

Grad Recruitment Worksheet: Your Big, Stupid Message

AHEM*

Program:

Audience (carry forward from Demographics worksheet)

Age range:

Interests:

Region(s):

Message (carry forward from Key Messages worksheet)

In your own words, what is the **one key thing** that is most important for this audience to know about your program? Assume they know *nothing* and are hearing about it for the very first time. Don't write a slogan, write it out in full.

What kind of image can **reinforce** that message – say the same thing as a picture? If your key idea is “great student-supervisor relationships,” it might be a photo of a student and supervisor working or presenting together. Describe one or more images that might reinforce your key message: consider who we see, where they are, what they're doing.

Name three other key points you think would attract the audience defined above to your graduate program:

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What kind of images can **reinforce** your secondary messages?

Convert your key message to ad copy

Rewrite your key message as a slogan or catchphrase (10 words or less); try to come up with five options. You may find that your complementary ideas might roll up into this: if your key idea is “supervisor relationships” and one of your added points is career development services, “unparalleled support for your studies and beyond” would be something that captures both.

Write your complementary sentences.

Take your secondary messages and write out one or two **short** sentences that summarize the other benefits you’re trying to convey. Aim for fewer than 25 words TOTAL. It won’t be easy, but you’ll thank yourself when it comes to laying it out.

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Call to action and destination

What **action** should the person seeing this message take next?

What do you have to do to ensure they can take that action? (Build a web page, set up a webinar series, set up a contact email address...)

Next steps:

- ☐ Gather images that match the ones you have described above. This could be on-campus photography (taken by a marcomms team or hired photographer) or from an image bank like Adobe Stock, Veer, etc. Avoid AI/LLM images. Aim for five options.
- ☐ Using layout software available to you (Canva for free; your university may have licenses for some software; programs like PowerPoint can do in a pinch), try various configurations of your chosen images and slogans.
- ☐ Take your favourite combination and build it out into various formats to meet your needs: social media tiles (1080px x 1080px), letter-size posters (8.5" x 11"), tabloid-size posters (11" x 17"), etc. Don't forget to add your institution's visual identity to the piece.
- ☐ For print applications, be sure you have everything you want on the page - image, slogan, also short URL / QR code, additional points (bullets or a few short sentences). For digital ads, you can put the additional points, etc., in the text that accompanies the post/ad, and the link will be baked into the ad itself.
- ☐ Test, test, test! Run your base image / word combos past five people you trust, and get their feedback: name them below, tick this box only after you've heard back.