

Reevaluating Your Institution's Wordmark: 5 questions to consider

1. Does your wordmark convey the character of your institution?

Just as certain clothes “feel” like you and express your individual style and character, your institution's wordmark should convey the unique character of your school. Is your institution steeped in tradition? Is it young and full of energy? Innovative or traditional? The typography and design of your wordmark should capture and reflect this.

2. What brand messages does your wordmark communicate?

A good wordmark subtly communicates and supports your institution's brand. For example, if your school claims to “advance education and prepare students for the future,” your wordmark should express forward momentum and movement (though no need to go overboard with the use of italics; remember that subtlety is key). If your institution provides students with a “dynamic and ever-changing learning environment,” your wordmark should reflect this energy.

3. Is your wordmark simple and easy to use?

One of the primary reasons to create a cohesive wordmark is to establish consistency throughout your publications, communications and on your website. Make this task easy for the entire community by creating a wordmark that can be reproduced in all sizes and in all media. To ensure consistent use of the wordmark, develop a style guide that outlines its basic usage rules.

4. If your institution has evolved, does the wordmark still reflect its character?

Many institutions undergo major transitions as they grow. Often the wordmark they started with no longer communicates the values or character of the current place. Using an out-dated wordmark won't do much to help attract the right students to your school. If your wordmark fails to convey your institution's current character, consider a re-design.

5. What do staff and community members think about your wordmark?

As you give thought to a redesign or choose a new wordmark, seek input from staff, students and other community members. After all, they know the school, too, and will offer valuable insights. Your community will also be more likely to embrace and use a new wordmark if they've been involved in the process.