



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
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INSTITUTIONAL OFFICE

Web Policy of the North-West University

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Web Policy of the North-West University

1 Preamble

As a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, with a unique institutional culture based upon the values the university espouses, the North-West University (NWU) has adopted this Web Policy on 10 June 2011.

This policy replaces the Web Policy adopted by Council on 19 September 2008.

2 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the North-West University to provide an official university website that supports the business needs of the university while meeting the needs of selected audiences. The different web pages of the units/schools/faculties/departments within the university all form part of the NWU website.

The purpose of this policy document is to provide the staff of the NWU with the necessary information about the optimisation of the NWU website as an effective communication medium for the benefit of the university as a whole, specifically with the following goals:

- to enhance the university's presence on the Internet and to broaden recognition for the university, while strengthening its image;
- to enhance the consistency of the university website through the ongoing publishing of current, informative and engaging material that is presented in an attractive, consistent, accurate and professional manner;
- to support a sustainable information and communication infrastructure that supports the university's mission, goals and objectives through an on-line presence; and
- to optimise resources to streamline and automate the development and maintenance of the NWU website as a quick and easily accessible means of communication with the university's target audiences.

It defines standards, definitions, rules, procedures and guidelines to ensure that information on the NWU website and other electronic channels are legible, legally compliant, accurate and consistent.

3 Definitions

3.1 Electronic Communications Forum (ECF)

This is a virtual network of NWU staff working towards the optimisation of the NWU web and other electronic communication, consisting of role players from across the university.

3.2 NWU web publisher

A person who edits web pages, manages websites, and/or edits content from external sources that is used in web pages (e.g. databases).

4 Rules

- 4.1 This policy, the web procedures and web rules and guidelines apply to all staff, service providers and contractors who develop web systems for the university. This includes programming, content development, publishing and the design and layout of web pages.
- 4.2 The policy applies to the official NWU web pages and the NWU staff intranet, all of which could be hosted in a Microsoft or Linux environment.

- 4.3 All these rules, procedures and guidelines are subject to the official policies of the university and especially the Policy for the responsible use of information and communication technology, networks and information resources.
- 4.4 The NWU is committed to intellectual and academic freedom and to protecting the rights of students and staff to exercise freedom of expression and free academic inquiry and discovery. Users must, in turn, respect the rights of other users, respect the integrity of the systems and related physical resources and comply with the South African Constitution and other applicable laws, regulations and university policies.
- 4.5 While the University strongly believes in freedom of expression, it is not obliged to provide facilities for the unrestricted electronic practice of this right: thus, web publishing and the use of electronic communication at the NWU is a privilege, not a right.
- 4.6 The following documents can be accessed for more detailed information pertaining to the NWU web: conditions for the use of the North-West University website (copyright, disclaimer, indemnification, privacy policy, etc.); rules and guidelines for the use of electronic mail; rules and guidelines for the protection of IT infrastructure; the NWU Policy on the Responsible Use of Information and Communication Technology; registration form to apply for IT courses relating to the intranet, internet and menu training; the NWU Policy on Archives; the NWU Records Management Policy; and definitions within the NWU web environment.
- 4.7 Every campus should have a dedicated person(s) overseeing the relevant campus's web publishing in general.
- 4.8 This policy will be reviewed as deemed necessary.

5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Role of the Electronic Communication Forum (ECF)

The ECF is responsible for the translation of the NWU web strategy into a workable plan and overseeing the planning, design, structure and development of the NWU web. They also ensure that policies of the NWU are followed to ensure consistency regarding the official templates application, accuracy of official information and regular update of all web content.

Specific responsibilities include:

- overall architecture, design and layout of the NWU web in accordance with guidelines set out in the policy document;
- acting as champions for the main portfolios: IT, Teaching-Learning, Research, Innovation, Language and Implementation of Expertise to ensure the NWU web strategy is translated into a workable plan;
- providing guidance to web publishers according to the policy document;
- controlling operation of the central web server;
- awarding disc space and rights to registered web publishers;
- ensuring that set rules are adhered to and the standard of web pages are maintained;
- acting as a central contact person to provide information about the NWU web;
- handling administrative functions of the NWU web;
- evaluating and making available web browsing software; arranging training programmes for users;
- ensuring the correct application of the NWU corporate identity (CID);
- handling applications from university stakeholders with regard to services provided;
- general web enquiries via email; and
- providing guidance with regard to the development and implementation of electronic communication mediums.

5.2 Members of the Electronic Communication Forum (ECF)

The following are members of the ECF and their responsibilities in terms of the ECF:

5.2.1 Executive Director: Corporate Affairs and Relations: This person oversees the NWU web from a strategic point of view.

5.2.2 Institutional Director: Corporate Communication: This person is also responsible for overseeing the NWU web and acts as mediator in case of a dispute relating to aspect(s) of the NWU web.

5.2.3 Institutional Office Web Content Manager: This person is located at the Institutional Office (IO) in the Corporate Affairs and Relations (CAR) office. This person drives the total NWU web in terms of established policies, processes and procedures. In addition, he/she is responsible for the planning, the appearance and setting up of the website navigation, design, updates and the overseeing, development and maintenance relating to the official corporate web pages of the NWU. The IO Web Content Manager is also responsible for overseeing the web publishing within the IO, controlling the build of the menu structure at IO level and implementing the ECF's decisions. He/she works with and supports the campus web coordinators and publishers towards the effective management of the NWU web.

5.2.4 Campus Web Coordinators: This person implements the ECF's decisions and action plan and acts as coordinator and overseer of the activities of the campus web publishers. They work closely with the IO Web Content Manager. The Campus Web Coordinator looks after site usability and user experience and is ultimately responsible for website construction (building menu structure) and maintenance to ensure professional and concise representation of the relevant campus on the bigger NWU web. The Campus Web Coordinator is also responsible for and supports the ECF in the overall application of the university's correct corporate identity. Content placement can be part of a Campus Web Coordinator's responsibilities, while content creation is typically not. The Campus Web Coordinators will also convene a Campus Electronic Communication Forum, where all the publishers from the different campuses will meet to discuss relevant issues, ideally before the monthly ECF meeting.

5.2.5 NWU web publisher(s): This person normally uses a web-based content management system, such as OpenCMS, to edit content on a web page. This person may also have skills in image design and development for the web. NWU web publishers are situated at IO and all three campuses and represent specific faculties, divisions, departments, schools and other business units. Ideally, each of these groups needs to be represented by at least one web publisher.

5.2.6 NWU IT representative(s): The NWU ITC department maintains the technical architecture of the NWU website, operates the central web server, and awards disk space and rights to registered web publishers. They support the ECF in the overall application of the correct corporate identity, providing guidelines to web publishers, ensuring that web page standards are maintained and facilitating optimisation of the NWU web in support of the University's mission. They are also responsible for hardware, software and web training.

5.2.7 ITC: Applications and Research (APR): This department is responsible for empowering the campus IT divisions to convey information on training programmes to users, who are responsible for composing and placing web pages on the NWU website. A new publisher will be trained in the following: how to publish on the intranet; how to publish on the internet; and dos and don'ts of internet and intranet publishing (CAR office).

5.2.8 Academic Support Services (AS): This department is responsible for training concerning the educational uses of the web (e-learning environment: e-Fundi).

5.2.9 Ferdinand Postma Library (FPL): This library is responsible for training concerning publishing of bibliographic and subject information.

5.2.10 Records Management and Administration: This department is responsible for training in the following: the use of the intranet links dedicated to records management; and the use of the electronic records management system.

5.2.11 Voluntary/Ad hoc information providers: These are staff or students who publish information on an ad hoc basis. Lecturers can use e-Fundi to publish study material.

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