Postgraduate advertising

Guidance and best practice
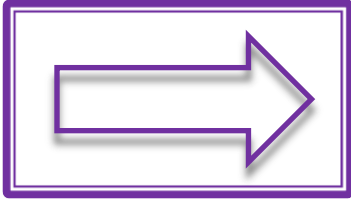
Contents

-

Purpose of document

If you wish to reach prospective Postgraduate students through advertising then the following document will be useful in order to help you:

- Identify when advertising should be used
- Plan a successful advertising campaign
- Choose the most appropriate channels for your audience
- Measure the success of your advertising campaign

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk
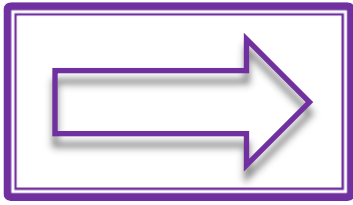
Getting started

It's very important that before embarking on any advertising, you discuss with your Faculty Marketing Team who will be able to assist you with the process - contact details can be found here. However, reading this guidance first and completing the briefing template beforehand (found in appendix 8.2), will help you prepare you so that you are equipped when meeting to discuss the project.

Do I need to advertise?

You may be considering spending money on running an advertising campaign but it is important that you first of all consider your reasons for advertising. This will help you to set clear and measurable objectives which will indicate whether your campaign has been successful and whether it has been worth your time, effort and money.

You may be considering running an advertising campaign if you:
- Need to raise awareness about a new postgraduate course
- Want to promote a specific opportunity i.e. new scholarship or funding opportunity
- You have received a significantly low number of applications
- You have an Open day or Visit day that you want to raise awareness of.

On the other hand, the following are not reasons for advertising:
- Your competition is advertising
- You have some money left and it needs spending
- You're cold called by a sales person and given a deal that seems reasonable.

Have you explored all your options?

Advertising is only one of the many channels available to you therefore we recommend that you discuss your requirements with your Faculty Marketing Team for advice about other suitable channels which could enhance your advertising campaign and create maximum impact. Some of these are

---

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

displayed below, but each faculty will also have its individual channels that are likely to be more tailored to your area of study.

Type of Channel - (Online, Print, Social media, E-newsletters, Current student messaging)

Online

Corporate website including course profiles

Perhaps the most important element of your marketing to get right, the corporate website attracts nearly 38 million views per year. Of this figure, the postgraduate study and programme pages (PGT and PGR) generate a total of nearly 20 million views per year. These substantial figures show the importance of having up-to-date, accurate, well-written information; which is the responsibility of each School. Your website information will be viewed many more times than any advertisement and has no associated cost for Schools and Faculties.

In addition, any advertising that is undertaken will almost certainly signpost back to this content, meaning that this is the foundation for any advertising and must be correct.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is also affected by out-of-date and poorly written information, adding to the importance of getting this right.

As well as being factually correct, information about your courses within the course profiles section should be written in a way that attracts applicants and brings what you offer to life. If you feel that you'd like some support with copywriting, talk to your Faculty Marketing team, or take advantage of some of the internal courses offered, such as Writing for the Web or Copywriting – both run by members of the University Communications and Marketing Division.

It is worth spending some time looking at the websites of competitor universities to understand how those across sector are marketing themselves, to ensure that we retain a competitive edge and to help you select your key selling points.

You can edit your course information via the web publishing module in Campus Solutions. Any questions about updating or editing your course profiles on the website contact the course administrator, your Faculty Marketing Team, or email studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk.

(Figures based on November 2014-October 2015).

----

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

School sites

A well as the corporate site, Schools have their own associated sites that sit within a Faculty structure. Many Schools have put a lot of effort into redesigning their sites in order to make them user friendly and easy to navigate, feature more rich content, and give applicants everything they need to know in order to apply.

As with the corporate website, School-level pages give you the chance to give a range of information in a medium that is our audience's primary method of gathering information. All details such as entry requirements etc are pulled through from the corporate site. If you have any questions about updating or editing your course profiles on the faculty/school website contact your faculty course administrator.

Print

Postgraduate prospectus

The postgraduate prospectus is printed annually for distribution July onwards for both home and overseas markets. It covers postgraduate taught and research study.

Each year schools are approached to update their content, and it is vital that this is not only checked for accuracy – you need to consider the prospectus as a major marketing opportunity to describe and sell your courses to a very wide audience.

In 2015 the Postgraduate Prospectus was downloaded from the website 17,696 times and 6405 were either mailed to enquirers or used at PG events across the world, showing the size of the audience that utilise this marketing tool.

The PG prospectus goes to print in June, with the project beginning in January. Faculty Marketing leads will be in contact with Schools in February with copy and deadlines – usually giving 3-4 weeks for updating of text.

It is recommended that colleagues look at prospectuses from other organisations when updating copy, to see what universities are doing to market their programmes, and so that we can position ourselves appropriately with our competitors.

----

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

If you would like to talk more about this project then please approach your Faculty Marketing representative listed below, or the Student Communications and Marketing team.

Social media (updates rather than advertising)

Centrally managed

Centrally-managed channels can be used push key messages out to very large audiences (UoM official Facebook page = 107,200 followers, UoM Admissions = 29,265 followers). Both pages are available to share School-level information, as well as more general University news, something we encourage Schools and Faculties to take advantage of. Please contact the Student Communications and Marketing Team for the Admissions account, or Tom Mason for the Official UoM page.

School / Faculty

Many Schools and Faculties now have their own Facebook and Twitter accounts, which provides the opportunity to interact with people who have a specific interest in your area of study. Although numbers will be a lot smaller than the general accounts mentioned above, you can be sure that those that are engaged have a real interest and are therefore more of a captive, 'warm' audience. Using both central and School or even programme level social media will give you the best opportunity to reach audiences who could potentially want to apply to your courses.

If you would like to learn more about running a social media channel speak to your Faculty Marketing Officer. There is also central support, with Social Media Surgeries run by the University's Social Media Coordinator – these can be booked via Staffnet.

E-newsletters

School level newsletters

E-newsletters will typically be a tool used with offer holders or current students due to the data that is available. However, if you do have contact details for enquirers or access to a suitable (*targeted*) mailing list (e.g. those who might

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

have attended a visit or open day), then e-newsletters are a great way to reach out to audiences. In addition, if e-newsletter platforms such as Communigator are used, then newsletters are fully trackable with extremely useful reports at your fingertips. For information on e-newsletters for student recruitment, contact the Student Communications and Marketing team.

Current student messaging

E-newsletters - My Mcr feature box

The post-registration element of the Student Communications and Marketing Team communicate with our current students via a number of channels. Messages about PG study are featured where appropriate, however, this isn't to advertise specific PG opportunities but generally encourage students to think about their future. When there are funding opportunities, for example through HEFCE, these are always sent via all available channels. Contact studentnews@manchester.ac.uk if you have any questions around these channels.

For opportunities to publicise individual programmes and areas of study, speak to your Faculty Marketing representative, as this can happen locally at School level.

Careers and Alumni may also feature activity in this area, it is recommended you contact them for further details.

▪ ▪

For general advice about advertising and marketing please contact:
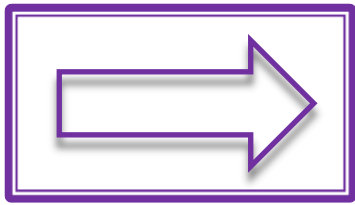Engineering and Physical Sciences – Zabina Kosar-Ahmed
Medical and Human Sciences – Sali Midjek-Conway
Humanities – Antoinette Perry
Life Sciences – Moyin Kwok

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

What does the University already do?

The University of Manchester website

See section 2.2

External course listings

Only 10% of traffic to the Postgraduate Taught section of the website comes from referrals from other external websites, however, this is still considered a significant number of visitors and therefore we invest time, resource and money into ensuring this information is kept up-to-date.
The University manages a number of course listings on external sites and these sites are carefully selected using insights gained from analysing data and market research to establish where prospective postgraduate taught students are looking for information and support when considering postgraduate study. We only work with trusted, reputable sites, recognised across the sector.

In some instances we also invest in enhanced institutional profiles or subscription-based course listings. Although we monitor and update the corporate course list on a regular basis, Schools, Faculties and CDTs (Centres for Doctoral Training) also have a responsibility of ensuring that the course content is kept up-to-date and often have their own login details to enable them to make changes to course information.

Here is a summary of the external websites where all PGT courses are listed as of January 2016.

---

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

Website	Other related sites	Free course list	Subscription based course list	Enhance institutional profile	Ability for Schools to edit course info
Target Postgrad	-	✓	✗	✓	✓
Masters Portal	PhD Portal, Short Courses Portal, Distance Learning Portal	✗	✓	✓	✗
Prospects	Chevening, UKPASS	✗	✓	✗	✗
Find a Masters	-	✗	✓	✗	✓
Find a phd	-	✗	✓	✗	✓
Hotcourses	Postgraduatesearch, Scholarship Search, Education UK, What Uni	✓	✗	✗	✗
UCAS Media	Education UK, Grade Guru, Hobsons, TopUniversities, Which.co.uk, Telegraph, UniFrog, Findthebest,Proquest/KnowUK, bachelorsportal.e, University-Directory, ShortCoursesportal	✓	✗	✗	✗
Think Postgrad	Postgraduate Studentships, Masters Compare, MyPostgradApps	✓	✗	✗	✗

It is worth noting that the University is also considering a central account with The Student Room, although have not yet confirmed what aspects of an account we will subscribe to. Once this is known it will be updated in this document and via the Student Recruitment Marketing Group.

For more information about these existing accounts and how to login please contact studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

- -

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk
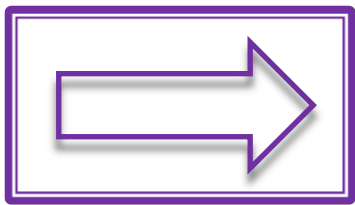
Before embarking on any advertising campaign it is important to ensure that the information at your source is up-to-date, accurate and of good quality - whether this is on the University website, school/faculty website or external website. Your advertising campaign is likely to be driving traffic to your source, so you want your visitor to find what they are expecting to find when they get there.

A very useful report 'Digital Marketing for Postgraduate Recruitment' is available from Net Natives which can be found in the Appendices (section 8) – this highlights trends in postgraduate marketing, recommendations, good practice and analysis.

It is also essential to remember that once you have bought into an advertising campaign, especially online, you need to review this regularly to check that it is working for you and giving you the return on investment that you expect. Once you have signed up to an ongoing campaign, never let it run without regularly checking on progress and communicating with the provider.

Things to consider

When planning your advertising campaign you should take into consideration a number of factors.

- Who is your audience and what are their characteristics and behaviours
- What is your product and how is it unique to anything else on the market
- Where does your audience seek information and what tools do they use
- What is your budget and how are you going to pay
- What do you want to achieve and how will you measure this

Audience and Segmentation

The most important element to consider when advertising is your audience. This will affect the content of your advert, tone, how it looks and where you advertise (see 'channels' below). Before selecting any channels for advertising, the audience must be considered – for example if you are

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

advertising a PhD course, is the site the type that a PhD student would be likely to use as part of their information search? What tone, terminology and visuals should be used that are appropriate for your audience? You should have a picture of them in your mind when writing your advert.

Product

The first thing to consider here is the product itself – if creating a new course there is much to consider at NPP1 stage. This includes market demand, demand internationally, competitors, and looking ahead, the possibility of running as a distance learning course.

The product you are advertising will dictate where you advertise. As well as any general higher education sites or publications, there may be niche channels that you wish to explore using. It is worth speaking to your Faculty Marketing Team before undertaking advertising in such publications/sites to ascertain whether these have been used before, what their reach is and whether they will provide value for money.

Channels

Information about the non-advertising channels utilised by the University, as well as recommended third party sites can be found in sections 2.2 and 3.2. These should be your first port of call when pursuing publicising your programme. If you wish to go beyond this, you need to consider whether the site is reputable and do our competitors feature? Is it optimised so that it appears high up on a Google search? And do the representatives from the site seem keen to build a relationship and look at the work of the School and University holistically, rather than just do one-off advertising at a 'special rate'?

If your programme attracts international applicants, then there are channels that can be utilised to target different countries, such as Education UK, Hotcourses Abroad (and associated country-specific pages like www.hotcoursesabroad.com/malaysia). There are also various companies specialising in driving applications, for example BAM or Study Portals. We recommend that you talk to the International Office to learn more (Contact details can be found below).

It is also worth considering that if it is a channel that the university uses (such as those in section 3.2), that it's recommended you approach your Faculty

- -

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

Marketing Team to ensure that the best value can be achieved by negotiation of rates at a University level rather than any 'cherry picking' of individuals across the University, and higher rates being charged as a result.

Budget and finance

One of the major factors to be considered before undertaking advertising is budget. This can obviously dictate the kind of advertising that is chosen, and similarly, any underspend can be what spurs to you to consider advertising in the first place. We recommend that any advertising that is undertaken is part of a planned campaign or to market a specific programme or event, rather than a reactive action, taking a chance on something where there are no objectives and little is known about any return on investment.

Prices across sites vary greatly and often depend on the type of contract – whether it is for one school or across the whole institution.

Setting objectives

Linking in to budget and return on investment, it's imperative you set objectives before undertaking advertising. This is to allow you to reflect on:
-Why you are advertising
-What results you are looking for
-How you will measure these results
-How this will steer whether you will repeat the advertising.

An example from the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences below, shows that the objectives set before this targeted PGT digital marketing campaign were to drive up enquiries, and ultimately applications, which will be a common objective for colleagues across the University.

The table shows how they measured their success. Although it is worth noting that it is very difficult to directly attribute an advert to results such as enquiries and applications without a CRM system in place, analytics and unique URLs do give an indication of how people are finding your webpages and peaks at times of campaigns running are indicative of people engaging with it.

- -
studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

	Budget	Clicks	Enquiries	Applications	Cost per Click	Cost per Enquiry	Cost per Application
Email	£26,089	1500	55	23	£17.39	£474.35	£1,134.30
AdWords	£10,303	2638	50	20	£3.91	£206.06	£515.15
Social Media	£3,273	1424	31	20	£2.30	£105.58	£163.65

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk
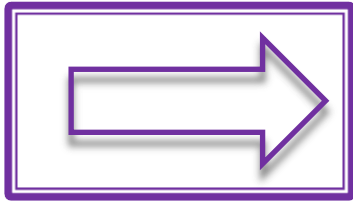
Measuring return on investment

It is always difficult to measure ROI within higher education, when there could be a number of complex factors that influence an individual to enquire, apply and register at a University. As can be seen below, tracking print advertising is very difficult and inaccurate, we therefore recommend that online advertising should be your first consideration and where you concentrate most of your effort (there may be exceptions for this, especially for more niche subjects where print is still prominent).

Print

Measuring the success of print campaigns is very difficult due to lack of tracking. There are only really two ways to try and get a picture of how effective it is:

-Gaining feedback through market research 'how did you hear about us'. However, this can be labour intensive, difficult to generate enough feedback and only provide part of the picture.

-Creating unique (marketing) URLs to feature within the advert, so that any hits you receive on this link have been generated by the advert. While this can be useful, not everyone who sees the advert and are prompted to take action will necessarily visit the URL i.e. may Google instead, gain information from a third party site, not seek any further information but still have registered what you have advertised.

Online advertising

As highlighted, online advertising is much easier to track. Click throughs can be measured so that you can see how many people have seen your advert and then clicked within it to visit whichever website you have linked to.

You can then work out the cost per impression by dividing the cost of placing your advert by the number of clicks generated to assess the cost effectiveness and profitability of your online advertising. Due to a current lack of CRM at the University, it is not possible to track whether these hits then go on to order a prospectus, visit us, apply etc, but knowing that audiences are engaged with your advert and that it is prompting them to take action is crucial and will indicate whether advertising is worth your time and investment.

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

Social media advertising

Social Media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are widely and strongly recommended for postgraduate advertising, as your advert will appear within someone's newsfeed as opposed to expecting your target audience to visit a specific website. Advertising with Google Search can also be effective but does require some expertise to really utilise the tool effectively.

All the social media channels listed allow you to carefully target your audience – minimising your costs (particularly when compared to print or other forms of digital advertising) whilst increasing the likelihood that your message will be seen by an audience who are likely to be interested in your message. For example targeting options on LinkedIn include:

1.   Location (required field): You can select multiple locations from continent to city level
2.   Company Name (current employer listed on member's profile)
3.   Company Industry
4.   Company Size
5.   Job Title
6.   Job Function
7.   Job Seniority
8.   Member Skills
9.   Member Schools
10.   Degrees
11.   Fields of Study
12.   Member Groups - up to 100 active groups
13.   Member Gender
14.   Member Age

Whilst costs vary across the many different social media platforms – understanding the behaviour of your audiences will help you identify the right set of tools for you to use as your audience may be more likely to use one of the channels instead of all of them. You can also set a budget you wish to spend on these channels and simply run a campaign until the money runs out, or you can increase the budget to increase your reach without having to create a new campaign.
Speak to your Faculty Marketing contact in the first instance for more information.

- -

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk
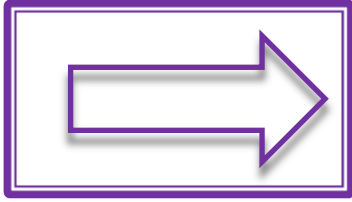
Advert templates

The University's design team have created some examples of advertisement good practice, suitable for print or web- these can be found in section 8 (appendix 8.3).

We recommend that you use these templates for your advertising. They are available as InDesign files and if you do not have this software available to you, access to the Graphic Support Workshop can be arranged to allow you to compile the advert. Please contact Jane Naylor for more information.
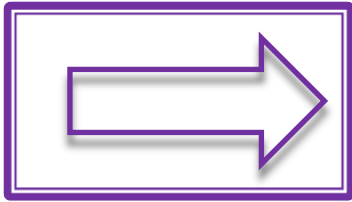
Next steps

If you are new to placing advertisements then you don't have to go it alone, there are plenty of your colleagues in the University who are experienced in creating successful advertising campaigns and making the most of your advertising budget. It is recommended that you liaise with your Faculty Marketing contacts before undertaking adverts and that you use the profroma in Appendix 8.1 to help guide you through the process. Below is a list of useful contacts:

Your Faculty marketing team:
Engineering and Physical Sciences – Zabina Kosar-Ahmed
Medical and Human Sciences – Sali Midjek-Conway
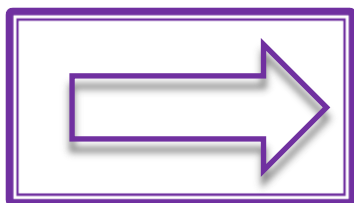Humanities – Antoinette Perry
Life Sciences – Moyin Kwok

The Student Communications and Marketing Team
Marieke Mollitt

Student Recruitment and International Development:

Head of UK/EU Student Recruitment– Bernard Strutt
International Office – Fiona Brown

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

- -

Postgraduate Advertising proforma

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Postgraduate Advertising Proforma

This proforma is for use if you are considering undertaking any kind of postgraduate advertising, in order to create a brief. We recommend that you take this form to your Faculty Marketing representative to discuss your needs further before taking action.

Name	
Role	
Academic School/Team	
Area to be advertised (programme/scheme etc)	
What, if any, marketing activity has already taken place for this area?	
What is the motivation for advertising (e.g. to increase enquiries by 10%, to increase applications by 5%)	
What is your message? i.e. what do you want to tell your audience	
Who is your audience? (e.g. demographics,	

- -

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

interests, fields of study)	
What are the programme's unique selling points?	
What budget is available?	
What channel do you wish to use? (e.g. online advert, Facebook boost)	
How do you hope to measure the success of this advert?	

Net Natives white paper on Digital Marketing for Postgraduate Recruitment

See attached PDF 'Appendix 1 -Digital-Marketing-for-Postgraduate-Recruitment-Whitepaper-May-2015-min.pdf'

---

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

Postgraduate advert templates

At Manchester we'll give you an amazing university experience that's rooted in a rich heritage, yet firmly focused on your future

www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate

At Manchester we'll give you an amazing university experience that's rooted in a rich heritage, yet firmly focused on your future

Studying at Manchester gives you the chance to make a difference

We're recognised globally for the quality and volume of our pioneering research. The breadth of our research activity surpasses that of any other UK university and in 2013/14 we attracted £298 million in external research funding.

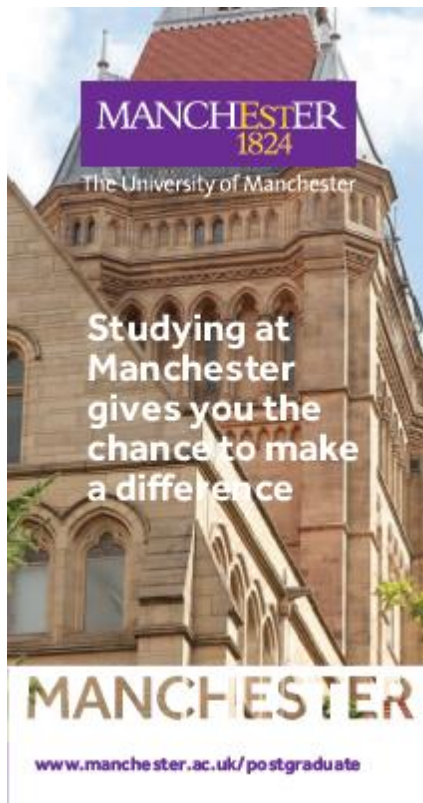**JOIN US**
www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate

Studying at Manchester gives you the chance to make a difference

www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk

studentmarketing@manchester.ac.uk