



# SWOSU Web Policy

## Purpose of guidelines

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) recognizes the Internet as a powerful tool for communicating with external audiences as well as for facilitating the exchange of information within the university community.

All websites and webpages residing on university servers or funded by university budgets must comply with all local, state, and federal laws and with Southwestern Oklahoma State University's other applicable policies, rules, and regulations. In addition, webpages on the SWOSU website should not contain links to external pages that are in violation to applicable laws or policies.

The quality of information published by Southwestern Oklahoma State University also plays a vital role in conveying the image and reputation of the university. Therefore, it is important that our webpages provide the best possible representation of Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

The following guidelines are meant to provide all SWOSU's website audiences with improvements in the accuracy, credibility, appearance, and timeliness of the information presented while protecting the identity and image of the university by providing a set of standards and guidelines for web sites of the university.

This document outlines relevant information to guide individuals in the creation of SWOSU websites. It should be noted that any organizational units may establish additional policies and guidelines governing content and style of webpages under its jurisdiction.

## University Web Committee

Oversight and review of university policies and guidelines related to the SWOSU website are the responsibility of the University Web Committee. The University Web Committee shall serve as a governing board for violations of the SWOSU Web Policy as well as a review board for webpages that may contain inappropriate or false information. The University Web Committee reserves the right to recommend the removal of webpages in violation of the Web Policy and the right to recommend the suspension of web publishing privileges of persons acting in violation of the Web Policy.

## General Standards

The following standards apply to all webpages on all SWOSU web servers:

1. All webpages must be in compliance with the appropriate SWOSU policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws, including copyright.
2. SWOSU webpages should not contain or link to content that may be considered inappropriate for certain viewing audiences, including but not limited to, sexually explicit or violent content.
3. Webpages located on university servers may not be used to promote commercial activity and/or personal business or to promote personal financial gain, except as may be permitted by other university policy or regulation.
4. SWOSU webpages should not contain confidential university information or student information covered by the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) unless adequate security measures are in place to restrict access to authorized persons.

## Accessibility

SWOSU strives to ensure the accessibility of all electronic publications to all individuals in compliance with applicable laws, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Requirements:

- All new and revised webpages published on or after the effective date of this policy must comply with WCAG 2.0 Level A success criteria. It is strongly encouraged that success criteria levels AA and AAA be achieved.
- Upon a specific request for access by an individual, legacy pages must be updated to be in compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level A success criteria. Legacy webpages are those published for 2 years or longer.
- Where compliance is not technically possible or is unreasonably difficult in that it may require extraordinary measures, an equally effective accessible format will be provided upon request in a timely manner. The department responsible for the creation of the information on the webpage is responsible for making it accessible.

Report accessibility problems to [webmaster@swosu.edu](mailto:webmaster@swosu.edu).

## Advertising, Donors, and Sponsorships

Advertising is not permitted on the SWOSU website.

Sponsorships and donors may be recognized on the SWOSU website. Sponsorships and donors are the receipt of funds without an endorsement from SWOSU.

Corporate partners are established when there is a formal written agreement between a corporation and SWOSU. University departments and organizations may link to university corporate partners with proper approval from the Web Services, Public Relations and Marketing Department or the university president.

University departments and organizations may acknowledge corporate sponsorships of events or programs through the use of text, corporate logos, or trademarks which may link to websites outside of the SWOSU domain with proper approval from the Web Services, Public Relations and Marketing Department or the university president.

## Copyright

All information and images published on the SWOSU website are subject to intellectual property rights and copyright laws. Webpage authors must obtain written permission from the owner of the copyrighted material (including text, graphics, and other forms of media) prior to the copyrighted material being published on the SWOSU website.

Copyright infringement complaints should be sent to the [University's Copyright Compliance Officer](#).

Users of the SWOSU website are permitted to access, use, print, and reproduce information from files and webpages unless stated otherwise provided: (1) the use is for personal, educational, or non-commercial purposes only, (2) images and information are not modified in any way, and (3) any copyright statement originally provided in the materials is included in the reproduction. Any further restrictions placed on information by SWOSU or the author must be honored.

Logos, graphics, photographs, templates, and text on webpages displaying official SWOSU logos are trademarked by SWOSU. Redistribution or commercial use is prohibited without express written permission. For more information on official SWOSU logos and trademarks, refer to the [Graphics Standards Manual](#) (PDF).

## Fundraising

Fundraising that is not university-related is prohibited on the SWOSU website.

Departments and organizations must obtain advance approval according to [University Policy \(Gift Solicitations\)](#).

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## Institutional Web Pages

Institutional webpages are created and maintained by Web Services. All administrative and academic department webpages on the SWOSU Web are institutional webpages plus additional pages designated as such.

Each department must designate a single information provider to be the point of communication with Web Services. Any full-time employee may serve as the web representative. The web representative will submit requests for updates on departmental webpages to Web Services. Web representatives are responsible for the accuracy of content submitted. Web Services is responsible for adhering to all SWOSU policies, procedure, and guidelines and all local, state, and federal laws.

## Student Organization Webpages

SWOSU provides an online web application for student organizations to create a homepage. To gain access to the web application, a web representative must be designated by completing a Web Representative Form signed by the organization's faculty/staff sponsor. Students are allowed to serve as web representatives as long as they are enrolled at SWOSU. **A Web Representative Form must be completed and submitted to Web Services each year.** Accounts in the web application will be created by the Web Services department, and the designated web representative will be responsible for maintaining the content.

Accounts assigned to student organizations are intended for the purpose of publishing information pertaining to the organization. The account should not be used for personal program development, file storage, or other purposes not directly related to the goals of the organization. The organization's faculty/staff sponsor is responsible for the accuracy of content and assuring the webpages meet SWOSU policies and guidelines and all local, state, and federal laws.

The following standards pertain to all SWOSU-hosted student organization webpages. Failure to meet these standards will result in the removal of inappropriate webpages and possible loss of web application privileges.

1. All webpages must meet guidelines stated in the Web Style Guide (above).
2. Creators of webpages must not make or use illegal copies of copyrighted materials or software, store such copies on university systems, or transmit them over university networks. Copyright law pertains to many types of materials, including cartoons, pictures, graphics, text, song lyrics, and sounds – including most MP3 and other files shared via peer-to-peer procedures. Written permission must be obtained before using copyrighted materials and kept on file with the student organization's faculty/staff sponsor.

## Professional Webpages

Full-time SWOSU employees are permitted to hold accounts on the SWOSU web in order to maintain professional websites. Web accounts may only be used to store files that are part of a user's website or that serve as a curriculum supplement for student download. The web server is not to be used for personal media storage or for backing up files. Professional websites may not be used to host or link to webpages that are intended to generate income from personal business. **SWOSU is not responsible for creating or maintaining professional webpages, but the university reserves the right to remove any page or link in violation of applicable laws or policies.** For assistance in creating a professional website, contact Web Services.

The following standards pertain to all SWOSU-hosted professional webpages.

1. All webpages must meet guidelines stated in the Web Style Guide (above)
2. Professional webpages must not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of the university or any unit of the university unless appropriately authorized (explicitly or implicitly) to do so.
3. The website owner's (faculty/staff member) name and e-mail address must be visible on all pages.
4. Creators of webpages must not make or use illegal copies of copyrighted materials or software, store such copies on university systems, or transmit them over university networks. Copyright law pertains to many types of materials, including cartoons, pictures, graphics, text, song lyrics, and sounds – including most MP3 and other files shared via peer-to-peer procedures. Written permission must be obtained kept on file with the website owner (faculty or staff member) before using copyrighted materials.
5. The following disclaimer must appear on the initial or homepage on all professional websites:

"The views and opinions expressed in these webpages are strictly those of [the page author]. The content of these webpages has not been reviewed or approved by Southwestern Oklahoma State University."

## Web Style Guide

SWOSU intends for webpages to be attractive and functional and reflect positively on the university, its organizations, and its community. The Web Style Guide has been established as a set of guidelines and recommendations for SWOSU websites. All webpages shall adhere to the standards established in the Web Style Guide.

- Plan ahead. Determine the purpose, intended audience, and what materials are going to be included. Make a logical outline of the website.

- Users read text differently in a web browser than they do on a printed page. Headings and subheadings are scanned as well as links to quickly find information rather than reading every word. Content should be written in short, concise paragraphs. The most important information needs to be placed at or near the top of the page (“above the fold”) to ensure that it is visible to a reader who does not scroll. It is important to keep in mind that users might arrive on a webpage in many different ways so the content should be written to work as a stand-alone webpage and not presume that the reader has arrived through a certain path.
- Page titles must be meaningful and reflect the content of the webpage.
- Headings are used appropriately to reflect the importance of content. (<h1>, <h2>...<h6>) H1 reflecting the highest importance.
- Links should be descriptive of the information that they link to. (Example: “Online University Application” not “Click here to apply”)
- Images should be sized and optimized to reduce file size as much as possible.
- Images should not contain important text, such as headings, as it limits accessibility. Alternate text must be applied to all images.
- Filenames should follow these naming conventions:
  - Filenames should contain ONLY letters, numbers, and dashes.
  - Dashes are to be used instead of spaces.
  - Lowercase letters are preferred.
- Captions must be used to describe any important information conveyed through visuals or sounds in multimedia content.
- Links to other sites are set to open in a new window so that users aren’t taken away from the SWOSU website.
- Preferred terminology and spelling:
  - Email
  - Webpage
  - Website
  - Username
  - Login (noun), log in (verb)
  - Filename
  - Homepage
  - Online

**If accessibility standards cannot be met, the information should be available by alternative means.**

## Questions

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Web Services at (580) 774-3179 or [webmaster@swosu.edu](mailto:webmaster@swosu.edu).