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Guide to Standards on the Web

The following web standards are relative to all web pages that are located in UW-River Falls’ content management system (CMS). It is required that all pages be housed in the university CMS, unless otherwise approved (prior to development) by University Communications and Marketing.

UWRF conducted usability research and testing and incorporated these research findings into our website using the current brand platform and visual standards. Through continued analysis we anticipate an evolution of our site consistent with our findings and brand standards. We’ll update all page authors of any major updates to our site standards as they occur via the web author listserv.

Purpose

The goal of the UW-River Falls website is to create an online brand and information clearing house for UW-River Falls. Some of the goals of our website are:

• Recruiting students
• Informing and building a sense of community amongst faculty and staff
• Engaging and informing alumni and donors
• Building relationships with the greater external community

The purpose of this Web Author Guide and the standards contained within is to provide consistent guidelines for the development of our web resources at UW-River Falls. Standards are necessary to reinforce the UWRF brand and to ensure a consistent and high-quality user experience.
Layout Standards

As a way to assist university departments in presenting a consistent presence on the UWRF website, we have provided a flexible template containing baseline web guidelines. To view the layout standards examples, visit: http://www.uwrf.edu/CMSTraining/Documentation/PageLayoutStandards.cfm

The layout standards are best viewed in Firefox.

This flexible layout options feature the UW-River Falls’ institutional fonts, colors and word mark, which further reinforces the university brand for current and future students, their parents, and alumni and friends.

#1 Layout with highlight box 1/4-1/2-1/4 grid (see inset below)

This layout provides left navigation, a large photo at the top (required for all index pages, optional for all non-index pages), a single 1/2 page wide text box for headline and paragraph in the center of the page, as well as a gray highlight box on the right.

#2 Layout without highlight box 1/4-3/4 grid (represented in a graphic image)

This layout provides a left navigation and a single 3/4 page wide text box for headline and paragraph across the remainder of the page (see inset above).
Members of the group of 22 ZISU students spending a year at UWRF, arrive at Greenwood Elementary School, for a tour of the school. Several of the students from China observed and student taught in six of the Greenwood classrooms throughout the school year.

Admissions Standards Sub-headline
Members of the group of 22 ZISU students spending a year at UWRF, arrive at Greenwood Elementary School, for a school.

Admissions Standards Sub-sub-headline
Several of the students from China observed and student taught in six of the Greenwood classrooms throughout the school year.

Several of the students from China observed and student taught in six of the Greenwood classrooms throughout the school year.
Fonts

No one design element affects the overall look of a brand on a website more than typography. Because a font speaks to the personality of a brand, all UWRF web page templates show university fonts in this manner:

Whitman
Regular typography
italics typography

Gotham
Bold typography
Book typography
Book Italic typography

Below are examples of how your text will appear when formatted:

Page Title – H2 (Red /Whitman) *River Falls*

Headline – H3 (Red/Gotham) *River Falls*
Used as the primary heading above initial body copy and subheads.

Subheadline – H4 (Red/Whitman) *River Falls*
Used as a delineating header following primary heading/ and respective body copy, and before relative body copy

Sub-subheadline (Black/Gotham) *River Falls* (Paragraph with bold setting)
Typically used for further hierarchical definition when required in body copy

Paragraph (Black/Gotham) River Falls
Used for body copy following a headline, subheadline or sub-subheadline.

Paragraph italic (Black/Gotham) *River Falls* (Paragraph with italic setting)
Used for accent within a text block.
Photography

UW-River Falls will use University Communications and Marketing staff produced or approved images on its website. UWRF photography offers a true representation of the university, its faculty, staff and student body. Because of this, use of stock photography is prohibited.

Photographs cannot be digitally altered in a manner that changes its editorial representation.

Cropping of University Communications and Marketing staff produced photography must be approved by University Communications and Marketing.

Ensure that all images are downsized and compressed for optimal viewing.

When used, the large image located at the top of the department/program page should be formatted as:

825 W x 464 H pixels (this 16 X 9 ratio provides proper fit for standard video applications)
72 dpi
rgb color
jpeg or png file format
250 kb maximum file size

When used, the small image located in the gray highlight box on the right side should be formatted as:

235 W x 160 H pixels
72 dpi
rgb color
jpeg or png file format
50 kb maximum file size

Colors

Below are the UWRF signature colors.

- PMS 200 (red)
  - Web #be0f34
  - r190 g15 b52

- PMS 5435 (cool gray)
  - Web #737373
  - r185 g199 b212

- Black
  - Web #000000
  - r0 g0 b0
Global Header

The www.uwrf.edu global header is a core element on every web page, which provides links to essential information for the university community. This header may not be altered in any way.

In addition to the UWRF brand elements, i.e. word mark, colors and fonts, the global header also contains site-wide links including:

Resources For (an audience based list of links)
Quick Links (commonly used links)
Translation (a Google based language translation tool)
Giving (a link to make a donation to the university foundation)
Search (specific to the UWRF site)
UWRF Wordmark (links to the uwrf.edu homepage)

Also included in the primary navigation are the following topic-based links:

Academics
Admissions
Campus Life
Athletics
About Us
Website Navigation

Primary Navigation

Many UWRF website visitors take advantage of resources on more than one subsite/department during an average visit to the website. For example, a prospective student might visit admissions, residence life and the registrar’s catalog.

To eliminate confusion of the multiple resources the website offers, a standard primary navigation is required. This navigation includes the following topic-based links:

Academics, Admissions, Campus Life, Athletics and About Us

Breadcrumb Navigation

Breadcrumbs are located directly below the primary navigation and above the subsite title. The breadcrumb identifies for the user the location of the web page within the website.

Secondary Navigation

For your subsite, the title will appear flush left in the left-most column beneath the global header and below the primary navigation. The subsite title will link to the subsite’s home page.

Use the full name of your department or program as the subsite title. Please avoid using acronyms.

Do not include “Department of” or “Office of” when naming your subsite (i.e. Anthropology is acceptable).

Secondary navigation will appear vertically along the left side of the page.

Preferably there should be no more than eight links in a secondary navigation.

While this list of secondary links will undoubtedly be determined by individual departments, academic departments are required to include the following secondary navigation items:

• Academic Programs
• Faculty & Staff

See page 12 for additional suggestions for your subsite navigation.
College/Department Logos

College and/or department specific logos are not to be used on uwrf.edu.

If an affiliated organization’s mark is used, such as an accreditation seal, recognition award, or other collaborative identity, approval from University Communications and Marketing is required to ensure that the overall UW-River Falls brand remains and retains the proper prominence in the hierarchy of communications.

Approved instances would require the icon is:

- used as a stand-alone symbol and should not be used in place of the official university word mark.
- centered in the gray highlight box or within the center body copy area.
- not more than 200 pixels in width.

Pre-footer

Department contact information should appear at the bottom of the left column and include:

- Department name
- E-mail address
- Phone number
- Office hours
- Room number/building
- Social media icons (for linking to department social media pages, we are currently providing icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram)
Global Footer

Another core component of any website is its footer. Research has established the value of this content area. Because of current best practices, UW-River Falls has adopted a standard footer to enhance the navigation of the site for users.

The global footer includes the following links:

**Call to action:**
- Request Info
- Visit UWRF
- Apply to UWRF
- Contact Us
- Give to UWRF
- Mobile Site

**Web tools:**
- A-Z Search
- Directory
- Maps/Directions
- Employment
- News
- Event Calendar

**Primary navigation:**
- About UWRF
- Academics
- Admissions
- Campus Life
- Athletics

**Audience segments:**
- Students
- Faculty/Staff
- Alumni/Friends
- Parents/Family
- Community

And,

Campus name
Physical address
Social media Icons/links
Content

As all can appreciate, the web is first and foremost about content. Below is a list of requirements and suggestions on what to provide our readers as they search our site.

Page Title

• Titling Your Subsite Index Page
  Please title the index page relative to the overall subsite content.

  Example:
  University Communications and Marketing (correct)
  University Communications and Marketing Home Page (incorrect)

• Titling Your Subsite Pages
  Please do not repeat your index page title within other subsite page titles.

  Example:
  Newsroom (correct)
  University Communications and Marketing Newsroom (incorrect)
Navigation Links

Your subsite can include up to eight secondary navigation links plus any academic programs. Examples of these links are as follows:

**College Subsite Navigation**
- Academic Programs
- Student Organizations
- Internships
- International Opportunities
- Faculty & Staff

**Department Subsite Navigation**
- Academic program 1
- Academic program 2
- Academic program 3 etc.
- Internship Opportunities
- Career Success
- Faculty & Staff
- College Name (College of Business & Economics)

Note: Recognizing that administrative departments offer unique content they may include the items specific to their area. If you would like your department subsite navigation reviewed, please contact University Communications and Marketing.

A sample department site has been created and can be found at http://www.uwrf.edu/dpmt/.

The creation of this site was intended to give web authors guidance on how to best keep department sites uniform to provide users with a good browsing experience.
Accessibility

All sites available to the public, including UWRF’s publicly accessible website, must be compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. One way to ensure accessibility is to offer a text-only version of your webpage. Regardless, you must follow the guidelines below:

• Alt tags
   Alt tags for images are required and must convey the meaning of the image rather than the appearance. Alt tags provide a text alternative to image when images are not displayed, as in a text-only display.

   As is the case with image captions, use of student names is not permitted unless you are featuring a student via a success story or news release. Instead, you might use a caption or alt tag that states: A freshmen anthropology major studies in the department lounge.

• Links
   All links will appear red, either when mousing-over secondary navigation and headlines or will be displayed as such within paragraph text.

   In the case of paragraph links, black, underlined text links turn red when moused-over.

   When writing copy, avoid the practice of writing “click here” for your link. Instead, hyperlink relevant text. See example below.

   Incorrect: To find out more information about our wellness programs, click here.

   Correct: Find more information about our wellness programs.

• Blinking text
   Do not use blinking text. Visitors cannot stop the text from blinking.

• Slideshows (such as PowerPoint files) and PDFs
   Refrain from uploading PowerPoint and PDF files when at all possible. PowerPoint files open entirely blank in a screen reader. Additionally, these file types can only be opened if users have the appropriate software installed.

• Animations
   Refrain from using animations. If an animation is used, provide a way to cancel or pause animations on a page. Besides accessibility issues, animations can hinder credibility.

• Background/font color
   - Primary background color is white.
   - Primary font colors are black for body copy, red for headlines and mouse-over hyperlinks.

Note: Color should not convey meaning – According to information from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), do not rely on color to convey information. For example, do not instruct a user to click on the “red arrow” to navigate a page.
Forms
Design forms with accessibility in mind. Include directions and cues that will help the person with a visual disability to complete the form. Be consistent in placement of field names.

Videos
If video host allows, provide closed captioning for your videos. If not available, transcribe video and provide a link to the transcribed content.

The items listed above are just a few of a larger set of recommendations which can be referenced at these websites offering ADA compliance information:

• U.S. Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act website at: www.ada.gov

• Electronic & Information Technology Accessibility Standards at: www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards

• Designing for People with Partial Sight and Color Deficiencies at: www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/design/

• W3C’s guide to accessibility at www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility

Metatags
Metatags are used by a search engine to find and index web pages and also provide the title and brief description in the search engine results page. Metatags do not display on the page itself, but are stored within the structure of the page.

The CMS allows you to add information to the metatags by completing the following fields when the page is created

• Description
  One or two sentences displayed in most search engines that summarizes your page. For example, the main Residence Services page might say “Learn more about on-Campus housing (dorms) for UWRF students.”

  Recommended length is fewer than 156 characters or search engines will truncate the description

• Keywords
  Please do not add keywords to the page at this time.

• Title
  See page titles on page 11.

  Recommended page title length is 5-25 characters.
Define Target Audience

- Site content must be tailored to reach a specific audience.

- As with any printed publication, when designing a website, first determine the target audience and the messages that must be communicated to that audience.

- In the case of the university, content should focus on serving incoming students, current students and their parents, faculty, staff and alumni. Information on university websites should pertain to questions and issues that those public groups might have, as many people generally look to websites for current, quick answers to their questions.

Writing for the Web

The information you are conveying to your target audience should be displayed in short, easy-to-read blocks of text. These techniques are necessary because people rarely read web pages word by word; they scan the page, picking out individual words and sentences that catch their interest.

The following are guidelines to be used when writing for the web:

- Brevity
  - Do not build a page unless it's absolutely necessary. Redirect to similar content if available elsewhere on the site.
  - Write no more than half of the text you would use in a printed publication.
  - Keep the text short, bulleted when possible and provide hyperlinks to detailed information.

- Readability
  On long pages, provide anchor jumps within the text and/or navigation throughout the page to allow the user to return to the top of the page.
  - Use meaningful rather than “cute” headings.
  - Use emphasis (bold/italic) to make important words catch the user’s eye.
  - Use bulleted list instead of a running paragraph when appropriate.
  - Use links to split long, complex pages into multiple pages.

- Clarity and Focus
  Consistency and accuracy ensure that the university conveys the same messages to all its audiences throughout its many diverse recruiting and promotional publications. University Communications and Marketing provides the Writing Style Guide for web authors as an aid for excellent communication style upheld by the university.

The Writing Style Guide and the tips below, you will help you in producing effective, accurate and consistent copy.
  - Always keep your audience in mind and write accordingly.
  - Avoid the use of acronyms. Always spell it out on first reference. It is acceptable to use an acronym for a formal college name, but only on second reference.
  - Use one space after a period.
- On an academic department index page, give a brief overview of the department and hyperlink programs within the department. Example: https://www.uwrf.edu/AGEC/index.cfm
- On a college index page use the gray highlight box for News & Events. Example: https://www.uwrf.edu/CAFES/Index.cfm

Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation

- The Associated Press Stylebook is the guide for all website content. It is recommended that all authors have access to this resource.

- The Associated Press Stylebook is organized alphabetically by general category. For example, for a question about whether “B.A.” requires periods or “bachelor’s degree” needs an apostrophe, look under the entry academic degrees. Style questions regarding numbers are answered under the entry numbers. The stylebook has specialized sections for Sports Guidelines and Style, Business Guidelines and Style and a Guide to Punctuation. If a style question is not addressed in the universities Writing Style Guide, then consult the Associated Press Stylebook.

- If an answer is not found, call University Communications and Marketing at 715-425-3771 and ask to speak with an editor, or send your question to marketing@uwrf.edu.

Copyright/Trademark

- No web page can contain any copyrighted or trademarked material without permission except as permitted by law. Photographs, drawings, video clips or sound clips should not be used on a page without permission except as permitted by law.

For more information, visit: www.uwrf.edu/CMSTraining/Copyright.cfm

Link/Content Review

- Website owners must conduct an annual review of their site to ensure information is current and is free of misspellings, grammatical or style errors. Inaccurate information diminishes a site’s credibility.

- Division of Technology Services offers web-based help to repair broken hyperlinks. Contact dots@uwrf.edu for assistance.

- University Communications and Marketing reserves the right to edit content for misspellings, grammatical or style errors.

Security and Privacy

- Do not collect student ID numbers, W numbers, social security numbers, credit card numbers or other sensitive data through the CMS web forms without prior consultation with the Division of Technology Services.

- Do not use photos of minors without photo releases.
Advertising Policy

The university’s web site must not be used for commercial, non-mission-related purposes. In practice, this means that advertising space cannot be sold. “Advertising” refers to any situation in which the university or one of its units received payment or in-kind gifts in exchange for a link or brand placement on a university Web page.

While advertising cannot be sold at any level, links to commercial vendors may be made in the following specific situations:

• Links to separately contracted vendor - The logo or link is to a vendor or other entity separately contracted to provide services to the university

• Sponsorship Recognition - Within a department’s web site, a logo or link can be displayed at that department’s second level page or below to acknowledge support of the department’s mission-related activities through sponsorship. Such logos or links are deemed to be recognition of corporate or other external sponsorship; payment may not be accepted for that link or logo

• Educational purposes - The text link provides information for educational or other mission-related purposes and the university has received no consideration for incorporating that link

Technology Standards and Testing

• Use only web standards to display your content, including audio and video. The use of proprietary technologies, such as Flash, should not be used.

• All content and custom features must be accessible in the following browsers, at a minimum:
  – Firefox (latest)
  – Chrome (latest)
  – Safari (latest)
  – Internet Explorer (latest)
  – Mobile Safari (latest - iOS)
  – Android browser and mobile Chrome browser (latest - Android)

• If you require assistance testing in multiple browsers, contact dots@uwrf.edu.

• Test pages for page load time. UWRF web pages are designed to be responsive for mobile devices. Pages and images will flex to fit narrow screen widths. However, authors should consider how long a page may take to load. Too many images on a page or images that are too large will lengthen the download time for people accessing pages via a cell tower or other wireless network.
Appearance and Usability

Professionalism

• It is the policy of UWRF that all visual communications bear its name and be consistent with professional standards in content and appearance. Websites should closely match the style of the UWRF institutional website. Using the layout standards will easily provide that consistency.

• Portraying cohesiveness among the different university pages informs the public that the sites are connected. The look of the site greatly affects how the public interprets the information contained therein.

• All university sites should have a professional appearance, demonstrating that the contents are of a proficient and reliable source. The visual identity standards have been developed to unify and strengthen the image and identity of UWRF.

• All visual communications that represent the institution to a significant audience, either internally or externally, must adhere to the visual identity as detailed in the web standards guide.

• Editorial style at UWRF closely follows the Associated Press Stylebook (most recent edition) and Webster’s New World College Dictionary (most recent edition) for all communications.

• For matters pertinent to UWRF, the AP Stylebook is superseded by the Writing Style Guide, available on the University Communications and Marketing website at http://www.uwrf.edu/UniversityCommunications/Writing.cfm

Design

• Each time a UWRF employee communicates with the public, that communication reflects and affects the university’s image.

• The university’s image is likewise affected when members of the public come to the university through any of the institution’s web portals.

• Upholding implementation and administration of the branding standards document rests with University Communications and Marketing. This policy can be found at https://www.uwrf.edu/UniversityCommunications/Design.cfm

• The intent of the branding standards is to provide consistency in the approach used by university departments and units to represent the university in publications and other printed matter. The university’s web presence, as represented in web pages at the departmental or program level and above, clearly falls within the scope of this policy.
Usability

• Prior to launching web pages, it is helpful to have someone unfamiliar with the project test the website and provide feedback about:
  - Helpfulness of content
  - Ease of navigation when given a list of predetermined tasks

• DoTS web team can assist with usability testing. Usability testing is not the same as technical testing. Technical testing should also be performed prior to launch (see Technology Standards and Testing on page 17).
Additional Resources

Management of the university website is a collaborative effort between the Web Team in the Division of Technology Services and the University Communications and Marketing staff.

Support for Website Content, Design and Strategy

Departments wanting assistance with content, design, photography or marketing strategy as it pertains to the website are encouraged to contact University Communications and Marketing at 715-425-3787 or visit www.uwrf.edu/UniversityCommunications. Requests will be reviewed and prioritized on a weekly basis.

Common questions for University Communications and Marketing are related to:
- Page Layout/Design
- Writing/Editing
- Marketing Strategy
- Photography/Videography
- Social Media

Support for Website Technologies, Training and Maintenance

Departments wanting assistance with technologies, training or maintenance as it pertains to the website or CommonSpot (our content management system) are encouraged to contact the Department of Technology Services at 715-425-3687 or visit www.uwrf.edu/CMSTraining. Here you can request CommonSpot training or reference web author documentation to assist you with a variety of topics.

Direct the following types of questions to the Division of Technology Services:
- Broken Links
- Spell Check
- Sponsored Sites
- Online Transactions (obtaining credit card or social security information)
- Google Analytics
- Online Surveys
- Forms
- RSS Feeds