

## **Web Content Plan**

### **1 Purpose**

1.1 This document provides a Web Content Plan through which the University can manage the processes, policies and standards for the production of its web content, enabling staff to carry out their work as effectively as possible.

1.2 All sites under the northampton.ac.uk domain are strategic assets owned wholly by the University and thus, content published on all sites must comply with the terms set out in the Web Content Plan and the terms of reference of the Digital Content Project Group.

### **2 Ownership**

2.1 The Web Content Plan is owned by Marketing and International Relations (MIR) and is modified and maintained by the MIR Web Content Editors and will be revisited and revised frequently, adapting to the ever-changing experiences and requirements of the University audiences.

### **3 Scope**

The principal scope of the Web Content Plan is all content produced and maintained on the University's implementation of WordPress (CMS) and the users of the CMS who own and publish content to [www.northampton.ac.uk](http://www.northampton.ac.uk) domains.

### **4 Content Strategy**

4.1 Content is the information conveyed in:

- Copy
- Navigation
- Visual design (buttons, banners, images, videos, icons, and other such assets)

4.2 Compared to print content, online content quality degrades quickly and websites can easily become bloated with outdated, irrelevant and potentially damaging content. The Web Content Plan ensures content is presented in meaningful, useful and relevant contexts for the most effective and straight forward user experience, which in turn ensures that the right content reaches the right people, at the right times, for the right reasons.

4.3 The benefits realised through the implementation of a Content Plan for the University vary according to role.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<b>Faculties and Departments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Only effective, high quality content is published and maintained, reducing risk and maximising impact</li> <li>● Content is audited frequently</li> </ul>
<b>Web Content Editors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Content creation and delivery is demonstrably effective</li> <li>● Content is sustainable and will continue to be useful, engaging and appropriate to the University's goals over time</li> <li>● Ensure that the right content reaches the right people, at the right times, for the right reasons</li> <li>● Best practice in content creation and delivery is demonstrated</li> <li>● Guidance is published and maintained</li> <li>● Training on how to write effective search engine optimised content is provided</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing Account Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Content creation and delivery is demonstrably effective</li> <li>● Content is sustainable and will continue to be useful, engaging and appropriate to the University's goals over time</li> <li>● Ensure that the right content reaches the right people, at the right times, for the right reasons</li> <li>● Training on how to write effective search engine optimised content is provided</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Content Project Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unified approach to content lifecycle</li> <li>● Clear roles and responsibilities</li> <li>● Clear governance can be effectively applied</li> </ul>

4.4 This Content Plan is written for the University and provides a structured approach to creating, managing and archiving content.

4.5 Tailoring of this guidance should only be done by MIR Web Content Editors as it agrees the website's specific purpose and objectives to help to ensure the context of the content is preserved.

4.6 Our brand positioning and identity are a set of tools that will help us communicate with focus, clarity, and consistency.

4.7 The university and education sector is a busy one so it's important that our communications work as hard as possible for us. If we're going to cut through the clutter we need to be single-minded.

4.8 The experiences we create for our students, colleagues, stakeholders and partners are guided by the following three hallmarks:

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**Super Supportive**

**On your side & inclusive  
Encouraging & caring.**

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**Future Focused**

**Forward thinking & visionary  
Innovative & ambitious.**

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**Positive Impact**

**Social responsibility;  
Purposeful research.**

4.9 All existing copy rules detailed in the University brand and editorial guidelines also apply to the web with the following exceptions:

- Wherever possible avoid the use of ampersands because these do not always display properly on all browsers and devices
- Certain governance-related content may disregard the guidelines pertaining to friendly wording and lack of jargon, if there are legal obligations that we must meet. For example: we would generally avoid telling our users they 'must' do anything, but in legal documentation this wording is essential.

## **5 The Core Content Statement**

Creating content on behalf of the University is an act that should support the University's belief and purpose:

**Our Belief:** “We believe universities must create opportunities for positive change.”

**Our Purpose:** “To bring out potential and develop knowledge.”

To ensure that our web content supports our belief and purpose, it is essential for Departments and Faculties to work with the Web Content Editors to create core content statements that will determine where to focus effort when creating content.

A core content statement answers the following questions:

- What are the business goals?
- What content is needed?
- Who is the target audience?
- What are the audience needs?

An example core content statement for international student recruitment might be:  
*“To increase the proportion of high-quality international students on all our programmes we will provide inspirational case studies and practical advice and support to prospective international students in deciding where to study in the UK.”*

In this example:

- **Business goal** - increase the proportion of high-quality international students on all our programmes
- **Content needed** - provide inspirational case studies and practical advice and support
- **Audience** - prospective international students
- **User need** - deciding where to study in the UK

## 6 Business Goals

6.1 The high-level business goals for the University are:

- Recruit **2850** FT UG H/EU status UK domiciled students enrolled as of 1 December 2018
- Post study (UG-PGT) progression at **20%**
- Meet International Recruitment Targets of **£15million** by 2021
- To maintain trust in the organisation through effective reputation management.

## 7 Audiences

7.1 The University has many stakeholders, both external and internal:

- Global research community (researchers, other HEIs, funding councils)
- Home and international prospective students (research postgraduates, taught postgraduates and undergraduates)
- Prospective students' opinion formers/influencers (parents/carers, schools; career advisors)
- Prospective staff (academic and non-academic)
- Alumni and friends
- Business and industry
- Local and regional community
- Media
- General public
- Current students (home and international undergraduates, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates)
- Current staff (academic and non-academic)

7.2 Each user of the University website is looking to satisfy one or more needs. This need may be to find out how much a particular MSc programme costs; to find a study space; to find the start time for an event; to look up the contact details for an academic. All new and existing content should be created specifically to satisfy a user need.

7.3 Avoid duplicating content that is available elsewhere on northampton.ac.uk. This prevents creating a bloated website, damaging search engine optimisation and creating a confusing user journey for visitors. Always link directly to the original source, do not reproduce.

7.4 Avoid duplicating content that is available elsewhere on external websites. For example, content provided by government (statutory instruments, policy, legal, visas), non-government organisations (UCAS, funding bodies, charities, think-tanks etc.), and any other third party should be linked to directly, sending users to the original source rather than republishing on northampton.ac.uk. Always link directly to the original source, do not reproduce.

## **8 University-specific Content**

8.1 Important content on northampton.ac.uk includes:

- Student recruitment
- Research
- Business Support and Enterprise
- News
- Events

- People
- About

Here are some rules about how to deliver content within these areas.

## **8.2 Student recruitment**

Student recruitment content includes course pages, subject hubs and information relating to student life.

Course pages must adhere to the HEFCE guidelines and provide as much information as possible as clearly as possible. There are designated fields for most information and content should be placed in the most appropriate field to keep the user experience consistent. For example, and information about additional costs for a course, should be contained in the text field beneath the Fees and Funding table. The factual elements of course information should be approved by Programme Leaders but the presentation of the facts is the responsibility of the Web Content Editors and Marketing Account Managers (MAMs). Anything relating to modes of attendance, modules and so on should be approved by Curriculum.

Subject hubs should contain an overview of the subject matter (including future career opportunities), relevant news and events, and a list of UG and PG courses within this subject.

Pages relating to student life should be as engaging and interactive as possible. This content is intended to show prospective students the non-academic aspects of being a student at UON. This content should be personable, authentic and open.

## **8.3 Research**

The research section of the website provides an overview of each institution, centre and group at the University, highlighting their research activity and detailing the members. This acts as a landing page for any publicity or advertising that is needed, but more importantly, provides information that is required for funding bids and other research-related activities.

There is a template for these pages to ensure that only the relevant, essential information is covered. Content should be pithy and concise and if necessary individual pages for specific pieces of research can be provided. Any collaborations should be linked out appropriately.

## **8.4 News**

Stories on the news pages must serve to enhance or protect the reputation of the University. Decisions regarding stories to be uploaded will be made by the Public

Relations and Corporate Communications Team, who have absolute editorial control to ensure adherence to house style and tone of voice.

Stories will only be considered if they demonstrate:

- Student success
- Staff success
- Institutional success
- Unique research
- Social Impact

In rare and extreme instances, the University news pages may also be used for Crisis Communications.

All News posts/images should be tagged and categorised appropriately and relevantly in order to make them as easy to search for (and find) as possible.

## **8.5 Events**

Events headlines should be short and pithy – anything more than 60 characters will break the template. All Events posts should be tagged and categorised appropriately and relevantly in order to make them as easy to search for (and find) as possible.

## **8.6 People**

Staff Profiles are displayed on the public website for those members of staff who are actively teaching, who provide front-facing support for students, or who need an online presence for research purposes. Other members of staff may have profiles displayed at the discretion of the Director of HR and Marketing. All Staff Profiles should be written in the third person.

Staff Profiles are split into four categories: General Information, Teaching, Research, Publications. General Information is a brief overview of your background and how you came to be working at UON. Teaching outlines what you teach now, at UON (if applicable). Research explains the areas and subjects that you are actively researching (if applicable). Publications pulls through your personal PURE listings and so all publications that fall within your time at UON should be inputted into PURE in order for them to display on your profile. If you have publications from before your role at UON (which are pertinent and relevant) these can be added to the Other Publications tab.

Research students also have profiles on the public website. This provides an online presence for postgraduate research students who are not employed by the University. Research profiles must also be written in the third person.

Research profiles are split into five categories:

- Research paper (an overview of the research being undertaken),
- Supervising team (a list of the staff who are supervising a student with links to their staff profiles)
- Research dissemination (where research has been published/featured),
- Biography (a brief overview of the student's background and how they came to be researching at UON)
- Awards and Recognition (any awards or recognition the student has received, if applicable).

Contacts can be created for teams who have general contact details such as a team inbox or a general phone number.

B2B is a list of businesses that the University works closely with.

## **8.7 About Us**

Content in the About Us section tends to have more diverse audiences that previously mentioned sections. However, it is still essential that all content has a clear audience and meets a specific user need. This section should not be a 'dumping ground' for content that simply doesn't fit in other sections, it should still have a clear purpose.

## **8.8 Management**

There are certain pieces of information that we must make publicly available under our FOI responsibilities and our responsibilities as a registered charity. While this content may not provide outstanding analytics, it is a legal obligation. Often this content may flout some of the brand guidelines for copy, especially if we are required to use certain legal wording.

## **9 Content Inventory**

The Web Content Editors will have a site-wide responsibilities matrix which defines responsibilities for factual information. All facts will be checked and approved by the nominated owners but will be presented in the best way that the Web Content Editors see fit.

## **10 Accessibility**

It is a legal responsibility for all websites that content be accessible to all users, no matter what disabilities they may have or what technological restrictions there may be (for example: older browsers or devices, or restricted internet speeds/access).

Therefore, all content must meet best practice guidelines for accessibility. Namely:

- all images must include alternative text for those with vision impairments or who have limited data. This alt text should describe the image as concisely as possible. If an individual is in the image they should be named in the alt text
- all links must be contextual and name the destination; do not use 'click here', 'read more' or similar. A good example of an embedded link would be 'Visit the BBC website for more information'.
- headings must be used in order so that those using a screen reader can navigate the page meaningfully
- all content must be aligned left so that zoom software focuses on the copy and not blank space
- italics must not be used as this seems to move on the page and is particularly challenging for users with dyslexia
- content must have a meaningful and straight forward flow so that it is easy to understand
- any downloads must be uploaded with the appropriate title as outlined in the Web Content guidelines so that it can be easily read by screenreaders

## **11 Analytics**

Google Analytics allows us to understand how the website is used and who uses it.

### **11.1 How it works**

It works by deploying a javascript tag on every page of the website, this tag then collects information about the user, their IP address, their browser, operating system, location. As well as how they accessed the site, whether they clicked on an advert, came from a google search or followed a link from social media or another website. Once on site, it measures their interaction in a container called a Session.

A Session consists of all the user's interaction on the site, how long they spend on each page, which links they click on, how far down the page they get and where they leave the site.

### **11.2 How we use it**

This information is used to build a picture of how users interact with the content on the site and tailor the content to their needs. On page analytics inform decisions on which links should get prominent placements.

Comparative behaviour analytics of different user groups informs how paid advertising is used and how to improve our organic search ranking.

Tracking user devices informs the structure and technology used to deliver the website to users. Over the past 3 years the University has seen a marked shift from Desktop to Mobile devices, with over half our users now using some sort of Mobile or Tablet device.

The most comprehensive tracking is on the public website, there is limited but still useful tracking for the Staff and Student Intranets as well as the University's associated microsites.

### **11.3 Reporting**

Reporting and analysis will be provided by the Digital Analyst in MIR. Reporting can be one off, calendar based or continuous depending on requirements.

Reports are currently produced for Marketing Exec, Marketing Account Managers, Content Owners, and these update and inform changes to strategy and content.

### **11.4 How to request a report**

Email [digital.analytics@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:digital.analytics@northampton.ac.uk) with your questions. We can then work together to hone in on the best questions to answer. Good places to start are:

1. How many users do my pages get each month?
2. Where do the users come from?
3. How many downloads in the last year?

### **11.5 Owners of Web Pages**

The University's content ownership matrix identifies individuals and areas responsible for the factual accuracy of specific web pages or pieces of web content.

It is the responsibility of the information owner to ensure the public facing information is updated as necessary.

Web Content Editors are responsible for ensuring this information is presented in the clearest, efficient and most user friendly fashion, whilst taking account of search engine optimisation best practice.

Content owners can contact [digital.analyst@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:digital.analyst@northampton.ac.uk) to request access to Google Analytics and training for the on page analytics tool available for the Chrome web browser.

## **12 Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is made up of many components, but there is work that we can do to our content to improve our ranking within search engine results, organically. By putting the foundations in place through properly optimised content, our budget can be better spent on Pay Per Click advertising. The easier we are to find, the more savvy we can be about where we spend on advertising.

The very basics of SEO are that content should meet the users need. So clear, concise and purposeful content is essential. Content should also include key terms that users will be searching for and these should be informed by analytics and data.

Headlines must be concise and include key terms and all images must be tagged appropriately, to also include key terms. Sub headings should be structured and nested appropriately and should also include key terms.

The Web Content Editors will edit every piece of content on the public website to ensure that it adheres to this best practice, and will also keep abreast of updates in the SEO industry to keep this best practice as relevant and up to date as possible.

Web Content Editors also audit images on the site to ensure that they have been uploaded to the CMS with the right meta information.