**University Websites UPPS No. 04.01.06**

**Issue No. 8**

**Effective Date: 06/10/2022**

**Next Review Date: 04/01/2024 (E2Y)**

**Sr. Reviewer: Assistant Vice President for University Marketing**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

*Texas State University is committed to maintaining university websites according to rules and regulations.*

**01. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

01.01 With respect to Texas law, [The Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations](https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus/policies.html), and the policies of Texas State University, all hardware, software, network, and data components of university websites qualify as information resources owned by Texas State and the state of Texas.

01.02 Texas State websites may not be used by profit-oriented third parties, or for solicitation, advertisement, or other commercial purposes to the benefit of third parties, except as provided under the terms of the following regulations:

1. [Section 39.02(a) of the Texas Penal Code](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/PE/htm/PE.39.htm#39.02) prohibits the use of state property and resources for commercial purposes or personal gain;
2. [Chapter VIII of The TSUS Rules and Regulations](https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus/policies.html) restricts the use of Texas State facilities and equipment in solicitation, advertisement, and other commercial purposes;
3. [UPPS No. 04.01.07](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-01-07.html), Appropriate Use of Information Resources, describes both permitted and prohibited uses of Texas State’s information resources, including websites; and
4. [UPPS No. 04.01.01](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-01-01.html), Security of Texas State Information Resources, details the security policies applicable to Texas State information resources, including websites.

**02. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY**

02.01 This policy applies to all web-based content and services published on websites supporting the operations of Texas State, regardless of physical location.

02.02 Except as specified elsewhere in this policy, the provisions of this policy are generally applicable to all official Texas State websites. Specific classes of websites are exempt from some provisions of this policy because of the unique nature of their content. Such exemptions are noted in the descriptions of these sites in Section 06. Website owners with sufficient justification may pursue exemptions using the process outlined in Section 08.

**03. KEY DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS**

03.01 The definitions and descriptions of key terms and concepts used in this policy are reflected in the [glossary](https://webguidelines.txstate.edu/resources/upps-glossary).

03.02 Wherever this policy incorporates a statute, standard, or rule by reference, any definitions or descriptions provided within the referenced statute, standard, or rule will prevail in the interpretation of that statute, standard, or rule (see Sections 05.01 and 05.02 for examples).

**04. CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCEDURES**

04.01 Texas State has implemented an official content management system (CMS) to assure that the official Texas State [homepage](https://www.txstate.edu/) and other official Texas State websites are consistent in design, function, and navigation, and to achieve timely and effective creation, modification, retrieval, expiration, and replacement of official Texas State web content. All academic and administrative units at Texas State will use the CMS to publish and manage their official websites.

04.02 Site owners who wish to move existing websites to the CMS or create new websites in the CMS must first complete training sessions with the Division of Information Technology (DOIT) and University Marketing.

04.03 Website URLs are governed by [UPPS No. 04.01.08](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-01-08.html), Texas State Domain Name and URL Policy. Existing websites that migrate to the CMS may retain their existing URL or request a new URL in accordance with the policy. Likewise, new CMS websites will be assigned URLs consistent with the domain name policy.

04.04 CMS websites use templates to achieve a consistent look, feel, and usability across all Texas State sites. Templates ensure that common page elements are identical in function and location on each page of the website. Examples of common page elements include navigation, headers and footers, site and page names, and page content. Keeping these the same makes the website easier to use and ensures a strong brand impression. Site managers and site editors control the content of some of these items (such as page names and navigation links), as well as the content of their pages within the template.

**05. GENERAL STANDARDS**

05.01 Branding, Graphics, and Design – Because Texas State’s websites are the university’s front door for many potential and current constituents, it is critical that these sites reflect consistency and coherence. Site managers and site editors should become familiar with University Marketing’s [Web Guidelines](https://webguidelines.txstate.edu/), [Brand Guidelines](https://brand.txstate.edu/), and [Editorial Style Guide](https://brand.txstate.edu/editorial-style-guide.html). These guides change from time to time and are incorporated into this policy by reference. Site owners, managers, and editors should reference these guides when making changes to their webpages.

Professionally designed page templates and content types have been provided to facilitate compliance with style guide provisions (see also Section 04.04). Use of the templates and content types ensures a consistent look, feel, and functionality across all pages of the university website when accessed with different devices (e.g., desktop computers, mobile devices, and screen-readers). The [Web Guidelines](https://webguidelines.txstate.edu/) provide an overview of available content types. Site managers and site editors must use the provided content types within the template to create their pages.

05.02 Custom Code — Site managers and site editors are not allowed to implement custom code that changes the template. Custom code should only be used to create content on a page when no suitable content type exists. Custom code must meet all branding, graphics, and design best practices, and accessibility requirements outlined in this section.

05.03 Best Practices – Site managers and editors are responsible for maintaining content that is accurate and timely. Content should be reviewed at least yearly and be updated or deleted as necessary. All university website creators shall adhere to these guidelines.

05.04 Accessibility – Access to information and electronic technology for persons with disabilities is an essential component of Texas State’s commitment to provide a barrier-free learning environment. To that end, all Texas State websites and the services provided via those websites shall satisfy the standards for website accessibility recorded in the following, which are incorporated into this policy by reference:

a. [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](https://www.section508.gov/manage/laws-and-policies);

b. [Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 206, Subchapter C](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&ti=1&ch=206&rl=70); and

c. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 A & AA](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/).

Texas State [websites](http://www.txstate.edu/) exists for the benefit of the entire university community: guests, students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Texas State is committed to an inclusive education and work environment that provides equal opportunity and access to all qualified persons. Texas State, to the extent not in conflict with federal or state law, prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, veterans’ status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Accessibility training and resources are available on the [Digital Accessibility](https://doit.txstate.edu/accessibility/) website.

Technology, and user’s interaction with it, continually evolves and, as a result, the way web content is accessed and consumed changes rapidly. Following the concepts of universal design (creating spaces and tools usable by the widest range of people possible) ensures the accessibility and usefulness of university websites for both current and future users.

05.05 Copyright – Site managers and site editors must be able to justify a claim of “fair use” under U.S. copyright law or obtain written authorization from copyright holders for any copyrighted material used, made available, or shared via their websites. Written authorizations must clearly specify any applicable access or usage restrictions and clearly authorize inclusion of the material on a Texas State website.

Basic applicable guidelines are provided by the following university policies, publications, and staff:

1. [UPPS No. 01.04.27](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/01-04-27.html), Intellectual Property: Ownership and Use of Copyright Works;
2. digital copyright and the use of resources to build websites;
3. [Library LibGuide](http://guides.library.txstate.edu/friendly.php?s=copyright); and
4. [University Copyright Office](https://infosecurity.txstate.edu/work/law-policy/laws-copyright.html).

Site managers and site editors shall seek the counsel of the university copyright officer prior to using material under a “fair use” justification of uncertain validity.

05.06 Privacy Policy – Texas State is committed to protecting personal privacy. Site owners, managers, and editors should be aware of [Texas State's Privacy Statement](http://www.tr.txstate.edu/privacy-statement.html).

05.07 Asset Management – Managing web assets properly is vital to maintaining websites. Images are stored in the CMS and must be of high enough quality for web use. Site managers and site editors must keep asset folder structures organized to match the structure of the site. Image names should be descriptive, simple, and consistent. [Alt text](https://doit.txstate.edu/accessibility/user-guides/images-alt-text.html) must be added to any images that are not decorative.

**06. STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC CLASSES OF WEBSITES AND SYSTEMS**

06.01 Official Texas State Homepage – The official Texas State homepage is the university’s highest level internet presence. The content, design, and functionality of the university homepage is owned and managed by University Marketing.

The official Texas State [homepage](https://www.txstate.edu/) will be published and managed within the CMS and adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05. In addition, the official Texas State [homepage](https://www.txstate.edu/) will contain links in accordance with federal, state, and [The TSUS Rules and Regulations](https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus/policies.html).

06.02 Official College Sites – All Texas State colleges will publish and manage their official Texas State websites within the CMS and adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05. Each official college website will include all of the following:

1. contact information with email, telephone, and mailing address;
2. a brief narrative describing the college;
3. a list of key college-level personnel with their contact information; and
4. a list of the college’s schools, departments, and centers with links to their websites.

06.03 Official Sites of Other Academic Units – All academic departments, schools, centers, and similar academic units will publish and manage their official Texas State websites within the CMS and adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05. Each academic unit’s website will include all of the following:

1. contact information with email, telephone, and mailing address;
2. a brief narrative describing the unit;
3. a list of the unit’s key faculty, staff, and other personnel with their contact information; and
4. a list of the unit’s programs with links to their websites or descriptions.

06.04 Official Division Sites – All Texas State divisions will publish and manage their official Texas State websites within the CMS and adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05. Each division’s website will include all of the following:

1. contact information with email, telephone, and mailing address;
2. a brief narrative describing the division;
3. a list of key division-level personnel with their contact information; and
4. a list of the division’s departments and offices with links to their websites.

06.05 Official Sites of Other Administrative Units – All Texas State administrative departments, offices, and similar administrative units will publish and manage their official Texas State websites within the CMS and adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05. Each administrative unit’s website will include all of the following:

1. contact information with email, telephone, and mailing address;
2. a brief narrative describing the unit;
3. a list of the unit’s key administrative personnel with their contact information; and
4. a comprehensive description of the services provided by the unit.

06.06 Instructional, Research, and Service Sites of Faculty – Webpages that represent or embody the academic freedom of faculty in fulfillment of their instructional, research, and service responsibilities are exempt from the [Editorial Style Guide](https://brand.txstate.edu/editorial-style-guide.html) published by University Marketing (see Section 05.01). Faculty are nonetheless encouraged to follow the guides to the extent they add value in meeting their instructional, research, or service objectives. All such sites will respect Texas State’s trademark rights relative to the use of its [service marks (logos) and taglines](https://brand.txstate.edu/assets/logos.html). All such sites will also comply with the accessibility and copyright provisions of this policy, Sections 05.03 and 05.04 respectively, unless an exemption is granted as described in Section 08. In keeping with the above-described exemption, most such sites will be published and managed outside of the CMS.

06.07 Personal Sites – Texas State recognizes that personal publication on the internet may contribute to the achievement of Texas State’s teaching, research, and service mission. Thus, Texas State provides students, faculty, and staff with a limited amount of resources with which to develop their own personal websites.

Personal websites are generally associated with the individual owner’s Texas State NetID. The site owner, as determined by the associated NetID, is solely responsible for the site’s content, including all views and opinions expressed on the site and the content’s accuracy, timeliness, and appropriateness.

Personal websites that are hosted on Texas State-owned servers or within a web hosting service contracted by Texas State and supported by the Texas State network must adhere to the provisions of [UPPS No. 04.01.07](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-01-07.html), Appropriate Use of Information Resources, and must comply with the copyright provisions found in Section 05.04. With the exception of the faculty sites described in Section 06.06, personal websites are encouraged, but not required, to satisfy the accessibility provisions in Section 05.03.

Visitors to Texas State websites must be able to clearly distinguish between official Texas State content and the content found in personal websites. Personal websites may not use the branding, graphics, and design constructs described in Section 05.01, or any facsimile thereof, without prior authorization from University Marketing. Similarly, personal websites will not be published or managed within the CMS. Owners of personal websites will display a link to the [Texas State official disclaimer](http://www.txstate.edu/about/disclaimer).

06.08 Organization Sites – Chartered student organizations are permitted, but not required, to use the CMS to publish and manage their official Texas State sites. If using the CMS, chartered student organizations are required to follow the brand standards described in Section 05.01.

Unchartered student organizations are prohibited from using the CMS. All student organizations that host Texas State websites within the scope of this policy will comply with the accessibility and copyright provisions, described in Sections 05.03 and 05.04 respectively, and with the provisions of [UPPS No. 04.01.07](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-01-07.html), Appropriate Use of Information Resources.

Recognized organizations comprised of Texas State faculty, staff, and community members with direct ties to Texas State (e.g., Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Friends of Fine Arts and Communication, Family Association, and Affinity Groups) are encouraged to use the CMS to manage and publish their official Texas State websites and to follow all of the general standards found in Section 05.

06.09 An official University Events Calendar System (UECS) has been implemented as a tightly integrated complement to the CMS and the official Texas State [homepage](https://www.txstate.edu/). Procedures and responsibilities that are specific to the usage and administration of the UECS is available on the [University Events Calendar Support](https://universityevents.its.txstate.edu/) page.

06.10 Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) Systems (e.g., SAP and Millennium) − Web applications and services procured from third parties will comply with this policy’s accessibility and copyright provisions, Sections 05.03 and 05.04, respectively. To the extent feasible, portal, login, and entry pages for such systems should be modified to comply with the brand standards described in Section 05.01. In most cases, it is not cost-effective to apply the brand standards to succeeding (lower level) pages of COTS systems. The content of pages in COTS systems is managed and published internal to the COTS system and not within the CMS.

06.11 Open Source and Internally-Developed Systems (e.g., Online Toolkit) – Open source and internally-developed systems will adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05. Exemptions may be afforded under the process described in Section 08. The content of the pages in open source and internally-developed systems is generally managed and published internal to the system itself and not within the CMS.

06.12 Entities Authorized to Operate Under Different Service Marks and Branding – Some Texas State entities have been authorized to operate under different service marks and branding constructs because of grandfathering, gift restrictions, grant fulfillment, or similar exemptions (e.g., Athletics, the Alumni Association, and The Wittliff Collections). Exemption requests must be reviewed and approved by University Marketing.

Such sites are exempt from the brand standards described in Section 05.01 but will comply with this policy’s accessibility and copyright provisions, Sections 05.03 and 05.04 respectively. The content of these sites is generally managed and published outside of the CMS.

06.13 Sites with Electronic Payment Capabilities – Unless otherwise exempted, a Texas State organization wishing to accept electronic payments via its website must first acquire authorization from Student Business Services. For security and stability reasons, such payment acceptance applications are required to utilize Texas State’s established payment gateways (see Section 06. of [UPPS No. 03.01.05](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/03-01-05.html), University Income Recognition and Associated Cash-Handling Procedures, for additional details).

06.14 Other Sites – Any site that is not described in Sections 06.01 through 06.13 will adhere to all the general standards found in Section 05., unless granted an exemption through the process described in Section 08.

**07. WEBSITE ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES**

07.01 University Marketing is responsible for the design, development, and application of brand standards and templates to be followed by all Texas State publications, including websites. University Marketing owns, manages, and publishes the content of the official Texas State [homepage](https://www.txstate.edu/). University Marketing reviews new websites and websites that have undergone significant changes in the CMS for compliance and consistency with the referenced standards and may provide assistance on a case-by-case basis to departments in designing websites that effectively deliver content while appropriately reflecting the Texas State brand.

07.02 Site owners are responsible for management and implementation of analytics across their websites. Analytics should be set up under a shared @txst.edu email address. Site owners must notify the [IT Assistance Center](mailto:itac@txstate.edu?subject=Website%20Analytics) and [University Marketing](mailto:umarketing@txstate.edu) when setting up analytics.

07.03 DOIT is responsible for the technical design, development, maintenance, and operation of the official Texas State [websites](https://www.txstate.edu/), the university’s web CMS, other approved web hosting services, and the UECS.

07.04 DOIT is responsible for the server and network infrastructure supporting the official Texas State [websites](https://www.txstate.edu/), the CMS, and the UECS.

07.05 Website owners are responsible for managing the content of their websites, including legal and ethical assimilation of content materials; web-compatible and brand-conscious presentation of those materials; and compliance with all the standards and provisions of this policy in developing and operating their sites.

07.06 Web Governance Committee – The Web Governance Committee ensures that Texas State websites comply with the brand, usability, and best practice standards outlined in this policy and has the authority to enforce these standards.

The committee includes:

1. Head – assistant vice president for University Marketing;
2. chief information security officer;
3. director, Mobile/Web Systems; and
4. Electronic Information Resources Accessibility coordinator.

Third-party companies hired to work on websites in the CMS must be approved by the committee. Third-party companies must follow all guidelines outlined in this policy.

Websites in violation of standards may be shut down for noncompliance. The committee will notify the associate vice president or dean of the department that owns the website about noncompliance issues. The site managers and site editors have 30 days to make progress on bringing their site into compliance. If no progress has been made after 30 days, the website will be shut down until all issues are resolved.

**08. EXEMPTIONS**

08.01 Website owners who desire an exemption from a provision of this policy will make the request in writing to the assistant vice president for University Marketing.

a. The written request must specify the provisions to be waived and

demonstrate a compelling need or unique circumstance that clearly justifies an exemption.

b. The assistant vice president for University Marketing will evaluate the

request and consult with a member of the Web Governance Committee with the appropriate expertise regarding the exemption.

c. Requests to operate an independent website, outside of the CMS,

must be approved by the vice president for Information Technology (VPIT) and the associate vice president for Enrollment Management and Marketing.

d. The assistant vice president for University Marketing will then advise

the requesting owner of the decision.

08.02 If the website owner disagrees with the exemption decision, the website owner may appeal to the vice president to whom they report. The vice president will review the exemption request with the associate vice president for Enrollment Management and Marketing and the VPIT, who will jointly make the final decision.

08.03 Unless otherwise specified herein, the assistant vice president for University Marketing may grant exemptions solely to provisions of this policy and may not grant any exemption to any otherwise applicable policy or rule referenced by this policy. For example, the assistant vice president for University Marketing is not authorized to grant exemptions from the Texas State domain name policy referenced in Section 04.03. Exemptions are granted by the VPIT, in collaboration with the Information Security Office.

**09. REVIEWERS OF THIS UPPS**

09.01 Reviewers of this UPPS include the following:

Position Date

Assistant Vice President for April 1 E2Y

University Marketing

Associate Vice President for April 1 E2Y

Enrollment Management and

Marketing

Associate Vice President for April 1 E2Y

Technology Resources

Vice President for April 1 E2Y

Information Technology

**10. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This UPPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Assistant Vice President for University Marketing; senior reviewer of this UPPS

Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

President