

PURDUE INSTITUTES
AND CENTERS

Brand Playbook

INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of this playbook?

- Define the role Institutes and Centers play within the Purdue brand.
- Explore why every communication contributes to Purdue's reputation.
- Showcase the opportunity to communicate on behalf of one of the world's leading public universities.
- Answer the questions we hear most often.

PART 1

The Purdue Brand Is Your Greatest Asset

Why does consistency matter for a brand?

A brand is more than logos and visual elements. Purdue's brand encompasses what we stand for, what we offer, our story, our personality and how we communicate. Every interaction contributes to how audiences experience Purdue.

Consistency within each brand interaction creates:

- **Recognition**
- **Trust**
- **Credibility**
- **Impact**

But shouldn't Institutes and Centers focus on differentiating themselves from other units at Purdue?

Put simply, no. Your audience often sees Purdue first, not your specific unit. This is a good thing: It gives your message the benefit of Purdue's legacy, recognition and credibility.

Creating separate brand language may unintentionally create a fragmented understanding of Purdue.

- Your audience is usually much less familiar with Purdue than you are.
- Consider whether this may be someone's first interaction with Purdue.
- Ask: Will this communication feel consistent with future interactions they'll have with Purdue?

You don't need to create a separate identity to be memorable. Your stories are what make your unit distinctive. Every institute and center has unique expertise, discoveries, partnerships and impact. Those differences should be celebrated.

- Your work should stand apart, but your branding shouldn't have to.

Instead of focusing on creating a unique brand for your unit, focus on ways **YOUR UNIT EXEMPLIFIES** what Purdue stands for, and use the Purdue master brand to tell that story.

PART 2

Preparing to Develop a New Communication or Marketing Initiative

Before developing any new communication or marketing initiative, ask the following questions:

☐ Are we tackling a marketing or communication opportunity, or are we trying to solve a branding problem?

- Individual units are often best positioned to address communication and marketing related to their specific audiences, goals and initiatives.
- If your challenge involves Purdue's brand, such as visual identity, messaging or brand alignment, Purdue Brand Studio can partner with you to determine the best path forward.

☐ To accomplish our goals, can we use existing approved Purdue assets and resources like logos, language, photos, graphic elements, etc., to add credibility and power to what we are building?

- It's a great idea to use existing approved elements to strengthen what you are communicating instead of creating new elements.

☐ Would someone outside Purdue understand this as coming from Purdue?

- It should always be clear that your unit is contained within the larger Purdue brand ecosystem.
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The Questions We Hear Most Often

As you create materials for your unit, you may run into questions about language, logos, co-brands, type treatments and acronyms. This section offers practical guidance for making those decisions while staying aligned with Purdue’s master brand.

BRAND LANGUAGE AND TAGLINES/SLOGANS

Can we create a tagline or slogan for our unit?

Put simply, no. Taglines and slogans are not permitted within Purdue’s brand.

Purdue doesn’t use taglines — even our brand essence, “Persistent Innovation. Together,” is not a tagline or a slogan (see Page 11 of the [Purdue Brand Guidelines](#)). It serves as a recall device and a mental prompt and anchor to Purdue’s story. It is not a required phrase to repeat in every communication.

Section 3 (Page 24) of the [Purdue Brand Guidelines](#) explores this topic in more detail.

- Purdue’s core brand language provides high-level expressions of the Purdue brand voice and is particularly appropriate when speaking for the university as a whole. It does not need to appear in every message.
- When your audience is more specific, use language that speaks directly to that audience, goal or subject matter while remaining aligned with Purdue’s voice and brand.

- 1 In the lab, in the field, in the studio and on the stage. *WE KEEP GOING.*
- 2 Finding new ways to reduce the contaminants in our drinking water. *AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.*
- 3 Engineering new ways to bring fresh, healthy food to all who seek it. *THAT’S MY GIANT LEAP.*

These phrases show how Purdue’s core brand language can be used to tell your unit’s story in a way that is “so Purdue” without creating a tagline or slogan.

BRAND LANGUAGE AND TAGLINES/SLOGANS

Why does Purdue discourage taglines and slogans?

Consistent brand language helps audiences quickly recognize Purdue, but using and reusing taglines and slogans compete with Purdue’s existing brand language.

Fragmented messaging creates fragmented brand recognition. A unified voice allows the university’s collective work to become greater than any individual message.

This guideline is about building on an established brand that has already been researched, tested and proven effective.

When does a phrase become a tagline?

If a phrase appears repeatedly across platforms, campaigns or merchandise — and starts to feel like a unit’s “thing” — it’s functioning as a tagline and starts to be seen as a brand’s consistent language.

If you are wondering if your unit is unintentionally creating a tagline or brand language, use the following questions to guide your thinking:

- Is this phrase appearing repeatedly across platforms and across time?
- Is it tied specifically to one unit and not the Purdue brand as a whole?

▪ Does it have no planned end date?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may be getting into tagline territory.

If audiences begin to associate the phrase with your unit — or with Purdue as a whole — it’s probably functioning as a tagline.

Can I repeat a phrase across pieces of a campaign?

Put simply, yes. Phrases repeated across a limited campaign are not considered taglines. However, it is important that the phrase stays within the campaign; otherwise, it can begin to function as an unauthorized tagline or brand language.

Units may find it useful to use a phrase or set of phrases consistently for a limited campaign. For example:

“Victories & Heroes:
Your Campaign for Purdue”

“Celebrating
America 250”

What’s the difference between campaign language and core brand language?

Campaign language is temporary. Core brand language is enduring.

Campaigns support specific goals, audiences and moments.

Campaign language should have a defined:

| AUDIENCE | OBJECTIVE | END DATE |

Core brand language represents Purdue as a whole.

The broader and longer-lasting an initiative is, the more it should align with Purdue’s master brand and use core brand language.

Campaign language can be appropriate when it is used within a defined campaign and does not replace core brand language.

Campaign Language vs. Core Brand Language

Campaign Language	Core Brand Language
Temporary	Enduring
Specific audience	Broad audiences
Specific goal	Purdue mission
Ends eventually	Continues in perpetuity
Supports specific Purdue functions or areas	Represents Purdue as a whole

How can I make my unit's work distinctive without slogans and taglines?

Differentiate your unit and your unit's work through:

| **STORIES** | **RESEARCH** | **DISCOVERIES** | **PARTNERSHIPS** | **PEOPLE** | **OUTCOMES** |

The Purdue brand clearly expresses what makes Purdue distinct. Let your unit demonstrate how that mission comes to life in ways only your unit can fully own.

Use Purdue's Message Map and storytelling filters to identify themes that connect your unit's work to Purdue's larger messaging and mission.

- Consider identifying storytelling “themes” for your unit to return to instead of word-for-word phrases to reuse.

See the Message Map (Page 18) and storytelling filters (Page 27) within the [Purdue Brand Guidelines](#) for more inspiration.

More information can also be found in Module 2 of the [Purdue Brand Training video series](#).

- Explore what kinds of language your unit would like to use for each theme. Consider the tone and the audiences for each theme. Then, use these theme guidelines to help create content instead of using the same phrases repeatedly.

Avoid unintentionally creating logos for your unit. We often see this in seals that are used repeatedly throughout a unit's work. While a seal may be altered to create merchandise design, using a seal repeatedly can turn into a kind of logo that could dilute the Purdue brand's impact.

Will my unit be allowed to use its own logo?

Generally, no. Units are not allowed to create their own logo or mark.

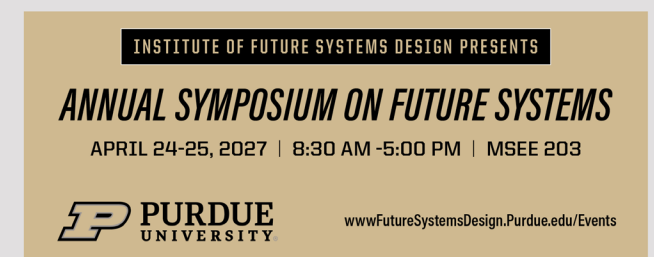
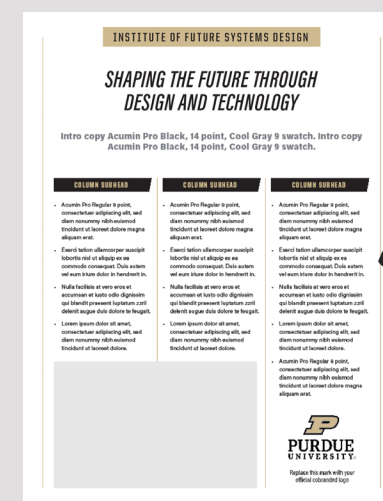
- Purdue's brand architecture provides a framework for how units are represented within the university's brand. This includes co-brands.
- If your unit has an approved co-brand, use it according to Purdue's brand guidelines. You do not have to use your unit's co-brand every time. Often, a type treatment paired with the Purdue

University signature logo is more useful than a co-brand.

- If you do not have a co-brand, a Purdue University logo and appropriate type treatment may be used.

If you would like to explore whether your unit needs a co-brand, [submit a request to Purdue Brand Studio](#).

Section 5 (Page 44) of the [Purdue Brand Guidelines](#) explores this topic in more detail.



What is a type treatment, and why would I use it instead of a co-brand?

Purdue's brand guidelines provide type treatments as a flexible option to present a unit's name within the Purdue brand using approved typography, colors and design elements. Type treatments are not logos and should not become fixed marks that are used the same way repeatedly.

When you have space constraints, co-brands can be tricky to implement — it is often advantageous to use a type treatment or

the Purdue University logo instead of your unit's co-brand.

Consider your audience and what they need to know.

- Does your audience need to know what unit you are in, or are they more concerned about what your unit's purpose and mission are?
- Can you utilize the overall Purdue brand to bring credibility to what you are presenting instead of using a co-brand?



Do not repeatedly use the same type treatment configuration. A fixed combination of typography, layout, color, shapes or graphic elements can begin to function like an unofficial logo. Avoid creating and distributing a single type treatment for repeated use across your unit. Instead, adapt your unit's name to fit the layout and purpose of each piece.



When does a type treatment start to function like a logo?

A type treatment starts to function like a logo when the same combination of typography, layout, color, shape or graphic elements is used repeatedly. Over time, that repeated configuration can begin to look like a unit's standalone mark.

Instead of creating one fixed design, set flexible guidelines for presenting your unit's name. This gives you consistency without locking the unit into a logo-like treatment.

This approach also gives designers more room to adjust the layout for different formats, audiences and space constraints.

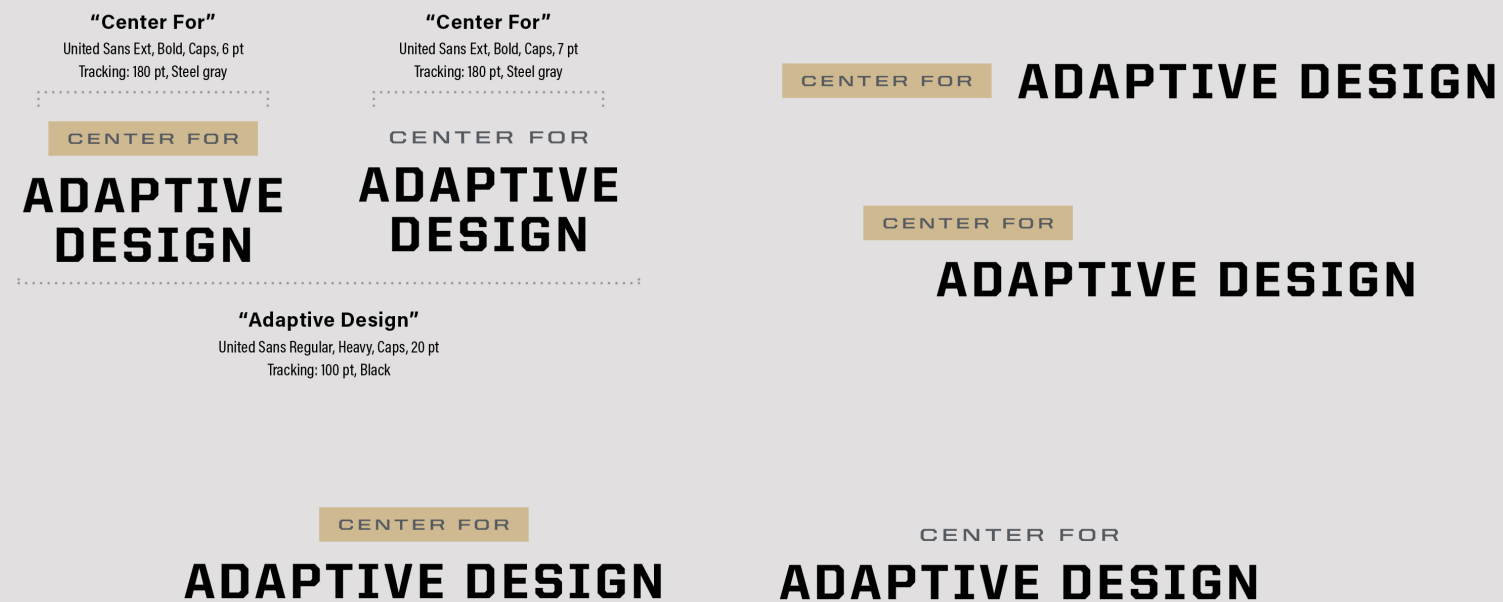


Use a family of type treatments rather than a single repeated treatment. Add the appropriate Purdue logo or co-brand, then typeset your unit's name to fit the layout and purpose of each piece. Vary the typography, layout and other design elements to create consistency without unintentionally creating a logo.



FAMILY OF TYPE TREATMENTS

When creating type treatments, varying the typography, layout and other design elements provides greater flexibility and avoids unintentionally creating secondary logos.



LOGOS AND CO-BRANDS

How do I create a type treatment for my unit?

To create a type treatment, type your unit's name in a brand-approved font. Use font weight, capitalization, italics, color, alignment, spacing, boxes or contrast to add emphasis where it is needed.

The goal is to create a consistent approach — not one permanent layout. For example, your unit's name may follow the same general style principles across materials, but the exact size, placement, alignment or supporting design elements should be able to change based on the piece.

LOGOS AND CO-BRANDS

Where can I find existing templates and tools to help my unit stay in brand?

Purdue Brand Studio has created many in-brand templates and tools that can help your unit follow the guidance contained in this section and stay within Purdue's brand.

- The [Templates page](#) on the Purdue Brand Studio website provides access to many resources and templates — including Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva and Marq.

PhotoShelter is another resource for finding in-brand materials that will be useful for your unit's work.

- Get access to [PhotoShelter](#) and learn more about our photography standards on Purdue Brand Studio's [Photography](#) page.

ACRONYMS

Can I use an acronym for my unit?

Simply put, yes — but only if you establish the full name of your unit first in each piece.

Acronyms can be useful internally for units with longer names; however, they can be very confusing for audiences who are unfamiliar with your unit.

- Do not use an acronym on first reference.

Instead of leading a piece of communication with an acronym, use the full name on first reference and in titles and headlines. Then, if desired, and if the phrase is used repeatedly in body copy, it can be used on subsequent references.

If possible, avoid acronyms when the intended audience may not already understand them.

See the [Purdue Editorial Style Guide](#) entry on abbreviations for more information.

QUICK GUIDE

Staying Within Purdue's Brand

BEFORE YOU PUBLISH, ASK:

☐ Is the Purdue connection clear? _____

- Is Purdue clearly visible as the master brand?
- Does the communication reinforce Purdue's reputation, mission and credibility instead of trying to create a separate brand identity?
- Would someone unfamiliar with the unit understand that this work is part of Purdue?

☐ Is the brand language consistent? _____

- Have we avoided creating or repeating an unapproved tagline, slogan or unit-specific brand phrase?
- Is the message grounded in Purdue's voice, messaging and brand themes?
- Are we telling a specific story through our unit's research, people, discoveries, partnerships or outcomes?

☐ Are the logos, co-brands and visual identity within brand? _____

- Are we using approved Purdue logos, co-brands, templates, fonts, colors, photography and graphic elements?
- Have we avoided creating a new logo, seal, symbol or repeated design treatment for the unit?
- Have we considered whether the Purdue University logo or a clear type treatment would serve the audience better than a co-brand?

☐ Are we using

☐ Final check _____

- Have we reviewed the Purdue Brand Guidelines, Purdue Editorial Style Guide and available Purdue Brand Studio templates?
- If we are unsure about a brand choice, have we contacted Purdue Brand Studio before publishing?

If the answer to any question on this page is “no” or “not sure,” pause and review the appropriate Purdue brand resource before moving forward.

acronyms clearly? _____

- Have we used the full name of the unit on first reference, especially in titles, headlines and external communications?
- If we use an acronym, would the intended audience already understand it?
- Could the name or acronym create confusion for audiences outside the unit?



For the most comprehensive information about the Purdue brand, review the Purdue Brand Guidelines at purdue.edu/brand-studio/brand/purdue-brand-guides.



You can also explore six core Purdue brand topics through the Purdue Brand Training video series at purdue.edu/brand-studio/brand/training-videos.



Brand Studio

Questions? Contact Purdue Brand Studio at purduebrand@purdue.edu.