

Policy on the Naming of Ulster University Buildings and Spaces

Policy Name – Policy on the Naming of Ulster University Buildings and Spaces	
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Policy Owner	Policy Author/Reviewer
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<p>Queries relating to this document should be directed to the Policy Owner – Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan, c.gormley@ulster.ac.uk</p> <p>This document can be made available on request, in alternative formats and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.</p>	



Policy on the Naming of Ulster University Buildings and Spaces

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles that Ulster University will follow to name or rename buildings and spaces¹. The naming of buildings and spaces should facilitate orientation and movement around the campus.

The naming of buildings and spaces is generally associated with four scenarios:

- To honour individuals for particular achievement;
- To acknowledge a connection with place and/or heritage;
- To recognise significant benefaction; or
- As part of a commercial contract or agreement.

The principal motivation to consider a naming opportunity is that the University wishes to recognise a particular achievement by an individual/s or to acknowledge a significant connection with a place or heritage.

A naming opportunity can also be an occasion for engaging with staff, students and communities to enhance the relationship and connection of the University to our community and region.

The process of naming of buildings and spaces will be overseen by Vice Chancellor Office to mark significant landmark buildings, spaces, events or individuals. Staff, students and stakeholders will be invited to consult on these accordingly.

This policy describes the principles that the University will follow to name or rename buildings and spaces and outlines the line of responsibility for the final decision of naming a building or space. Note: this policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Acceptance of Donations Policy².

Naming or changing the name of a building or space is something that should be considered thoroughly, not based on a sentiment that may fade over time. Examples of items for consideration are:

- The attendant cost and codification;
- The impact on brand and the need to re-orientate staff, students and visitors;
- The relatively small number of naming opportunities available;

¹ It is not the intention that partnerships with companies or other organisations which are referenced in signage (for example, 'in partnership with') would be covered by this policy as these are reviewed on a case by case basis and progressed from DARO to SLT.

² The Acceptance of Donations Policy is currently being finalised.

- Any potential reputational damage arising, for example, from association with individuals or historical regimes; and
- Actions by individuals or those associated with such individuals may bring the University into disrepute.

Company names have relatively short lifespans and additional consideration should therefore be given to the type of arrangement which involves the naming buildings or spaces after companies. In the case of naming of buildings or spaces which involves a commercial contract, additional consideration must be given, including to alignment with the University's brand and to the potential for use of buildings and spaces needing to change over time.

The principle of naming buildings and spaces has implications for:

- The sensitive management of relationships with family members of those individuals being acknowledged;
- 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; and
- The University's Estate Services team, local authorities and emergency services.

In general, the naming of buildings or spaces should not be discipline-specific due to the fluid nature of occupancy. The Estate Strategy and programme should be taken into consideration.

Naming must be aligned to other considerations such as Marketing and Communications policies and guidelines. 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 and spaces.

Policy

Building and space names should support and enhance the brand of the University, ensuring that names are consonant with the mission, values and goals of the University.

Building and spaces names must have clarity and simplicity, aiding orientation and movements around all University sites.

Names used for existent structures such as buildings or spaces, on campus or in surrounding areas, should not be reused.

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.

The naming of a building / space will be assessed in terms of the impact on equality of opportunity and good relations in line with the relevant University procedures.

Guidance for honorary naming of buildings or spaces

Names of staff, students or lay-members of the University should not normally be used to name buildings or spaces, 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.

Names of people from outside the University community can be used as building or space 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 or societal 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, an Olympic Medal, or recognition of an equivalent status.

Guidance for philanthropic naming of buildings or spaces

Buildings and spaces named in recognition of a major benefaction linked to that building should normally contribute to at least 20% of the cost. Where refurbishment to an existing structure is being carried out and naming of an existing structure 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, for example, 50% - 75%.

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

Approval process

Proposals for naming of buildings and spaces should be submitted in the first instance to the Ulster University, Office of the Provost from where it will be processed to the Building Naming Committee for consideration (membership below).

- Acting Director of DARO and Deputy Director (fund raising)
- Director of Community Engagement
- Head of Communications – Special Projects
- Director of Estates Services

Once reviewed by the Building Naming Committee, a recommendation based on the guidance within this document will be sent to the Provost who will then submit the naming proposal to The Vice Chancellor's Office for review and endorsement, prior to forwarding the proposal to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for review and approval.

Ultimate responsibility for approving proposals brought forward under this policy lies with the SLT. Once approved by SLT, any agreed naming decisions should then be reported to the next available meeting of Council.

The naming of a building or a space 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 approved by SLT and reported to Council at the next available meeting.

Brand/ethos naming

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 Office of the Provost for information after which, if appropriate, will be issued to the Building Naming Committee for consideration.

Term of Naming Rights

In approving naming decisions, consideration needs to be given to the term for which the naming rights should be conferred.

It may be appropriate to confer the name in perpetuity. Where the building or space subsequently undergoes demolition or redevelopment, the use of the name will normally cease at that time.

Where a space has been refurbished, it may be appropriate to name the space until such times as it next requires refurbishment.

Approval flowchart:

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| Step 1 | Submit proforma to The Office of the Provost Office. |
| Step 2 | Proposal to be reviewed by the Building Naming Committee |
| Step 3 | Provost to submit recommendations from the Building Naming Committee to the Vice-Chancellor Office for endorsement, where appropriate. |
| Step 4 | Provost to submit recommendations to SLT for approval, where appropriate; |
| Step 5 | Where approved by SLT, the agreed name will be reported to Council at the next available meeting. |

Once these steps have been completed, time needs to be built in for a robust [Equality Screening](#) process. Equality Screening Consultation takes place 2 times annually (March and October). The consultation period is usually 12 weeks, unless a holiday period falls within the 12 weeks (in which case we add on 2 weeks on – making 14 weeks). The equality screening proforma is updated annually.

Policy compiled by:

Development and Alumni Relations Office in consultation with the Provost, Building Naming committee. Updated Provost Office August 2024.