Making us all look good

Brand chapter
"It fills me with great pride to say ‘I am from the University of Edinburgh’. I say this quite often, and more often when I am not in Edinburgh. Everyone knows the name, and most people say ‘great university’. Maybe they say it because I am the Director of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs but mostly I believe it’s because our brand precedes any introduction. It tells the audience who we are and what we do. It conveys satisfaction and emotional connections we have made. Our brand defines our place in the world. Fortunately for us, there is something very special about our brand. What this book attempts to do is define what makes us special and give us some tools to help ensure that we continue to express, articulate and evaluate our brand in our work.”

Dr Ian Conn
Director of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs
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What is brand and why is it important?

To many people, branding and academia may seem unlikely bedfellows. Creating a brand is often seen as a diminishing process; reducing complex messages and ideas to short words and simple visuals, while universities such as our own encourage detail and discourse. Furthermore, it is commonly thought that branding is all about short-term commercial gain and is therefore the antithesis of the long-term values at the heart of academia. The truth is that a brand is neither a logo nor a slogan – and definitely not short-term – but is a reflection of everything we do and everything we believe in. As Philip Kotler wrote in Marketing Management (2003): ‘A brand is much more than a name, a logo, colours or a tagline – it is essentially a promise to deliver a set of features, benefits of services consistently.’

For the purposes of this brand book, an introduction to the beliefs and qualities that make the University of Edinburgh unique, it would be just as appropriate to substitute ‘brand’ for another everyday word: reputation. In today’s increasingly complex and competitive environment, creating and maintaining our reputation is vital when it comes to attracting the very best students and staff, and the funding to help us achieve our goals. Perhaps you don’t even realise how much you are doing to strengthen the University brand every single day. But by striving for excellence, creating emotional connections, and telling people what a special place this is, you are playing a part in building a clear and compelling brand that helps people associate the University of Edinburgh name with credibility and quality.

In short, a strong and consistent brand helps us project a strong and simple message of the University; market ourselves more easily; collaborate, partner and engage effectively with leaders; and ultimately maintain and help enhance our ranking as one of the top 20 universities in the world.

So, what exactly is our brand? And where does it come from? Well, unlike some recently invented retail brands, it has been around for a very long time – more than 400 years. The story of our brand is the story of the University. As Ian says earlier in this book: ‘It fills me with great pride to say I am from the University of Edinburgh. Our brand precedes any introduction.’

Of course, a long history is no protector of brand – just ask Woolworths, Viyella and British Rail. Today’s successful brands (and the University of Edinburgh is no exception) are founded on their ongoing commitment to stakeholders; essentially a promise to customers – and are backed up by a set of unique qualities that provide value and worth, and to which everyone in the organisation subscribes each and every day.

The following pages talk about our history, our brand promise and our shared values, and how together they create a ‘personality’ for the University that is as unique as the people within it. It’s that personality that shapes the outward expression of our brand – and determines how we look, how we speak and what we say.
The Edinburgh Story

For more than four centuries, the University of Edinburgh has been changing the world. Our people have explored space, revolutionised surgery, won Olympic medals, published era-defining books and led the way in science and technology. Today, we continue to make our mark, with world-leading experts educating the pioneers of tomorrow. Our reputation precedes us.

The University of Edinburgh brand, therefore, carries enormous weight and gravitas. It is so much more than a logo on a building, or a slogan on a website. Nevertheless, these outward articulations (the words and images we use every day) are fundamental to how we want people to respond, intellectually and emotionally, to what we stand for and what we are – one of the great universities of the world.

Founded in 1583, the University of Edinburgh has an unrivalled tradition of excellence in scholarship, enquiry, research and teaching that is almost impossible to put into context. So, we do so by pointing to some of the extraordinary people who have passed through our doors – such distinguished academics as Joseph Lister, Sir James Young Simpson and James Clerk Maxwell, whose ground-breaking work changed lives forever and for the better.

Our law school was established in 1707 and during the 1700s the University was the pre-eminent medical school in the English-speaking world. However, it was during the Scottish Enlightenment of the 18th century that our ideas really began to attract the world’s attention. At the forefront of this creative period was a group of Edinburgh academics, including Joseph Black, the chemist who discovered carbon dioxide and latent heat; Adam Ferguson, a philosopher, historian and pioneer of modern sociology; and James Hutton, the ‘Father of Modern Geology’. Their ideas helped build the foundations for the world in which we live today.

In recent years, our academics’ research achievements have had global implications. Nobel Prize winner Emeritus Professor Peter Higgs was a lecturer at Edinburgh when he proposed the Higgs boson, while our scientists devised technology used in today’s smartphones, and created Dolly the Sheep, the first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell.

Famous alumni also include former MI5 director Stella Rimington and six-time Olympic track cycling champion Sir Chris Hoy, while author JK Rowling and musician Nicola Benedetti are among many inspirational honorary graduates.

Today, the University is home to 33,000 students who study across some 100 disciplines. During the period of their studies, home is also the city of Edinburgh, one of the most beautiful in Europe and the exciting backdrop to international festivals, lectures, sports and arts events. The treasures of Scotland are also on our doorstep, but we have a global outlook and an international reputation.

All these elements are reflected in our corporate identity; our core logo, while we stand proudly behind a statement of intent: Influencing the world since 1583. However, when it comes to truly understanding the story of our brand, we need look no further than our history, our people and our achievements – the Edinburgh Story.
Our commitment

We are committed to:

- Improving quality of life and wealth through world-leading research
- Delivering excellence in teaching and learning
- Investing in enhanced student experience and wellbeing
- Widening access to first class education
- Adding value to Scotland’s economy and contributing to the global economy through the commercialisation of our research
- Making an impact on public policy in Scotland and beyond
- Connecting campus and community in Edinburgh

These commitments are summed up in a single statement. It is the essence of who we are – a brand promise that underpins everything we do:

**Influencing the world since 1583**

You will see this message a lot. It is both memorable and succinct, and neatly combines our proud achievements of the past with our aspirations for the future. Significantly, it has relevance to everyone connected with the University of Edinburgh today, from those carrying out cutting-edge research to those working hard to enhance the student experience.

Our brand is taking shape. We have examined who we are and what we do. Now we need to look at how we do it. As we are not only a university of bricks and mortar, but also a university of people, how we deliver our brand promise will be determined by what we stand for and what we believe in. These are our values.
Our values

As with the human personality, you don’t invent corporate values; they are shaped by life experiences, history and the people we come into contact with. For example, we believe in being innovative, influential and global today because we have also been all of these things for more than 400 years. Similarly, we can’t list a defining set of brand values without also explaining where they come from and why they will be important to subscribe to in the future.

We don’t shout about our values or write about them in University publications – they sit quietly in the background, where, together with the Edinburgh Story and our overarching brand promise, they help complete the final part of our brand picture: our brand personality.

Influential
Throughout our history, we have been respected and trusted for the quality of our work. Our mark is an assurance of excellence, and commands respect worldwide. Our expert opinion is sought nationally and internationally, and we are considered a significant player in higher education.

Global
Our influence and connections have always reached far beyond Edinburgh. Today, we have students from 140 countries, and collaborate with academic institutions, companies and other organisations around the world.

Accessible
We offer a variety of ways to learn. We are friendly, open and welcoming. We endeavour to seek new opportunities, new methods and new routes to ensure we can cater to our diverse community.

Stimulating
We have always provided an environment for the best in the world to research, teach, meet, discuss, create, innovate and grow. Today, we have facilities that inspire and provide opportunities for creative learning – all against the backdrop of one of the world’s most beautiful and vibrant cities.

Innovative
We are known as pioneers in the global field of higher education. We are considered a global leader in research and teaching, and seek out new ideas, opportunities and answers. We set the pace.

Excellence
Our most valuable resource is our staff and students – they are chosen because they are the best in their field. We support and encourage the best learning, and create the right environments for quality teaching and research. We are always outstanding.
Our brand personality

It is fair to say that in marketing’s toolbox, brand personality can have all the subtlety of a very large hammer. It can be contrived, fabricated and manipulated to give otherwise homogenous products distinct personalities that appeal to particular customers. The University of Edinburgh is not, however, a supermarket – our brand personality has been shaped over many centuries by tangible attributes and beliefs, by our people and their achievements. Our brand personality is real and distinctive.

In order for us to continue being a global institution that influences and attracts the world’s brightest minds, it is important that we never lose sight of where we’ve come from, and who we want to be. As the sum of everything that makes us great, our brand personality will drive our communications, both visual and verbal.

So, if the University was a person, what sort of person would we be?

**A spirited and passionate team player.**
We are committed to increasing our global impact and contribution to society. We bring together a diverse community of students and scholars, and unite specialist research strengths as cross-disciplinary responses to transform knowledge into practice and train a new generation of global citizens.

**A firm believer in being respectful and ethical at all times.**
Of course, just as people don’t carry around a big sign saying what they’re like, we don’t express our personality in these words. As people, our unique and distinct personalities are expressed by what we say and how we say it, and by the clothes we wear. As a university, our brand personality is articulated by our visual style (or visual identity), our key messages and how we communicate them (our tone of voice).

These components of brand are introduced in the following chapters.

**An influencer on a global platform who leads with confidence and inspiration.**
We are a large, diverse, global community of talent and enthusiasm that stimulates collaborative, dynamic, clever thinking and action, and celebrates ambition and thoroughness. Our work is often carried out at a national or global scale but we remain a homely, friendly, caring and nurturing place.

**An innovator who seeks out opportunities.**
Our people and their achievements have rewritten history and determined how people think and feel about the University of Edinburgh. They have explored space, revolutionised surgery, won Olympic medals, published era-defining books, been pioneers in science and technology... and provided a benchmark for staff and attracted the students we wish to have.
### Key messages

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<td>Influencing the world</td>
<td>Edinburgh has created global citizens since 1583</td>
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<td>Rooted in Scotland, influencing the world</td>
<td>Edinburgh’s great minds work/research/study, play and live here</td>
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<td>Excellence and innovation is part of the Edinburgh legacy</td>
<td>Edinburgh connects you to a world-class community</td>
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<td>Edinburgh embodies a culture of leadership</td>
<td>Valued and respected in the world job market</td>
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<td>Edinburgh’s influence makes history</td>
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<td>Edinburgh’s blueprint for innovation</td>
<td>Keeping in good company</td>
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<td>Investing for the future since 1583</td>
<td>For use with Scottish Business pledge:</td>
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<td>Inspiring futures</td>
<td>1st University to sign up for Scottish Business Pledge</td>
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<td>Edinburgh helps you to make the most of who you are</td>
<td>Embracing the principles of fairness, equality, opportunity and innovation.</td>
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