



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Website Governance Policy

Policy Name: Website Governance

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the governance, management, security, and compliance standards for ETSU's website and its content, defining the roles and responsibilities of web content editors, content approval processes, design and accessibility requirements, and protocols for hosting, security, and handling sensitive information.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to all faculty, staff, students, vendors, and third parties who publish content on ETSU's official web domains, including etsu.edu and all subdomains thereof. This policy applies to anyone who creates, publishes, manages, or maintains an official ETSU website or webpage. It covers sites hosted on an ETSU domain or an approved external platform. It does not apply to personal websites or content that does not represent ETSU.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Office of Marketing and Communications is responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Office of University Marketing and Communications. The Vice President for Marketing and Communications, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

ETSU Website

Any website on the etsu.edu domain or an etsu.edu subdomain.

Content Management System

A platform used to add, edit, and organize website content.

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Authoritative Content

Content that must not be replicated or reposted in multiple locations. Instead, web pages must link to the designated authoritative source to prevent outdated or conflicting information.

Outdated Content

Any time-sensitive material that has expired, material that is no longer accurate, or any other material which has not been updated or reviewed in the past five years.

Data Hygiene

Practices used to keep data clean, accurate, and well-organized — including checking for errors, removing duplicates, and getting rid of outdated information.

Unit-Level Web Lead

An individual designated by a unit or department to serve as the primary editor and steward of web content for that particular unit or department.

Departmental Web Editor

An individual who can update basic content (such as job titles, phone numbers, and other basic information) on a department or unit's website.

Website Administrator

Team members housed in the Office of University Marketing and Communications responsible for overseeing and maintaining the university's web properties.

Policy

1. Website Purpose

The primary purpose of the ETSU website is to communicate with external stakeholders. In general, content intended for internal audiences should be presented or archived elsewhere. Course materials are prohibited from being posted on ETSU's main website or subdomain. Instead, course materials must be posted on D2L or other tools as designated by the Office of the Provost.

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The website should not serve as an archive or repository for inactive or historic files. Digital materials that need to be publicly accessible may be archived in the Sherrod Library's institutional repository (Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University). Print materials and other analog formats, as well as certain electronic records such as email correspondence, may be archived in the University Archives, which is a part of the Archives of Appalachia. Removal of content from an ETSU Website does not authorize destruction of a University record. Website content must be retained, archived, or disposed of in accordance with applicable records-retention requirements and legal holds.

2. Website Management and Editing

Each campus unit or college must designate a Unit-Level Web Lead who will be responsible for working with the Office of University Marketing and Communications (UMC) to ensure content on the college or unit's websites and webpages is up-to-date and in compliance with all regulations. To serve in this position, Web Unit Leads must:

- 2.1. Obtain approval from their direct supervisor, dean, or department chair to serve as the web unit lead;
- 2.2. Obtain approval from UMC to serve as the web unit lead;
- 2.3. Complete all trainings required by UMC;
- 2.4. Review and sign a copy of this website policy;
- 2.5. Ensure that web content remains up-to-date, accurate, and in compliance with accessibility and brand standards;
- 2.6. Make basic edits and modifications as needed to suit unit or college needs;
- 2.7. Act as the primary liaison between their unit or college and UMC for website-related needs;
- 2.8. Participate in ongoing discussions and workshops about website governance and best practices;
- 2.9. Follow annual data hygiene and maintenance schedules for both removing and archiving outdated content;
- 2.10. Renew their account credentials annually with UMC.

3. Content Updates

3.1. Quarterly Content Review

Unit-Level Web Leads are responsible for conducting a quarterly review of their departmental website content to ensure accuracy, currency, and the absence of duplicate content. This review should encompass all pages, documents, and images within the unit's site. Unit-Level leads may delegate some of this work to

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department-level editors. However, it is the Unit-Level Web Lead's responsibility to ensure that all documents are thoroughly reviewed and updated accordingly, on schedule.

3.2. Data Hygiene

Outdated, unused, or redundant documents and images should be removed or archived in accordance with established data hygiene standards.

4. Content Accuracy, Accessibility, and Brand Compliance

4.1. Adherence to Standards

All content updates must adhere to university brand standards, accessibility guidelines, and the [ETSU Public Content Accessibility Policy](#).

4.2. UMC Authority

UMC website administrators may edit or remove content that violates applicable law or University policy; does not meet accessibility, security, brand, or data hygiene standards; or is inaccurate, outdated, or duplicative.

4.3. Notification

Except when immediate action is reasonably necessary to address a legal, security, accessibility, or operational concern, UMC will notify the Unit-Level Web Lead and provide a reasonable opportunity to correct or relocate the content. When immediate action is necessary, UMC will provide notice as soon as practicable.

UMC may withhold or suspend website access for failure to complete required training or comply with this policy or applicable procedures. When practicable, UMC will notify the user and the Unit-Level Web Lead before suspending access. UMC has final authority over website design, templates, and presentation, subject to applicable law and University policy. Questions involving legal compliance, academic content, records retention, or information security will be addressed in consultation with the appropriate University office.

5. Website Hosting and Content Management

All university-affiliated webpages must be hosted on the etsu.edu domain or an approved subdomain. Any webpage in existence as of the effective date of this policy that is hosted on an external hosting solution shall be removed by the owner, unless the owner receives express written approval of the Vice President of Marketing and Communications or designee, or is grandfathered due to prior written approval pursuant to the previous policy. Any request to use an external hosting solution must be submitted in writing to the Vice President of Marketing and Communications. The Vice President of Marketing and Communications (or designee) must approve the use

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of an external hosting solution. This approval will only be granted in extremely rare circumstances. The decision of the Vice President of Marketing Communications (or designee) is final. Subdomains or outside domains will be assigned at the discretion of UMC.

5.1. Authorization Required

Entities or events not wholly owned or sponsored by ETSU may not have entire websites hosted on the main ETSU web server or its domain or subdomains. However, a single informational web page may be created on the main ETSU web server under an appropriate academic or administrative unit after receiving the written permission of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications or designee.

5.2. Advertisements

Advertisements for services, programs, events, or activities not directly provided or sponsored by ETSU are prohibited on the ETSU website except in the following, limited circumstances:

- 5.2.1. A sponsor of a university event may be listed alongside information about that particular event, or
- 5.2.2. Information about official partnerships between the university and organizations or businesses may be presented on individual pages of the site. The university will not include partner logos or information sitewide, in headers or footers, for example.
- 5.2.3. In both cases, the information must be reviewed and approved in writing by the Vice President for University Marketing and Communications or designee.

5.3. Website Design

UMC will provide or work with web content editors to create approved templates and styles for use in developing webpages and presenting content. Individual units or colleges are not permitted to create their own templates without written approval from the Vice President for Marketing and Communications or designee.

- 5.3.1. All web design elements must adhere to the university's brand standards. All web design elements and content must follow best practices for accessibility and adhere to the university's Public Content Accessibility Policy.
- 5.3.2. Web content editors must undergo periodic accessibility training provided by UMC to stay up to date on best practices and ensure inclusivity for all users. Regular audits will be conducted to identify and rectify accessibility issues.

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5.4. Design Modifications

5.4.1. Request Process

In general, special design modifications will not be made for unit-, college-, or department-level content. If special design modifications are required, the Unit-Level Web Lead submits a request via the [UMC Web Support Request Form](#).

5.4.2. Request Review

UMC will review and determine whether to grant or deny the request. UMC will only grant such requests in extreme circumstances in which the standard design elements within the CMS absolutely will not accommodate the content required.

6. Security Standards

Web content editors must:

- 6.1. Utilize their ETSU single sign-on credentials or a unique username and password when logging into any ETSU CMS;
- 6.2. Not share passwords for units or colleges;
- 6.3. Follow security protocols as directed by UMC and Information Technology Services (ITS) for preventing cybersecurity breaches;
- 6.4. Not install third-party plugins, applications, scripts, or other services without written, explicit consent from the Vice President for Marketing and Communications or designee. Approval will be contingent upon completion of a satisfactory security review by ITS and an accessibility review by the appropriate university office(s).

Access to the website will only be granted to permanent regular ETSU employees, as defined by the Office of Human Resources, unless explicit consent is obtained in writing from the Vice President for Marketing and Communications or designee. For example, graduate assistants, contractors, and temporary employees will not be granted access without written approval by the Vice President for Marketing and Communications or designee.

7. Authoritative Content Designation

Certain categories of content, such as university policies, forms, regulatory information, program information, and financial aid information are designated as authoritative content and must not be replicated or reposted in multiple locations. Instead, web pages must link to the designated authoritative source to prevent outdated or conflicting information.

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8. Financial Transactions and Personally Identifiable Information

No ETSU website may collect credit card payments or other financial or personal sensitive information from users without written authorization from University Counsel, the Office of University Marketing and Communications, the Office of Business and Finance, and the Office of Information Technology Services. Any unit needing to conduct commercial activity on an ETSU website, including receipt of online credit card payments, must receive authorization from financial services and create a valid payment account. The user is responsible for obtaining a merchant ID, if appropriate; setting up the payment site; and acquiring adequate training on maintaining the payment site.

No ETSU website may collect personally identifiable information from users unless permitted under the Personally Identifiable Information policy and after all required approvals are received.

Procedures

1. Designation and Approval of Web Content Editors

1.1. Appointment of Unit-Level Web Leads

1.1.1. Identification of Domains of Responsibility

UMC will align the university organizational chart with the etsu.edu sitemap to establish clear domains of responsibility for each unit or college.

1.1.2. Selection of Unit-Level Web Leads

UMC will collaborate with the director or dean of each administrative unit or college to identify and appoint a Unit-Level Web Lead. This individual should possess familiarity with the unit's or college's content and demonstrate the technical aptitude required for website management.

1.1.3. Notification and Role Definition

UMC notifies the selected individual of their appointment as the Unit-Level Web Lead, outlining the responsibilities of the role, including the completion of all required trainings, review and signing of the Web Governance Policy, and the oversight and approval of departmental web editors.

1.2. Appointment of Departmental Web Editors

1.2.1. Request for Access

Individuals who desire to make minor edits to a departmental website must request access through the designated form. The form includes the requested

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department web address, the individual's role on campus, and their Unit-Level Web Lead's name and email address.

1.2.2. Departmental Web Editors Approval

The submitted form will be routed to the appropriate Unit-Level Web Lead for the respective department for approval. The Unit-Level Web Lead assumes responsibility for departmental web authors, ensuring adherence to guidelines and policies.

1.2.3. UMC Review and Account Creation

Upon approval from the Unit-Level Web Lead, the form will be forwarded to the UMC website administrators. UMC will create the user account within the CMS and grant the appropriate permissions for access to the departmental website.

1.2.4. User Notification and CMS Training

Upon completion of account creation, the user will receive an automated notification confirming their access to the university's CMS and providing links to the required training modules. These modules must be completed before any website edits can be made.

2. Content Management and Editing

2.1. Content Management System (CMS) Access

Unit-Level Web Leads will be granted access to the CMS and provided with access information and credentials upon completion of their initial training.

3. Approval and Review Workflow

3.1. Content Review and Approval

Unit-Level Web Leads may publish content without UMC review. Department-level editors are required to submit their content for review to their Unit-Level Web Lead to ensure that content meets all brand and accessibility guidelines, as well as website best practices. UMC may edit or remove content as provided in Section 4 of the Policy.

3.2. Data Hygiene Practices

3.2.1. Outdated Content Removal: Any outdated, unused, or redundant content should be removed in a timely manner. UMC may remove content that has not been reviewed or updated within the past five years, subject to the notice and records-retention requirements of this policy.

4. Website Design Standards

4.1. Templates and Design Components

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4.1.1. Web Page Templates

UMC will provide approved templates for page creation. These templates will be presented to Web Content Editors during training and must be used for all page creation to maintain brand consistency.

4.1.2. Standard Design Components

Web Content Editors will have access to standard design components that can be used to customize content while adhering to ETSU brand guidelines.

5. Management of Authoritative Content

5.1. Identification and Maintenance

Repository: UMC will maintain a centralized repository of authoritative content, including but not limited to university policies, safety information, and financial aid and academic program information, and ensure consistent updates across the website.

5.2. Linking and Duplication

5.2.1. Proper Linking

Training modules will emphasize the importance of linking to authoritative sources rather than creating duplicate content.

5.2.2. Content Removal

If UMC site administrators find duplicate content on the site, they will remove the page, implement redirects to the authoritative source, and notify the Unit-Level Web Lead of the change.

5.3. Updates and Coordination

5.3.1. Request Submission

Web Content Editors can submit change requests for authoritative content via the web request form.

5.3.2. Processing

UMC will process the requests and notify the requester of the outcome (approval or rejection with rationale).

6. Handling Financial Transactions and PII

Any Web Content Editor requesting the ability to collect sensitive information or to process payments will contact the Office of Business and Finance and ITS to complete all requirements.

7. Content Removal and Archival

7.1. Outdated Content

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Outdated content must be removed regularly. Content that units wish to preserve for historical purposes can be stored in other places, such as D2L, Digital Commons, or SharePoint in order not to accumulate files in perpetuity. UMC can provide guidance on where content should be stored.

7.2. Archival Procedures

7.2.1. Institutional Repository

Public web content may be archived in the Sherrod Library's institutional repository (Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University). Unit-Level Web Leads must coordinate with the library's institutional repository staff to create digital collections of archived web content and similar works. Contact digilib@etsu.edu for inquiries. Additional analog and digital materials may be archived in the University Archives, which is a part of the Archives of Appalachia. Contact archives@etsu.edu for inquiries.

Applicable Forms and Websites

[ETSU.edu Web Strategy](#)

[ETSU Public Content Accessibility Policy](#)

[UMC Web Support Request Form](#)

Authority and Revisions

Authority: Focus Act § 49-8-203, et seq.

Previous Policy: [Web Design and Publishing Policy](#)

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of

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University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.