

**Imperial College Union
Union Council / 19 March 2024
Student opposition to Imperial's new visual brand**

Author(s): Anaya Jaffer (Student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering)

Seconder(s): Amelia Borkowicz (Student in the Department of Life Sciences)

Decision(s): To approve

Union Notes

1. Imperial is implementing a new logo (the visual side of the brand) as part of their Brand Project.
2. A significant proportion of the Imperial community dislike the logo, evidenced by:
 - a. A petition titled "Stop the new Imperial logo" gained over 2000 signatures in less than two days.
 - b. The same petition has amassed over 7800 signatures as of the 11th of March.
 - c. Comments on Imperial's social media posts have been overwhelmingly negative [see Appendix A, 1].
 - d. Social media posts by alumni on LinkedIn, by current students on Instagram, and by current and prospective students on Reddit [see Appendix A, 2, 3].
 - e. Numerous comments by staff, students and alumni on the petition page [see Appendix A, 4].
3. A significant proportion of students were unaware of what the new logo looked like before it was implemented, and many were surprised to see a new logo.
4. Imperial has not explicitly addressed any of the criticism.

Union Believes

1. The new visual brand is not a better representation of Imperial and it may have a negative impact on the image of the institution.
2. Opportunities to engage with the brand project and provide feedback were not effectively nor sufficiently advertised [see Appendix A, 5].
3. Without pushback from the union, Imperial is unlikely to collect more feedback on the new visual brand.
4. Without pushback from the union, Imperial is unlikely to apply any feedback to the new visual brand.
5. Imperial not addressing the wave of negative feedback is likely to have a lasting negative impact on students' trust in Imperial.
6. Students feel unheard due to a lack of acknowledgement of the pushback.

Union Resolves

1. To mandate the Union President to lobby those involved with the brand project to openly address the criticism of the new logo.
2. To mandate the Union President to lobby those in charge of the brand project to gather more feedback from the Imperial community before continuing implementation.
3. To mandate the Union President to lobby those involved with the brand project to make changes to the new logo and branding, based on feedback from the community.
4. To mandate the Union President to discuss improving engagement and feedback collection methods from students with those involved with implementing the brand project.

Appendix A

1. Comments on a video posted by the official Imperial Instagram on the 27th of February introducing the new branding:
 - "Why did you never survey among students about replacing the logo? Is this a new way of money laundry?" (209 likes)
 - "Leave the jokes to me next time please" (1007 likes)
 - "Looks like an online uni rather than an established, respectable uni" (358 likes)
 - "...it honestly hurts my eyes. The blue and green is very bright and moving quickly on this posts honestly gives me a bit of a headache. (Side note I also think it looks stupid)" (293 likes)

2. LinkedIn posts by alumni:



Eryk Krusinski · 1st
Flatworm, Univ. of Cambridge · Ex-Amazon, Ex-Tesla
4d · Edited · 🌐

Earning infamy for poor execution, [Pentagram](#)'s botched redesign of the [Imperial College London](#) logo mobilised 4,000+ students and staff to plead for a revision.

Its never a good look to make headlines for how bad your work is, but [Pentagram](#) achieved just that due to bad preparation, minimal consultation and terrible execution.

"As a math student, it is truly horrifying and amusing how they arrived at the conclusion ... so little and some biased statistics. It is truly a bad reflection on its teaching.

It is literally doing everything our Lecturers told us not to do."

Quote: [Desmond Lin](#), Student at Imperial.

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[Felix \(Imperial College London Newspaper\)](#):
<https://lnkd.in/dPFuBhqj>
[Times Higher Education: https://lnkd.in/dvGYhf6h](https://lnkd.in/dvGYhf6h)

Reading the global top 10 University's student and staff comments paint an unmistakably clear picture:

"On behalf of all imperial students graduating this year, we have not chosen to dedicate the past few years striving to meet the standards of a 'world class university' only for it to look like we've graduated from a **dodgy online coding academy**."

Quote: [Anya Elise Hurd](#); Final year student at Imperial.

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questions; questions such as "What were the reasons for which any reference to 'London' was removed from the branding despite Pentagram data not supporting this motion?"

Personally, I think it looks like a logo one would see on the side of a Happy Meal toy, or perhaps in a first draft of a C-grade GCSE Graphics submission?

I support James D's suggestion to write to the management board of Imperial College with view of rebrand: umbsecretary@imperial.ac.uk

I think this rebrand should've been done by [Imperial College London](#)'s very own [Dyson School of Design Engineering](#) or the [Royal College of Art](#), not an external entity.

A wasted opportunity.

EDIT: Old logo was single colour blue.

Before

Imperial College
London

After

IMPERIAL

Annie Zeng and 1,431 others

114 comments · 55 reposts

Joshua Liddicott · 2nd
 Maths Student at Imperial College (2025 Graduatio...
 4d (edited)

For any wondering, my reasons for saying that the Pentagram data did not support the removal of a reference to London include:

At least 75% of both staff and students (surveyed) either agreed with, or were neutral to, the idea that the brand should more strongly reflect Imperial's London status.

International students from all listed countries put being in London as either a primary or secondary factor in choosing a university.

A greater proportion did say that the brand should more strongly reflect Imperial's global mindset, but I do not see how this requires the removal of London from the name.

Interestingly, London was added in the previous brand change to reflect Imperial's London status.

Like · 🗨️ 31 | Reply · 3 replies

Eryk Krusinski **Author**
 Flatworm, Univ. of Cambridge · Ex-Amazon, ...
 4d

Their data mismatching with their decisions makes it seem like someone made a decision and then tried to make it look like that was a consensus decision - when it very very much isn't.

3. Comments made by prospective Imperial students on a Reddit thread for 6th form students:

🔍 r/6thForm Search in r/6thForm

Complete_Theory_4911 · 5d ago
 there's just NO WAY everyone looked at that, thought its better, & agreed to change it
 ↑ 78 ↓ 🗨️ Reply ↑ Share ...

Chichikodam_ · 5d ago
 Everyone hates it dw
 ↑ 12 ↓ 🗨️ Reply ↑ Share ...

1200-2_2-0021 OP · 5d ago
 Yeah no. Maybe it's a joke, in which case my decision may have been irrational
 ↑ 19 ↓ 🗨️ Reply ↑ Share ...

yzven · 5d ago
 year 7 computing ahh logo
 ↑ 136 ↓ 🗨️ Reply ↑ Share ...

toothysmile12 · 5d ago
 year 7 RGB coded
 ↑ 20 ↓ 🗨️ Reply ↑ Share ...

sharkster6 · 5d ago
 even worse than that actually
 ↑ 10 ↓ 🗨️ Reply ↑ Share ...

4. Comments made on the petition site [Petition · Stop the new Imperial logo · Change.org](#) :



Department of Computing

2 weeks ago

We strongly feel that this rebranding is unbecoming of a university of our stature. As we have repeatedly communicated in the past - the university's decision to spend time and money on such vanity projects instead of funding its departments and pushing research, is the reason for our lack of international recognition and respect.

♡ 20

[Report](#)



Max O

2 weeks ago

As an alumni, I was horrified to see this new logo on LinkedIn. It looks like something out of a cartoon book and gives the impression that Imperial College is an amateur institution, rather than the gravitas that the previous logo had.

♡ 10

[Report](#)



D Chang

2 weeks ago

As an Imperial alumnus who is currently on the job market, I don't think my future employer who might be a bit less familiar with Imperial likes the new logo when they see it on my LinkedIn profile.

♡ 7

[Report](#)



James May

2 weeks ago

No signs of prestige anywhere, just cheapness and goofyness lol

♡ 16

[Report](#)



Tamlyn Peel

2 weeks ago

Member of staff. Embarrassing, 90s style design, yet focusing on Empire connotations of the College. Waste of money when they're fighting cost of living increases in pay. Comes after much of the new signage for White City is done.

♡ 6

[Report](#)



Jeremy Ghinn

3 weeks ago

I submitted a contact form via the website the day it was announced via the Provost's new years' newsletter, and haven't had a response - and now they just change the logo outside the main entrance without asking for any further feedback?

♡ 15

[Report](#)



Jeremy Ghinn

3 weeks ago

ridiculous that the only announcement they made was a brief clause (not even a full sentence!) in the provost's new year newsletter, that barely anyone would read. so so so misleading - "Top among these will be the launch of our new institutional strategy, supported by our new brand." imperial really does have a terrible track record at asking the imperial community for feedback before making terrible "artistic" changes (e.g. the Mother Earth mural, ALERT statue, and now this)

♡ 15

[Report](#)



Ch Z

3 weeks ago

1. As it was mentioned before, I do not understand how keeping only one word "Imperial" helps to represent our college better. Especially, given that we are potentially trying to get rid of being associated with imperialism. Just makes no sense to me to keep the only word in the name that is associated with imperialism.
2. Focus group was too small and not focused on students (and we constitute the majority of people at the institution). There are around 30000 people working and studying at ICL. So, the focus group of 350 makes around 1%, and it is not clear how it was selected.
3. My friend recreated the design in word in under 10 minutes.
4. A lot of money was invested into this, and most probably money coming from tuition fees (sorry if I am wrong). Therefore, more students should have participated in the survey. If you asked for my opinion, getting a second microwave for Computing department or just improving lecture halls and other campus facilities would be a more obvious choice.

♡ 53

[Report](#)

5. Opportunities to engage with the Brand project:



President <president@imperial.ac.uk>

To Jaffer, Anaya



04/10/2023

If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.

Imperial College London

Dear Anaya,

Welcome to Imperial's new academic year! The arrival of students brings a wonderful wave of energy and excitement. Whether you are a first year or returning student, I hope you are settling into life as part of Imperial's inspiring, vibrant and diverse community.

This time of year holds promise and potential and I urge you to make the most of it – not just through your studies, but also the many extracurricular events, experiences, and activities on offer. If you're wondering where to start, please take a look at our monthly student newsletter – Inside Imperial – which includes news and event updates plus the latest student resources and support services.

We begin the year with a fresh run of high rankings and awards. Imperial has been ranked in the world top 10 by Times Higher Education, complementing our top 10 position in the QS World University Rankings, and received Gold in the [Teaching Excellence Framework \(TEF\)](#) and strong [National Student Survey \(NSS\) results](#). These successes are a testament to the quality of Imperial's education, research, enterprise and engagement activities and a credit to our entire community.

I have one request and that is to get involved in the work we're doing on the Imperial [brand](#). The consultation process on our institutional strategy revealed tremendous pride in Imperial's achievements. However, we were consistently urged to tell the Imperial story with more clarity and confidence. The [Imperial Brand Project](#) responds to this and should deliver multiple benefits, from helping attract the best talent, funding and partners, to our general reputation and ranking. We are now running a period of engagement with our whole community until 13 October. Please get involved and [share your feedback](#).

Finally, a brilliant example of showcasing the best of Imperial and something we can all get behind. September saw the start of this year's University Challenge, the iconic

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Inside Imperial <inside-imperial@imperial.ac.uk>
To Jaffer, Anaya



06/10/2023

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College updates

Imperial **Brand** Project: share your views

Imperial's President Hugh Brady wrote to you [earlier this week](#) with details of our work to strengthen [Imperial's brand](#) and a call for your feedback into the process.

There is still one week left to visit [the project webpage](#) where you can watch a video presentation and share feedback, and register for an online session taking place Wednesday 11 October.

The goal is a **brand** identity that reflects and serves the entire Imperial community, so your input is essential.



Inside Imperial <inside-imperial@imperial.ac.uk>
To Jaffer, Anaya



09/11/2023

If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.

Imperial **Brand** Project

Our focused period of community engagement (22 September – 13 October) on the initial **brand** identity work has now ended. Our students, staff, and alumni were invited to feed back on the initial creative work on the **brand** identity through a video presentation by Pentagram, an online survey, and four feedback sessions. Many thanks to everyone who participated. We had more than 1,600 video views, 350 survey responses and almost 100 attendees at our focus groups.

The feedback has been thoughtful, wide-ranging, encouraging, and challenging, and will no doubt help deliver an attractive, adaptable, and flexible **brand** system that works for the whole Imperial community. The project team are working with Pentagram to carefully consider all feedback as part of the next stage of development.

[Find out more about the project](#)