



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Brand Awareness & Reputation Perception Study

2026

UNIVERSITY OF **INDIANAPOLIS**

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Brand Awareness & Reputation Perception Study

University of Indianapolis

Issued By:

University of Indianapolis

RFP Issue Date: [Insert Date]

Proposal Due Date: Friday, August 21, 2026 at 5pm eastern

Primary Contact: Sam Kingdon, procurement@uindy.edu

1. Institutional Background

The University of Indianapolis (“UIndy” or “the University”) is a private university located in Indianapolis, Indiana, serving undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and online learners through innovative and experiential education. The strategic plan can be found [here](#)

The University’s mission is to champion lifelong learning through relevant and innovative education that fosters experiential learning, diverse perspectives, service for impact, and a global mindset.

As part of its strategic enrollment and institutional positioning initiatives, the University seeks an external marketing research and/or brand strategy firm to conduct a comprehensive brand perception and awareness study across up to three designated markets (DMAs).

2. Purpose of the RFP

The purpose of this study is to help the University better understand:

- Current brand awareness levels
- Institutional reputation and perceptions
- Competitive positioning
- Brand strengths and weaknesses
- Drivers of consideration and enrollment

- Perceptions of academic quality, career readiness, innovation, value, and community impact
- Distinctions between awareness, familiarity, consideration, and preference

The University seeks actionable insights that can inform:

- Enrollment marketing strategy
 - Brand positioning and messaging
 - Advertising and media strategy
 - Market expansion decisions
 - Employer and community engagement
 - Graduate and online program growth
 - Long-term institutional reputation management
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3. Study Objectives

The selected firm will design and execute a research study that enables UIndy to:

A. Measure Brand Awareness

Assess:

- Unaided and aided awareness
- Familiarity with UIndy
- Awareness of academic offerings
- Awareness of online and graduate programs
- Awareness relative to competitor institutions
- Market-level awareness differences

B. Measure Brand Reputation & Perception

Evaluate perceptions related to:

- Academic quality
- Career outcomes and employability
- Innovation and relevance
- Affordability and value
- Student support and engagement
- Community impact
- Diversity and inclusiveness
- Athletics and campus experience
- Online education credibility

- Graduate program quality
- Corporate partnership reputation

C. Understand Audience-Specific Perceptions

The study should evaluate perceptions among the following audience segments:

Prospective Undergraduate Students

- Traditional college-bound students
- Transfer students

Parents/Guardians

- Parents of college-bound students

Graduate Students

- Prospective master's and doctoral students

Online Learners

- Adult learners and professional learners

Corporate & Employer Community

- Employers
 - HR leaders
 - Workforce development leaders
 - Business/community influencers
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4. Geographic Scope

The study should evaluate up to three designated markets/DMA's.

The University anticipates:

- Indianapolis DMA (required)
- Two additional markets to be recommended collaboratively and finalized during project kickoff

Firms should provide recommendations regarding:

- Appropriate market selection methodology

- Market comparison strategy
 - Sample sizes by market
 - Statistical reliability
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5. Scope of Services

The selected firm will be expected to provide the following services:

Research Design

- Develop research framework and methodology
- Identify appropriate sample structure
- Recommend quantitative and/or qualitative approaches
- Develop screening criteria and quotas

Data Collection

Potential methodologies may include:

- Online surveys
- Focus groups
- In-depth interviews
- Brand tracking methodologies
- Social listening/reputation analysis
- Competitive benchmarking

Competitive Analysis

Evaluate UIndy relative to identified competitor institutions, which may include:

- Regional private universities
- Public universities
- Online-focused institutions
- Graduate and adult-learning competitors

The University expects the selected firm to recommend an appropriate competitive set.

Insights & Reporting

Deliverables should include:

- Executive summary

- Full findings report
- Market-by-market analysis
- Audience segmentation analysis
- Competitive positioning analysis
- Strategic recommendations
- Presentation to University leadership

The University strongly prefers findings that are practical, visual, and actionable for executive and marketing use.

6. Timeline

The University anticipates the following preliminary timeline:

Milestone	Target Date
RFP Issued	August 6, 2026
Questions Due	August 13, 2026 Responses emailed August 15th by request
Proposal Submission Deadline	August 21, 2026
Finalist Interviews	End of August, First week of September
Vendor Selection	Early to mid -September
Project Kickoff	mid -September
Final Report Delivery	December 15, 2026

7. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

Firm Overview

- Company background

- Relevant higher education experience
- Experience conducting multi-market brand studies
- Experience with higher education enrollment marketing research

Team Structure

- Project lead
- Key personnel
- Relevant expertise

Methodology

- Recommended research approach
- Sampling methodology
- Proposed audience sizes
- Recommended DMAs/market logic
- Analytical approach

Relevant Case Studies

Please include examples of:

- Higher education brand studies
- Enrollment perception studies
- Reputation research
- Multi-audience perception studies

Deliverables & Timeline

Provide:

- Detailed timeline
- Deliverable schedule
- Project management approach

Pricing

Please provide:

- Detailed pricing
- Optional/additional services
- Travel assumptions
- Market expansion pricing (if applicable)
- Expenses should be built into cost, not billed separately

- The pricing proposal should be separated from the technical proposal
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8. Submission Instructions

Please submit proposals electronically in PDF format to:

Sam Kingdon
Procurement Specialist
procurement@uindy.edu

Subject Line: "UIndy Brand Perception Study Proposal"

Proposals should be submitted as **two separate documents** - a technical proposal and a financial proposal. Failure to submit properly may result in disqualification.

Proposals must be submitted no later than **August 21, 2026 at 2pm** to be considered. Any proposals submitted after the deadline may not be accepted.

9. Additional Information

The University reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
 - Request additional information
 - Negotiate scope and pricing
 - Select one or multiple firms
 - Modify the project scope
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Optional Add-On Section (Recommended)

Future Brand Tracking Capability

The University is interested in establishing a repeatable benchmarking framework that may support future annual or biannual brand tracking initiatives. Firms are encouraged to propose scalable longitudinal approaches.