

University Websites Policy

Reason for Policy

To govern the operation of university websites in a way that ensures legal compliance, supports the university's mission of teaching, research, and public service, protects the institutional brand, and preserves academic freedom and research agility.

Entities Affected

All university departments, units, faculty, staff, and student employees who create, manage, or fund official public-facing institutional websites.

Responsible Office

Office of University Communications, reachable via: [\[role-account-email@uoregon.edu\]](mailto:role-account-email@uoregon.edu)

Policy Statement

The University of Oregon's official web presence is a primary communication tool and a critical institutional asset. This policy governs the creation and management of that digital ecosystem.

Scope

This policy applies to public-facing websites hosted on uoregon.edu, oregon.edu, and their subdomains, as well as any custom or externally hosted websites that represent the University of Oregon, its units, programs, or affiliated activities.

This policy does not apply to:

- Software applications and web applications, including learning management systems, enterprise systems, research databases, scholarly research tools, custom research platforms, and internal dashboards behind login
- Intranet sites and applications behind login used for internal university business

- The authenticated portions of systems where a public landing or marketing page exists for the broader application

A **website** is a public-facing digital communication channel whose primary purpose is conveying information to a reader. A **web application** is an authenticated software system accessed through a browser whose primary purpose is to let users perform tasks, manipulate data, or run computations. Where a system includes both, public-facing landing and marketing pages fall within this policy; authenticated or application-layer interfaces do not. The accompanying procedures provide criteria and examples for consistent application of this distinction.

Ownership and Governance

This policy distinguishes between the website as institutional property and the content displayed on it.

Institutional property. For the purposes of this policy, institutional property refers to: (a) the website itself, including its domain, configuration, infrastructure, and the university's authority to govern its operation; and (b) the content on sites that speak in the institutional voice. The Board of Trustees of the University of Oregon is the legal owner of all institutional property governed by this policy. This authority enables the institution to set governance standards, require remediation of non-compliant sites, and ensure continuity of operations.

Content on affiliated sites. On sites that speak in affiliated voices — faculty professional pages, research labs, scholarly projects, student work, and recognized student organizations — intellectual property in the underlying scholarship, creative work, research data, and instructional content remains governed by UO's intellectual property, research, and academic policies, including UO Policy II.07.02 (Inventions, Licenses, Patents, Copyrights), UO Policy II.06.05 (Proprietary Research), and the Academic Freedom, Freedom of Inquiry, and Free Speech Policy.

Enforcement authority. The university retains authority to act on any content on in-scope sites that violates applicable university policies or laws, regardless of the site's voice.

Relationship to Other Policies

This policy governs the operation of university websites, including their hosting, branding, accessibility, content standards, and lifecycle. It does not displace or modify other university policies that address substantive matters appearing on websites. When this policy and another university policy both apply to a matter:

- The substantive policy governs the substance. Intellectual property questions are governed by UO Policy II.07.02 (Inventions, Licenses, Patents, Copyrights) and UO Policy II.06.05 (Proprietary Research). Academic freedom questions are governed by the Academic Freedom, Freedom of Inquiry, and Free Speech Policy. Information security and privacy questions are governed by the Information Security Program. Accessibility questions are governed by the Information and Communications Technology Accessibility Policy.
- This policy governs the website's operation as a website. Brand alignment, hosting platform, technical standards, lifecycle, and operational compliance are governed here.

Where the application of these policies to a specific situation is genuinely contested, the matter is referred through the appeals process described in the accompanying procedures.

Universal Baseline Standards

All in-scope websites, regardless of technical platform or unit, must meet the university's foundational requirements for:

- Digital accessibility, in accordance with the Information and Communications Technology Accessibility Policy
- Information security and privacy, in accordance with the Information Security Program and related policies
- University brand affiliation, at the minimum level of visible UO identification specified in procedures
- Records management and content currency, in accordance with the UO Records Retention Schedule

Standards beyond this baseline, including full institutional branding, content review requirements, hosting requirements, and approved technology stacks, vary by the site's purpose, audience, and the voice it represents. The accompanying procedures define site categories and their applicable standards.

Delegation of Authority

The Responsible Office is authorized to establish and maintain the University Websites Procedures and Guidelines (see Related Resources). These living guidelines define specific technical requirements, branding mandates, domain naming conventions, hosting requirements, content standards, monitoring and enforcement processes, and the formal process for requesting academic or research exceptions.

Web Governance Board

The Responsible Office will convene a Web Governance Board to review and advise on enforcement matters, exception requests, and updates to the accompanying procedures. The Board's composition and operating practices are set forth in the procedures. The Responsible Office retains decisional authority on matters within the scope of this policy.

Decision-Making

For matters within scope of this policy:

- **Legal ownership** rests with the Board of Trustees.
- **Decisional authority** rests with the Office of University Communications.
- **Advisory review** is provided by the Web Governance Board.
- **Unit-level accountability** rests with Web Trustees; daily oversight with Web Stewards; content management with Content Custodians.

Appeals follow the process set forth in the accompanying procedures.

Definitions

- **Web Trustees**—Vice Presidents and Deans holding ultimate accountability for the digital compliance of their portfolios. A Web Trustee may be asked to reassign stewardship if a steward is unable to maintain effective oversight.
- **Web Steward** — Full-time UO staff or faculty member designated by a Web Trustee to oversee daily technical and editorial standards for one or more sites. Stewardship is a best-effort responsibility.
- **Content Custodians**—Staff, faculty, or students responsible for day-to-day content creation and maintenance.
- **Website**—A public-facing digital communication channel whose primary purpose is conveying information to a reader. See Scope.
- **Web Application**—A software system whose primary value is interactive functionality, data processing, or computation. See Scope.

Related Resources

- [University Websites Procedures and Guidelines \(accompanying document\)](#)
- [UO Policy II.07.02 \(Inventions, Licenses, Patents, Copyrights\)](#)
- [UO Policy II.06.05 \(Proprietary Research\)](#)
- [Academic Freedom, Freedom of Inquiry, and Free Speech Policy](#)
- [Information Security Program](#)
- [Information and Communications Technology Accessibility Policy](#)
- [UO Records Retention Schedule](#)
- [Acceptable Use \(in review\)](#)
- [Oregon Brand Guide](#)