

NCCU Web Standards and Procedures

Purpose

This North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Web Standards and Procedures document provides guidance for faculty, staff and students contributing to the University's web presence. Web space is provided primarily to support the academic and administrative functions of the University. University related webpages are an important means of conducting business, including but not limited to advancement, communication, education, research and scholarship. It is further recognized that webpages are a reflection of the creator(s) and the institution as a whole. Therefore, the content, appearance of documents and other subject matter contained on all webpages should comply with the standards and procedures within this document.

Specifically, these standards and procedures are designed to:

- Provide a framework for developing and presenting webpages in a consistent and user-friendly manner aligned with the University's mission;
- Ensure the information presented is accurate and current;
- Mandate the development of webpages that comply with University policies, and applicable state and federal laws; and
- Provide necessary management and oversight of the University's IT resources.

Webpages Subject to Standards and Procedures

Websites on University servers are subject to these standards and procedures and categorized as either official or unofficial webpages.

Official University webpages include the NCCU home page (www.nccu.edu); academic departments and program pages; office, administrative and support unit pages; news and information pages; and any other World Wide Web address that is otherwise sponsored, endorsed or created on authority of a University department or administrative unit; including course pages residing outside the secure course management system.

Unofficial webpages are pages maintained by individuals on University servers such as student pages and University recognized student organization pages.

Applicable Laws and Regulations

All official webpages must adhere to federal, state, local and University regulations. No copyrighted or trademarked information may be posted without written consent of the owner.

Privacy Policy and Terms of Use

Official university webpages must include a link to the NCCU Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Non-Templated Pages

All webpages developed outside of the University template and hosted on University servers must provide a link back to www.nccu.edu. The link is to be clearly displayed as "NCCU.edu" in the upper half portion of the page. The NCCU logo or "North Carolina Central University" located in the header may serve as a graphical or textual link back to the NCCU home page.

Disclaimer of Unofficial Content

Many pages link to unofficial pages which feature externally hosted content. The appearance or design of an unofficial webpage should not create confusion such that a reasonable person viewing that page would believe it is an official University webpage; it should not appear to be sponsored, endorsed or created on authority of a University department or administrative unit. To reduce the likelihood of confusion, clicking on external links will display the following disclaimer prior to page launch:

“This webpage is not a publication of the North Carolina Central University, nor is it in any way sponsored, endorsed or created on authority of a University department or administrative unit. The author(s) of this page is solely responsible for its content.”

A “white list” of approved unofficial external webpages may bypass the disclaimer. ITS Web Support Services may include or remove sites from the white list at its discretion.

NCCU.edu content such as blog and news articles may not be officially vetted. This content may or may not adhere to University policies or guidelines. Any inflammatory or obscene content or references to criminal activity is not permitted.

Links to Non-University Web Sites

Links to non-University web sites should be related to the subject matter of referring page. Placement of advertising or links to commercial web sites is generally prohibited. However, the Web Advisory Council (WAC) has the authority to approve advertising or links to commercial web sites if they are:

- General interest sites, available free of charge
- Subscription services paid by the university
- Information that relates to or supports teaching, research or the service mission of NCCU

Accessibility

Reasonable effort must be made to comply with accessibility requirements mandated by Federal and State law. Such requirements include, but are not limited to, adherence to Section 508 Subpart B – Technical Standards of the Rehabilitation Act and Chapter 168A of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Oversight

Oversight of webpages subject to this policy is the responsibility of the Web Advisory Council (WAC), which is made up of representatives from each University division. Violations of the web policy will be made known to the WAC for resolution. Non-compliance with applicable policies and/or laws may result in removal of webpages or directories from the main web server and/or removal of links to the site from upper level University webpages and site index.

Writing Style

Content must use Associated Press (AP) style.

Content Age and Accuracy

Official webpages must be accurate and current. Outdated information must be removed and new information added on a regular basis. Inactive pages and files must be removed from official directories and stored locally.

Image Content

The incorporation of images into page content adds interest to pages, however the inclusion of too much content results in long pages that will require excessive scrolling to view. The inclusion of any more than five images per page is discouraged; however image galleries can be used to incorporate more than five images on a page without requiring excessive scrolling to view the page content. Image galleries are best suited when images are the focal content on a page.

Page Titles and Page Names

Titles of pages can sometimes be confusing, both to the visitor and to search engines. Seeking to eliminate that confusion, we oftentimes will repeat elements, which should be obvious – “NCCU School of Education Message from the Dean,” for example. The visitor (and search engine) knows it is “NCCU,” and having clicked on “School of Education” should make that part obvious (to the visitor, at least). Do not manually include parent entity names in page titles. The web server will automatically determine that “Message from the Dean” is within the “School of Education,” which itself is part of “NCCU,” thus improving search engine results and making page titles shorter.

All page titling should be as brief as needed to get the intent across. For example, “How to Get Aid” should be “Get Aid” or even “Aid.” The following standard titles and page names should be used for these common types of pages:

- Contact/directory listing pages should be titled "Contact Us" and named "contact-us.cfm". If there are multiple contact pages within the same directory, then the page names should be "contact-[department-or-unit-name].cfm"
- Scholarship listing pages should be titled "Scholarships" and named "scholarships.cfm".
- Degree listing pages should be titled "Degrees" and named "degrees.cfm".
- FAQ listing pages should be titled "FAQs" and named "faqs.cfm".
- News article listing pages should be titled "News" and named "news.cfm".
- Calendar event listing pages should be titled "Events" and named "events.cfm".

Headings

Heading structure must be implemented in numerical order for ADA compliance. For example, an h2 tag should be used before an h3 tag.

Headings should be concise and refer specifically to their associated sub-content.

Headings should not be used simply for text formatting. Use bold or italic text to show emphasis.

A sub-heading should only be used if there is more than one (1) sub-section of content on a page.

Headings should not include training colons. For example, the heading “Contact Us:” should be formatted as “Contact Us”.

Do not use compound headings. For example, “About NCCU - History” should simply be “History”, and the parent heading or page title should be “About NCCU”.

Internally Hosted Content

NCCU.edu should be the single primary source of content integral to the conduct of a university department, unit or program. Examples of integral content include course descriptions and degree

program curricula, financial opportunities and requirements, admission requirements, and faculty/staff directory listings. Integral content should not be duplicated under an external domain.

Exceptions are permitted for content hosted externally for the purpose of advertising internally hosted content. For example, a Facebook post may be created featuring details of an upcoming event which links to an internally hosted event detail/registration page. In this case, the Facebook post encourages traffic toward NCCU.edu.

Exceptions are also permitted for student-created content or content created solely for academic or learning purposes.

Web Liaison

Each official University webpage must have an authorized Web Liaison responsible for the development and maintenance of the page according to University policies, standards, procedures and guides. The Web Liaison may delegate tasks as needed to be in accordance with the policy, but should be prepared to serve as the primary informational contact for inquiries regarding the site.

Departmental Directory Profiles

Web Liaisons are responsible for identifying and reporting outdated or inaccurate information on directory profiles of employees in their designated department(s), however it is the responsibility of both departmental chairs and individual employees to keep profiles updated.

Photography

Documentary photography featuring human subjects should be images of NCCU faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, and they should appear to be authentic. The use of stock photography of human subjects is discouraged, although exceptions are permitted for publicly available or privately submitted photos of visiting speakers, scholars, performers or politicians.

Photography for purposes other than illustrating campus life may include stock photography and/or artistic alterations.

Photography featuring human subjects must be appropriately authorized for publication to NCCU.edu.

Link Structure

Links on webpages must use descriptive link text that matches the title of the destination page or document title; or that precisely describes the destination page or its content. Links should not include the words "click here." If a link is associated with an action, then the action should be included in the link. For example, the hyperlinked text for "Click here to register for orientation" should be simply phrased "Register for orientation."

Links to documents such as PDFs, office documents or spreadsheets should be followed by the document extension in capital letters within parentheses. Below are examples of formatting for common document types:

- **PDF Document** - "Document Title (PDF)"
- **MS Word Document** - "Document Title (DOCX)"
- **MS Spreadsheet Document** - "Document Title (XLSX)"

Web Hosting

The University is not responsible for unofficial pages and reserves the right to remove pages found to be in violation of the law, University policies, interests or standards, or pages that negatively affect the performance of the web server or network.

Non-profit organizations sponsored by a member of the NCCU community, whose mission is directly tied to the University's mission, may qualify for server resources. Resources may be provided only if these resources do not have a negative impact on server efficiency. The faculty or staff member affiliated with the organization will be responsible for developing and maintaining the page, with no support from Web Support Services. Acquiring server space does not guarantee a link from an official University webpage, nor does it imply that the page will receive a requested uniform resource locator (URL).

General Appearance

All official University webpages must adhere to the current established template; and accompanying design standards and guides, unless the WAC grants special permission.

Unofficial pages need not conform to the University design standards or guides but are subject to applicable policies.

Web Applications and Databases

NCCU Web Support Services must be notified of all intentions to put interactive applications on web servers. Such applications must be reasonably constrained due to concerns about security, server performance, operational monitoring and ongoing maintenance. Data collected through web applications using ColdFusion script requires the establishment of a datasource on the server. Web Support Services has the right to deny requests for datasources or disable existing datasources if security or performance concerns are reported. Applications that require extensive scripting or involve monetary transactions must be handled by Web Support Services.

Issues of privacy and the confidentiality of sensitive information are considered a high priority and may be brought to the attention of Web Support Services at any time by any member of the NCCU community. Sensitive information should not be displayed or collected by a website residing outside a secure connection.

Intranet

Information that is determined to be of relevance only to faculty, staff and students will be located on the campus intranet; this includes information requiring additional protection or information not intended for public release.

Responsibility at Termination

An author of an unofficial webpage is solely responsible for moving that page to a new non-University server once the employment and/or academic relationship with NCCU has ended. For example, when an individual leaves University employment, a student graduates or is otherwise no longer enrolled at NCCU, or when a student organization ceases to exist, NCCU reserves the right to remove unofficial webpages authored by them as part of its routine maintenance of University servers.

Additional Considerations

Insofar as the University web presence is a tool for communicating with both internal and external

constituents, each webpage is a University asset and the Web Liaison should therefore be aware of the other University policies and guidelines that relate to University assets, including, but not limited to:

- Software use
- Copyright
- University logo use/placement
- Privacy
- Computer use

Issues not addressed specifically in this document will be considered in the URL Naming Standard document, or by Information Technology Services (ITS) and the Web Advisory Council on an ad hoc basis.