by a number of factors including:

a. the value of the sponsorship investment compared to other channels that may achieve the same goals;
b. strategic benefits and risks, if any, of the proposed arrangement;
c. relevance of the offer to strategic goals and purpose; and
d. quality of the benefits.

(17) Assessing large sponsorships may require further analysis to build a business case in the form of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and more detailed risk assessment. For advice on assessing and proposing large sponsorship requests staff can contact the Associate Director, Communications and Creative Services.

Risk Management

(18) Potential risks to ACU should be assessed prior to entering into sponsorship arrangements in. Some examples of the inherent risks in providing or receiving sponsorship commonly include:

a. conflicts of interest including to the Catholic identity of the University (actual or potential);
b. embarrassment to the University;
c. direct or indirect personal benefits received by staff or students;
d. perceptions of being influenced by the sponsor / sponsorship recipient; and
e. perceptions of endorsing the sponsor / sponsorship recipient's products / services.

(19) It is critical to also understand what other sponsors may be involved with the organisation or event as aligning with them may pose a risk to ACU. It is mandatory to complete the Outbound Sponsorship Assessment Application outlined in the Outbound Sponsorship Procedure.

Budgeting for a Sponsorship

(20) When assessing an outbound sponsorship request, it must be clear what the cost of the overall arrangement will be and that there are no hidden costs such as staff travel, time, merchandise, freight etc. In addition to the sponsorship fee, any leverage activities such as signage or collateral, requests for in-kind products or services should be costed and added to the cash investment requested.

(21) Staff are required to obtain approval for the total cost of a sponsorship before sending an application for endorsement.

(22) ACU has a central Sponsorship Overhead budget for strategic University-wide sponsorships. If business units do not have the funds for a sponsorship, they can apply to access funds from the Sponsorship Overhead by indicating this need in the Outbound Sponsorship Assessment Application. Even though a sponsorship may fit the criteria, the budget is finite and funds may or may not be available at the time of a request.

Section 8 - Negotiating arrangements

Exclusivity

(23) Exclusive sponsorships mean that the sponsee is not to engage or accept sponsorship from another organisation in the same field or industry sector. In these cases there should be a higher level of visibility delivered to ACU but it will also attract a higher sponsorship fee. Unless stated in the sponsorship agreement, exclusivity should not be assumed. In the competitive landscape of higher education, exclusive sponsorship opportunities can be very beneficial. If the investment level is low however, exclusivity should not be expected and leveraging the sponsorship benefits to provide awareness and differentiation is critical.

Sponsorship Frameworks

(24) Organisations and events generally have a sponsorship framework with different packages and levels of investment and benefits offered. For example, often a Principal or Leading Sponsor category will offer a higher level of exposure than lower level sponsors. At times, it may be preferred to sponsor at a lower levels (ie. Supporting or Event Partner) if there is value for money offered or for example if the sponsorship ensures that ACU engages with a critical stakeholder. It is critical to understand the landscape of the sponsee's framework to assess where ACU will sit and what is expected in a sponsorship arrangement.

Sponsorship Benefits

(25) Usual sponsorship benefits include marketing and profile opportunities to increase awareness for ACU such as logo acknowledgement on sponsee promotions. These are important; however, staff should also look beyond these to ensure that the sponsorship offers value for money and the opportunity to extend ACU's engagement with the activity and target market. Benefits on digital platforms should be part of the offering to extend the reach of sponsorship activities as should access for staff and/or students to engage with the sponsorship activities.

(26) Other benefits staff can explore with sponsees include:

a. work experience that contributes to course requirements for students with leading industry and community organisations;
b. volunteering opportunities for students, staff and alumni;
c. opportunities to engage and promote academics in industry;
d. activities that build capacity at no cost for community members or groups;
e. exclusive benefits to engage and inspire students and staff;
f. collaboration on health and community programs;
g. activities that support access to equity groups; and
h. collaboration on research opportunities and vehicles to promote the outcomes in industry.

Negotiating the Agreement

(27) Appropriate sponsorship benefits should be negotiated and documented in the Outbound Sponsorship Letter of Agreement, where required, to ensure the sponsorship delivers value for money in accordance with the principles outlined in this Policy and the process outlined in the Outbound Sponsorship Procedure. The benefits should present

appropriate entitlements commensurate with the level of support.

Section 9 - Management

(28) Effective management and reporting processes must be applied to ensure value and accountability. Outbound sponsorships should have clear ownership, approved terms and activities and be regularly reviewed and evaluated. Staff managing sponsorships should consult this Policy and the Outbound Sponsorship Procedure.

(29) A staff member should be appointed to take ownership of managing the sponsorship on behalf of ACU. Staff members are required to nominate this person on the assessment form for endorsement. The day to day management of sponsorship activities or events will be the responsibility of this delegated manager.

(30) Each sponsorship initiative must be monitored at regular intervals documenting the planning and progress of the sponsorship initiative based on the agreed activities and benefits set out in the sponsorship agreement. This includes facilitating logo approvals, payment of sponsorship instalments, delivery of sponsorship entitlements, monitoring the sponsee's performance under the agreement and managing the conclusion or termination of the agreement, as relevant.

(31) Sponsorship provides a privilege to access benefits associated with an organisation, event or initiative. ACU must leverage these benefits to deliver the value that can be accessed from the opportunities. Staff should plan leverage activities to support the benefits offered. Collaboration with other areas of the University to access as many opportunities as possible will increase the value of the arrangement.

Payment of Sponsorship Fees and Associated Activities

(32) All payments associated with outbound sponsorship fees and activities must be coded to the dedicated outbound sponsorship natural account code (#42003).

Records - Sponsorship Register

(33) ACU maintains a University-wide Sponsorship Register and regular reporting of sponsorships is provided throughout the year to senior management. High level details of a sponsorship are recorded in the Register using assessment forms that have been endorsed.

ACU Logo use

(34) Staff managing sponsorships should consult ACU's Brand Identity Guidelines when using the ACU logo with external organisations. Any use of the ACU logo in sponsee marketing communications must be approved in accordance with clause 12.3 of the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register. Request any artwork using the logo from the sponsee and send it to design@acu.edu.au for approval in accordance with the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register before publishing.

Section 10 - Measurement and Evaluation

(35) All sponsorships should be monitored and their outcomes evaluated and recorded. The delegated staff member managing sponsorship arrangements will be responsible for measurement and evaluation. Staff should use the Outbound Sponsorship Evaluation Tool template.

(36) When assessing sponsorship requests staff are required to select what methods of measurement and evaluation will be used. Periodic reviews against deliverables or established KPI's and a post event summary or annual report are mandatory.

(37) Outbound sponsorship arrangements exceeding $50,000 should be evaluated with the Associate Director, Communications and Creative Services.

Section 11 - Review

(38) In line with the Policy Development and Review Policy, this Policy is scheduled for review every five years or more frequently if appropriate.

(39) Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Section 12 - Further Assistance

(40) Further resources are available to assist when applying, assessing, approving, planning, managing and evaluating outbound sponsorships; see the Outbound Sponsorship Procedure. Staff should ensure that the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register is reviewed and upheld in regards to endorsing sponsorships.

Section 13 - Associated Information

(41) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	31st January 2024
Review Date	30th April 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	31st January 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Kathy Vozella Chief Marketing Officer
Responsible Manager	Alisse Grafitti Associate Director, Communications and Creative Services
Enquiries Contact	Alisse Grafitti Associate Director, Communications and Creative Services --- Marketing and External Relations