Web Content Guidelines

Audience

- Understand who the user is, and what they are looking for. Follow their expectations – don't force the information into a structure that only you understand.
- Do not waste the user's time with superfluous and unnecessary information (such as repeated use of the university or department name).

Requirements

- All pages should be professional and consistent with the rest of the University System.
- All university-related webpages should be published within the university's "edu" domain.
- Personal messages from department/division heads should not be on the departmental landing page, but can be included on a separate page within that department's section.
- Use the Institutional Faculty Directory for faculty bios.
- Only link to commercial websites if that company provides goods or services specifically of interest to the BOR and/or the USG institutions.
- All content must comply with HIPAA and FERPA regulations.

Usability

- Use the content to stand out, not the page layout.
- Webpages should be easily viewed both with and without color.
- Use appropriate naming conventions when naming webpages and uploading files to help users easily navigate the website.
- Provide transcripts for all videos used on the website.
- Keep user requirements minimal.

Content

- All content should be current information – any information older than 1 year should be deleted.
- All pages should have a purpose and contain useful information.
- Do not create webpages promoting non-university endeavors or activities.
- All images should be professional quality and follow copyright laws.
- Use visual elements sparingly to effectively focus on certain information. White space should be the dominating field of color to make reading easier.
- Integrate links into the text, and trust the user to know where to click.
- Create a new page when the content is short, has few or no graphics, and/or changes frequently.
- Upload a PDF if the content is longer than about 5-10 printed pages, contains complex images or layouts, and/or rarely changes.

Web Content Rules

Audience

- Make the content clear and concise. Pages should be self-explanatory.
- Do not thank users for visiting the webpage.

Requirements

- Do not link to commercial entities.
- Do not use copyrighted information.
- Do not consistently refer to the university and/or its entities.
- Do not create an external website labeled as a university entity.
- Do not create separate pages for each faculty member.

Usability

- Use the default page layouts in OU Campus.
- Complete all metadata requirements, including page and image descriptions.
- Do not use videos as primary sources of information.
- Do not use flashing text or images.
- Label all table headers – both columns and rows.
- Do not create images of words, including Word Art and picture with words.

Content

- Use the official university calendar for all university-sponsored events.
- Do not use the website to archive information.
- Do not create pages that are blank or "under construction".
- Use PDFs to upload information, not MS Office files.
- Only use tables for data. Do not put images inside of tables, or use tables for layouts.
- Do not use all caps or excessive punctuation.
- Use individual pictures, not group pictures.
- Use images and media that are relevant to the overall subject matter on the page.
- Do not duplicate content that exists elsewhere on the university website.
- All images should be resized appropriately for web use.

Web Content Tips

Audience

- All information is public – all private or internal information should be on the intranet or not there at all.
- Users should not have to work for their information.
- Users don't read – they scan.
- Users are impatient and demand instant gratification.

Requirements

- Every webpage is a part of a larger whole – pages not only represent the department, but also the university, the board of regents, and the university system of Georgia.
- Just because certain information is public, does not mean that it needs to be on the website. All public information can still be requested following the appropriate processes set in place to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

Usability

- Utilizing a consistent and coherent layout will allow for better navigation and user experience.
- View the webpage as if it were the first time, and consider how easy it is to navigate through the site.
- Try making the department landing page inviting, by using high quality images, brief summaries, clear and concise information, and highlights for important information.
- Use alt-text to accurately describe what is in an image. This is used as an audio description for users using site-readers to comprehend images.

Content

- Create content that can be scanned quickly.
- Use bite-size chunks of information and bulleted lists. Break content up into multiple pages to avoid one long, scrolling page.
- Avoid catchphrases and unfamiliar technical terminology.
- Videos and media should supplement the information already on the page, not distract from it.
- Avoid using the phrase "click here" when creating a link.
- PDFs are friendly to most browsers, and cannot be altered or edited by the user. Fillable PDFs allow users to complete forms without editing the content.
- A single, individual picture is easier to replace and update than a new group picture every time there are personnel changes.