WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY
DIGITAL GOVERNANCE & STANDARDS

NOTE: This document is a dynamic document that is subject to change to meet the evolving Web and digital needs of the University.

The development of the Western New England University website and digital properties is an extensive initiative and our investment in strengthening the institution’s online image and presence. It is, therefore, of vital importance that our entire University community maintains wne.edu, its sub-sites, blogs, and other digital properties according to best practices, institutional policies, and at the highest level of quality possible.

With that goal in mind, this document details the online management and governance of the Western New England University digital environment.

Digital and Web governance pertains to people, policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines that govern the creation and maintenance of our official website and digital properties. These include pages managed in the Content Management System (CMS), calendars of the University, and blogs created and managed within wne.edu, externally focused applications and services, mass emails and e-newsletters, as well as other tools supporting e-communications, social media sites, and University video hosted on internal and external sites.

THE OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this document is to provide collaborative governance and centralized oversight for the continual development, deployment, delivery, and maintenance of Western New England University’s digital presence, to achieve and maintain a unified look for official University webpages and digital properties to consistently represent the Western New England University brand, with an overarching emphasis upon the recruitment and retention of students via the standardization of processes, roles, responsibilities, practices, and accountabilities. The underlying goal is to facilitate a user experience that will develop a lasting digital relationship with all visitors. This demands that we offer the information they need quickly, easily, and professionally. Thus, we must arrange our website and digital properties in ways that intuitively present information to site visitors to yield a positive online experience that is
consistent with the high quality face-to-face experience that has been and is a hallmark of this institution.

THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The University’s governance structure will consist of two bodies:

- Digital Communications & Technology Standards Group
- Web Content Managers/Users

The Web Content Managers/Users is not as much a group as it is a role. Web Content Managers will receive information and updates pertaining to the website on an as needed basis via the Web Administrator—an individual within OIT who is responsible for: Ensuring a consistent look and feel throughout the website specifically through controlling the implementation of new templates and options; enforcing web guidelines; managing user access, roles, and security; publishing; programming; and Content Management System Software Administration. Working in tandem with the Web Administrator is the Web Content Coordinator—a position within Marketing & External Affairs that focuses on the type, presentation, preservation of a consistent institutional brand, and quality of content that is placed on web pages. Web Content Managers/Users will direct in writing issues or requests for new features/functionality to the Web Administrator and to the Web Content Coordinator as appropriate.

Day-to-day oversight of the University’s website is shared between the Office of Marketing & External Affairs and the Office of Information Technology.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS ADVISORY GROUP

This group is comprised as follows:

- AVP for Information Technology (Co-chair)
- AVP for Marketing Communications (Co-Chair)
- Director of Administrative Information Systems
- Web Marketing Manager
- Web Administrator
- Web Content Coordinator
- Two representatives from Academic Affairs
- One additional faculty member
- Two representatives from Enrollment Management (one undergraduate/one graduate)
• Two representatives from Student Affairs
• One representative from Advancement
• Two representatives from Finance & Administration (includes 1 from Human Resources)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS GROUP

It is the responsibility of this 16-member group to:

• Provide oversight of wne.edu and other University digital properties;

• Establish appropriate policies, processes, and procedures to govern current and future digital and Web standards;

• Evaluate effectiveness, content, standards, and policies in order to assure accuracy and consistency in the communication of the University’s brand;

• Suggest global changes to the taxonomy, structure, branding, look and feel, navigation, and styling as needed;

• Ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory standards, including accessibility, use of copyrighted material, security, protection of personal information, and other related policies and standards of the University, as applicable;

• Ensure site quality and integrity; and

• Assist and refer to the appropriate area to resolve non-compliance issues.

This group will meet on a monthly basis during the fall and spring semesters and on an ad hoc basis as needed, in order to assure that directions and policies are established with a full understanding of the issues and implications of its decisions. Recommendations that are appropriate to the jurisdiction of the Digital Communications & Technology Standards Advisory Group will be reached by consensus. Consensus is defined as achievement of full support after a complete airing of differing viewpoints. Consensus is achieved through discussion. If the group is unable to reach consensus, a
vote that represents a simple majority will be honored. The final recommendation with be presented to the Vice President for Marketing & External Affairs for approval.

The Digital Communications & Technology Standards Advisory Group will continually look at opportunities to communicate relevant information to appropriate audiences and review requests from academic and administrative stakeholders.

GOVERNANCE POLICIES & STANDARDS

Guidelines and Compliance

Pages published within the wne.edu domain and other digital properties are under the jurisdiction of Western New England University. While certain faculty and staff will have access to edit certain portions of these properties, create new content, and remove old content, the University retains the right to review, modify content that is not in compliance with University policy.

The website provides a platform to showcase the University’s best qualities and to project a positive image to the entire world. It is a strategic asset that carries enormous influence and provides global access to all aspects of the University. Given the large number of Web editors/authors managing portions of the site, guidelines that advance clarity, accuracy, and consistency are essential for the protection of Western New England University’s online image. While this document seeks to cover all areas of digital governance, there may be questions that remain. For additional information, contact: Web Content Coordinator of the Office of Marketing & External Affairs.

The Office of Marketing & External Affairs has access to all areas of the Western New England University website and, in order to assure quality control, will edit/alter content as needed for clarity, grammar, spelling, usage, and style, as well as to conform to University naming conventions and branding. The University reserves the right to revise or remove content housed on University Web resources or external resources that does not meet the University’s Acceptable Use Policy, the standards contained within this document, or other approved policies and procedures set forth by the University, including, but not limited to, the collection of personally identifiable information (PII), solicitation of funds, and the use of humans in research that includes surveys. Any issues that represent violations to such policies and procedures will be communicated with the individual responsible for the content in question or the appropriate department chair or director.
Functionality Processes

Requests submitted to Marketing & External Affairs will be reviewed by the Web Marketing Manager and Web Administrator before implementation. If there are questions about the request, it will be referred to the AVP for Information Technology and the AVP for Marketing Communications for proper vetting and decision. If the requesting party disagrees with the decision, it will be reviewed by the Digital Communications & Technology Standards Advisory Group.

WEB ROLES, PERMISSIONS, AND PUBLISHING WORKFLOW

Permissions are determined by user groups, which include all content authors and editors assigned to a specific department or area.

Marketing & External Affairs staff will provide day-to-day oversight of all Web content submitted for review as part of any applicable workflow before it is published to the live Western New England University website. These same staff members are also responsible for generating and maintaining content for the homepage and the high-level landing pages, and provide content writing/editing/design guidance to departments university-wide.

A Subject Matter Expert (SME)/Contributor is role of each academic chair or administrative department director who has content on the Website. That person may or may not work within the CMS, but is accountable for:

- Departmental recommendations regarding content direction for their webpages that aligns with the University’s stated strategic Web goals, objectives, and the established site structure;

- Assurance that all department site content is accurate, up-to-date, and meets the University’s quality standards;

- These individuals will work with the head of their College/School or division to ensure that a web editor is assigned to attend training and to maintain their department pages. Departments, where possible, should limit the assignment of maintaining and updating their webpages to those who will use the CMS on a regular basis. It is generally advisable to assign one or two individuals who will regularly work in the CMS and gain both the experience and knowledge to become experts in the use of the system.
**CMS Content Approver** is the role of the individuals responsible for reviewing submitted CMS content as part of department workflow for quality, style, consistency, accuracy, and that it is up-to-date.

**CMS Content Editor** is the role for all users who have the ability to edit existing site content and work with Marketing & External Affairs to create new webpages. Once changes are complete, pages are sent in workflow for review/approval by the Content Approver. Certain high level pages will require a secondary approval by Marketing & External Affairs via the Web Content Coordinator.

**PLEASE NOTE: The ultimate accountability for content accuracy in each area resides with the Deans and Vice Presidents.**

**QUALITY CONTROL & WORKFLOW**

Regardless of the structure, when any individual makes changes to the existing pages, he/she should make certain to check spelling, grammar, style, links, and content quality on each page, using the tools within the CMS and referring to the University’s Style Guide and Graphics Standards Manual. This should be considered for each page BEFORE submitting changes to a workflow.

All edits to existing CMS pages on the externally focused pages of the site or the creation of new pages will be reviewed by a member of the Marketing & External Affairs staff prior to being published.

If pages are submitted with errors, are of poor quality, or inconsistent with the brand messaging of the University, the Marketing & External Affairs staff will either reject the page and request that the CMS Content Editor responsible make the appropriate changes or the Marketing & External Affairs staff will make the changes themselves if time is limited. If the problem continues, Marketing & External Affairs staff will communicate the issue to the Web Content Approver for the department or area and may suspend CMS editing privileges until resolution is achieved. Maintaining the quality and accuracy of The Western New England University website is a shared responsibility that needs to reflect the brand, mission, and values of the institution. Typos, poor grammar, outdated information, etc. detract from effective communication of what makes Western New England University an outstanding place to study, live, and work.
KEEPING CONTENT RELEVANT, COMPLIANT, AND CURRENT

**CMS Editors/Approvers** should make certain that their assigned pages are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Content and pages that are out of date must be updated, deleted, unpublished, or archived from wne.edu. If content is not reviewed or is out of date, notifications will be sent to the assigned web approver to either update or reapprove. If the issue continues beyond a reasonable time frame determined for review or action, the page may be removed and/or the page approver may lose access to the CMS until the problem is corrected.

An annual content audit will be conducted on all department sites by the Web Content Coordinator. It is expected that academic and administrative department heads (deans and department/program heads) will consult with Marketing & External Affairs communications staff in reviewing their site audit and will take an active role directly or indirectly in addressing issues regarding content on any given department or program site.

**CMS TRAINING/EDUCATION**

Only CMS Content users who have been formally trained and who have attended a group training session on the CMS will receive access to the content management system. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) will announce and provide CMS training at a minimum of once per semester. Additional follow-up trainings will be held periodically as needs arise. In addition, all CMS users will have an opportunity at a minimum of one other time per semester to share issues, be refreshed on CMS capabilities, and bring issues that will be forwarded to the Digital Communications and Technology Standards Advisory Group for consideration and resolution. The individuals, who will forward such information to this oversight group, will be the Website Administrator and the Web Content Coordinator.

If trainings are not immediately available, the members of the Marketing & External Affairs website staff will assist the CMS users in maintaining or updating their designated pages/content until formal training can be arranged.

**MESSAGING FOCUS AND INSTITUTIONAL BRANDING**

Writing content for the Western New England University website should reflect a style that draws visitors to the website in ways that will engage its readers in a conversation. Ultimately, the goal is to provide visitors with the information they seek, when they seek
it, as concisely and clearly as possible. Web visitors are task-oriented; they scan information quickly; and they do not want to become weighed down with irrelevant information, heavy or wordy text, or confusing pathways to get the information they want, so they can move on.

Therefore, it is important to convey a clear and consistent message, throughout the wne.edu website, and to use the official logos and University naming conventions as well as style as detailed in the Western New England University Graphics Manual and the Western New England University Style Guide, which may be found at wne.edu/marketing/guides-and-resources. Although the University generally uses the most current edition of the Chicago Manual of Style, there are certain “house rules” that the University has adopted, that are contained in the two Western New England University guides noted here.

It is important to focus information, as appropriate, on the benefits of this University as well as the features.

**OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**

Departments are prohibited from duplicating official University information in order to prevent conflicting or duplicate information on the wne.edu website. Web pages or content found to be in violation of this will be removed. This includes:

- Tuition, fees, and scholarship information
- Academic calendars and University deadlines
- Course listings (these are maintained by the Academic Scheduling Controller and Information Analyst)
- Course descriptions other than those provided in the Western New England University Academic Programs catalogue
- Academic requirements listed in the Western New England University Academic Programs catalogue
- University news stories or announcements published by the Marketing & External Affairs Office
- Events posted to the campus calendar. Non-academic events should be reserved and arranged through the ESS Systems and the University Events Office.
- New content that references the University’s Mission, purpose, bylaws, honor code, accreditations, etc.
COURSE LISTINGS

Course listings or descriptions can only appear on the University’s website on the Academic Scheduling Controller and Information Analyst’s pages or in the online *Western New England University Academic Programs* catalogue. They should not be duplicated on other pages.

Departments cannot post a link to a Word document or a PDF that includes course descriptions. The Marketing & External Affairs staff reserves the right to remove such documents or links.

UNIVERSITY TEMPLATE DESIGNS

Duplication of any part of the CMS design templates, inclusive of the header, footer, navigation, masthead, or callout styles is strictly prohibited without the express written approval of the Marketing & External Affairs department. Any sites found to be in violation will be removed or disabled. Requests for HTML templates or elements to implement on sites or applications that reside outside of the CMS should be coordinated in advance through Marketing & External Affairs and OIT.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VISUAL ELEMENTS

Photography and other visual elements on the website play a vital role in creating a positive image of Western New England University. Their intent is to emotionally captivate prospective and current students, parents, and other visitors to the website in order to make a connection with the people and activities displayed, along with making alumni feel a sense of pride about their connection with Western New England University. You should not rely upon clip art, as it is a lesser quality and very outdated graphic option. Consult with Marketing & External Affairs for more professional and higher quality graphic options.

All principal photography will be reviewed for quality professional standards prior to publishing. Photos that do not meet the quality expectations of the University will be identified and discussed with the CMS Content Approver.

Marketing & External Affairs, in collaboration with the CMS Content Approver, will select all banner photos, i.e. those used at the top of webpages.
VIDEOS

Videos, like other materials that tell our stories, e.g. brochures, handbooks, webpages, email, social media sites, etc., are a vital component of the Western New England University story and brand. They must adhere to University quality standards and be consistent in tone, style, and message. Therefore, plans to produce videos for external audiences should be discussed in advance of production and concepts and storyboards should be reviewed by Marketing & External Affairs. Pre-production planning, video concepts, audio capture, and editing techniques should be discussed with and/or coordinated through Marketing & External Affairs. It is important to have a clear understanding of who your intended audience(s) is/are, what is your message, and what your intended outcome is from the video.

All videos posted on the wne.edu website, whether uploaded directly to the University website or embedded in the CMS or in the site from external video-sharing sites, such as YouTube or Vimeo, etc. must be accessible through captioning or text transcripts, which is essential to our overarching goal of ensuring accessibility to all web content.

When producing or overseeing the production of any videos, be certain to include additional production time for transcription or captioning. For more information on accessibility matters, see wne.edu/student-disability-services.