Communication Standards for the NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
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Introduction

The importance of brand consistency

Maintaining a strong and recognizable brand is a key component to NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology’s success in student enrollment. We created this guide to make it easier for you to correctly and consistently represent the CEET when you develop new communications.

At the same time, it is important to be mindful of the relationship between the CEET brand and NIU’s overall brand. This guide focuses on strategy and expression through our CEET lens but is built upon, and should secondarily align with, the Institutional brand. So, while this is your primary reference tool, you should be aware of and, when in doubt, use the NIU institutional guidelines as a supporting resource. Those guidelines can be found at niu.edu/marcomm/standards.

How to use this guide

Brand Basics — This section highlights the basic components of our brand, including value proposition and brand personality.

Brand Voice — This section covers what the NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology brand voice is, plus guidelines and examples to help you put the brand voice into practice.

Visual Elements — This section provides concrete direction on how to use specific elements, such as logos, photography and typography.

Clearinghouse Review

Please submit all print and digital communications to the Clearinghouse Review at go.niu.edu/clearinghouse at least three days before the communication is due.
Brand Basics
The NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology value proposition is a brief aspirational statement that clearly describes the value we offer students and why they should choose us over other engineering schools. This statement is not intended to be used literally in communications. Instead, it is the prevailing thought behind every communication.

Value proposition:

Education engineered to be customizable, experiential, expectation-surpassing and transformative, so that all those we interact with can better impact the world.
Brand Personality

Our brand personality shines through in everything we do.

A brand’s personality represents the characteristics or traits people associate with a brand. For designers and writers, it helps determine “the look and feel,” or how the brand comes across at a personal and emotional level.

Being a college within NIU, the institution’s personality is a natural part of the NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology’s brand personality. However, we build off that with two key traits that make our character as a college unique.

curious


grounded

Know how, show how.

IN ADDITION TO THE UNIVERSITY’S PERSONALITY

personalized

Be who you are. Discover who you want to become.

inviting

Open up. Try new things.

charged

Come to take on the world. Leave ready to change it.
Brand Voice
Brand Voice

How to put the NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology brand voice into practice

The College of Engineering and Engineering Technology’s brand voice reinforces our brand personality through the careful use of language. Below are the brand personality words along with how-tos. See page 9 for examples.

Curious
- Ask questions in content, be it in a headline to pique interest, pose a challenge or present a new perspective
- Highlight the urge to tinker and figure out how things work
- Be clever and unconventional

Grounded
- Celebrate the fundamentals as much as the virtual
- Don’t get swept up in cutting edge; highlight engineering in the real world
- Be honest about what companies are looking for so students can make smart choices
- Write in a way that sounds part peer, part professor and part professional

Personalized
- Personalize with the student’s name whenever possible
- When applicable, include a real person’s quote or signature to convey personal, one-on-one communication
- Think of what the student wants or needs—what is the end benefit for them?

Inviting
- Look for opportunities to convey inclusiveness
- Use encouraging, aspirational ideas and phrases
- Write from a place of warmth and empathy
- Talk to the student, not at them

Charged
- Choose words that are encouraging and energetic
- When appropriate, use short bursts of encouraging phrases (e.g., let’s do this, we’re going places, no-limit learning)
- Write content that is bold and action-oriented
- Portray and speak to NIU Business students as being ready for what’s to come, not just challenges that exist today
How to combine brand personality with brand narrative

Below are examples that demonstrate the flexibility of the brand personality through voice.

Pursue your passion. Surpass your potential.

You solve problems. Build. Innovate. You take things apart to see how they work and think about how to make them better—it’s why you’re drawn to engineering. And maybe you can already see a better way forward with cleaner energy, more efficient travel or new technologies that will change the world. We can help you get there.

Keep hands-on state of the art.

How do you get 1,265 miles out of one gallon of gas? Functional engineering.

“I’ve found what I want to do with the rest of my life... I want to design and build objects that make life better for others.” Sarah O., CEET student.

That’s what we mean when we say our programs are transformative.

Make your mark. Make a difference.

Consider. Tinker. Improve. Repeat.
Visual Elements
As a sub-brand of NIU, the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology derives its core brand assets from the Institutional identity, including color, imagery, pattern and type. All CEET communications should feel as if they are part of the larger institutional identity system.

The following pages outline visual elements specific to NIU CEET. For more details on the use of NIU institutional brand assets, please review the communication standards for institutional identity at niu.edu/marcomm/standards.
The College of Engineering and Engineering Technology logo

The NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology logo is central to its branding. It serves to identify communications with a “signature” of the college. Consistent and correct use of this logo significantly contributes to maintaining and strengthening the identity and reputation of the college and NIU. Generally, the logo appears at or near the bottom of the page and, occasionally, elsewhere. The logo should not be used as, nor incorporated into, a heading within a message.

The NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology logo is composed of two parts: the \textbf{NIU brandmark} and the \textbf{sub-branded wordmark}. These parts combine to make a logo that identifies the college of Engineering and Engineering Technology to the world. \textbf{Never use the brandmark alone to represent the university except in specific cases, which must be approved in advance by University Marketing.}

\textbf{Logo with tagline}

The NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology logo is also available with the university tagline. It’s an opportunity to say something bold about ourselves that differentiates us from other universities.
Photography

Imagery is one of our strongest opportunities for creating an emotional connection. It provides a platform to engage with our audience and is a joint reflection of the University and College of Engineering and Engineering Technology’s personality traits:

• Curious  
• Personalized  
• Grounded  
• Inviting  
• Charged

**Image library**
From buildings and landscapes to students and faculty, you can access a variety of photos from the Image Library at images.media.niu.edu. If you cannot locate a suitable image in the library, you can request assistance in locating an image or schedule a photographer. For help with the Image Library, contact socialmedia@niu.edu.

**Original photography**
When original photography is needed, we recommend using the professional photographers in Institutional Communications. Their expertise in lighting and composition is essential for creating dynamic and engaging photos. Discussing the project ahead of time with the creative team can help focus the direction of the photography. For photo assignments, contact socialmedia@niu.edu.
Selecting imagery
Always select photos that reinforce NIU College of Engineering and Engineering Technology’s brand personality. Imagery should convey student engagement that is authentic and creates an emotional connection with our audience. Look for photos that are warm and full of spirit and energy. Only select photos that have adequate image resolution.
Unique visual elements

In addition to the University level brand elements, the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology also has its own proprietary set of visual elements. These elements have been designed to reflect the value proposition and personality of the college and should only be used in communications expressly designed for the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology.

The NIU logo is the inspiration and source of our unique visual elements, which we refer to as “future connectors.” These visual elements represent a link between the core NIU brand and the NIU CEET brand. Visually, they serve to show the connection between the classroom and the real world. These elements can be depicted in a number of different ways, which are illustrated on the following pages.

When using these devices, the connectors can be scaled and staggered but must always remain proportional to their original construction.
The strongest application of the connectors is to use them as markers that help guide the reader through a piece. They can be used both vertically and horizontally to accomplish this. When using the connector, consider the following:

1. **Keep a minimum of 0.25” of clear space along the outside edge.** This provides a visual break and prevents type from being too close to a color block or image container.

2. **The connectors can scale in size but must always remain proportional to their original construction.**

3. **When more than one connector is being used, they must share a common relation or border to preserve the link between content and imagery.** **Connectors must never overlap each other.**
Unique Visual Elements

In addition to providing a visual guide, the connectors can be used in a variety of other visually supportive ways:

**Example A**
To create a container to house color, patterns or engaging imagery that complements the content.

**Example B**
As a callout that highlights key messaging or facts you want to draw attention to within a larger piece.

**Example C**
Adding a repeating pattern to bring more texture to a content area. It's important to consider legibility and background when using these across a larger area.
Example applications

The pictured pieces demonstrate some of the ways that NIU CEET’s voice and visuals can be combined to create compelling brand communications.