

Standard XIII: Advertising, Recruiting and Enrollment Practices

Lesson 1

Standard XIII.A Advertising

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- *What have you found to be the best way to advertise your school?*
- *Who is involved in determining the content of all promotional pieces and ensuring they are accurate and follow regulations?*

COMTA STANDARD

A. Advertising

- 1. All advertising and promotional materials (including the institution's website) are clear, factually accurate and current, and avoid leaving any false or unsupported impressions of the institution or program, including location name, educational programs, services, policies, and accreditation status.**
- 2. All advertising and promotional materials (including the institution's website) comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including the COMTA Advertising and Recruiting Policy.**

Rationale

Marketing and enrollment are often school owners' primary concerns. It is essential that a successful school be able to market itself to potential students. In these times, it is also important to do so as economically as possible. Fortunately, technology and social media provide great opportunities to reach more students.

With these practices, as well as in traditional advertising, however, school owners must be judicious about all promotion and marketing done on their behalf. Standard XIII provides guidelines to ensure that accredited schools are following fair and accurate advertising to protect students as well as the school's reputation.

Ethical

Standard Statement of Purpose

Institutions must use ethical recruitment and enrollment practices and ensure that all recruitment and enrollment practices comply with applicable regulations. “Recruiting practices” include all activities designed to attract students and lead to student enrollment. These include but are not limited to advertising, public outreach and promotion, correspondence with prospective students, and completing enrollment documents. All activities should provide prospective students with complete and accurate information about the institution so that students can make informed enrollment decisions.

What do we mean by “Advertising”?

The practices covered under this standard are more than paid advertising (print, TV, radio). They also include **any and all promotional activity designed to attract prospective students—both before and after initial contact**. This includes but is not limited to:

- School website
- Signage
- Brochures
- Flyers
- Postcards or other mailings
- Emails
- Social media posts
- Scripts for admissions/recruiting representatives



Think about which of the above practices you use for admissions and recruiting.
(Do you use anything else that has been beneficial?)

Keep your promotional activities in mind as you read through the following guidelines...

The lists on the next page are from the [COMTA Advertising and Recruiting Policy](#) document (revised April 2015). Please read carefully and ensure all of your admissions/recruiting personnel have a copy.



Advertising “DO”s:

- Include the correct name and location of the program or institution.
- Be factually accurate, current and able to be substantiated.
- Contain clear and provable statements.
 - Documentation of policies, claims and statistics cited in advertising and promotional material are kept on file and readily available for review.
- Clearly indicate that training or education, not employment, is being offered.
 - Institutions or programs may not use the “employment,” “help wanted,” or “business opportunities” classifications for any form of advertising except to procure employees for the institution or program.
- Clearly differentiate existing and recognized programs from those which are prospective or hypothetical.



Advertising “DON'T”s

- Falsely represent the character or scope of any program of instruction, service offered or its transferability of credit.
- Falsely represent the institution's facilities in photos, illustrations or through other means.
 - Use a visual image in any promotional materials in such a manner as to convey a false impression as to the size, importance, location of the institution, or the institution's equipment and facilities.
- Claim that students receive compensation for attending school.
- Represent any service as “free” when the service is regularly included as part of the course of instruction.
- Offer programs of instruction at "reduced tuition" from what is in fact marked up or fictitious tuition.
- Characterize competitors by falsely imputing to them dishonorable conduct, inability to perform on contracts, or questionable credit standing; making other false representations; falsely disparaging the character, nature, quality, values or scope of their courses, programs or services; or in any other material respect.
- Use unsubstantiated statements.
- Emphasize financial aid as the focal point.
- Use the term “financial aid” if the institution does not participate in Title IV funds.
- Use so-called "blind" advertisements (in print or online) that may be considered misleading and contrary to the ethics of an accredited institution.
- Suggest or imply that COMTA accreditation extends to programs that are not accredited.

For more guidelines on advertising, please see the policy document.