

# THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

## WEB POLICY

### INTERIM

**Number** 08.01.01

**Division** Vice President for Strategic Communications - Office of Marketing and Communications

**Date** August 1, 2014; Reviewed and Revised June 20, 2025

#### **Purpose**

This Policy governs documents (Webpages) appearing on the World Wide Web from The University of Alabama in Huntsville ("UAH" or "University") Web servers. The University seeks to ensure all official University websites and web resources align with the University's identity standards and strategic goals; provide a consistent navigation and user experience for all; and comply with all applicable UAH, state and federal requirements.

Any questions, comments, or suggestions concerning this Policy should be addressed to the Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) ([webmaster@uah.edu](mailto:webmaster@uah.edu)).

#### **Policy**

Both Official and Unofficial University Websites, as defined below, must comply with all copyright laws of the United States, all other applicable local, state, and federal laws, and applicable policies, rules, and guidelines of UAH, including those defined herein.

The dominant theme of any Website, whether an Official or Unofficial University Website, must not appeal to prurient interest to the average person applying contemporary community standards.

This Policy will be periodically revised in response to pertinent legal and/or technological issues in consultation with the appropriate entities.

#### **Official University Websites**

Official University Websites are defined as Websites or webpages created by UAH entities, including, but not limited to, its colleges, schools, departments, research centers, and administrative offices and purporting to represent UAH.

All Official University Websites must be approved by the vice president who has administrative oversight over the area represented by the Website or by his/her designee.

All Official University Websites must adhere to the minimum standards described below. These minimum standards are presented in conjunction with associated recommendations in the UAH Web Style Guide at <https://www.uah.edu/omc/resources/web-style-guide>.

- Display clear identification of UAH on the top-level pages of each Website. The preferred means of identification is to display a UAH logo or wordmark.
- Display a clearly labeled link on each Web page to the Website's home page and to the UAH home page (<http://www.uah.edu>).
- Display clearly labeled ownership information on each Web page in the form of a contact e-mail address, which may be supplemented by a contact name and/or telephone number. In unusual cases, a contact name and telephone number may be substituted for a contact e-mail address.

### **Unofficial University Websites**

Any Unofficial University Websites must include the following disclaimer:

"The views, opinions, and conclusions expressed in this website/webpage are those of the author or organization and not necessarily those of The University of Alabama in Huntsville or its officers and trustees. This website has not been reviewed or approved by the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and the author or organization is solely responsible for its content."

### **Compliance**

All websites, web resources, pages, and/or documents must be compliant with all other [UAH policies](#), including and especially those related to computer use, privacy, human resources, and those outlined below.

- Copyright: All websites, web resources, pages, and/or documents must comply with the UAH copyright statement.
- Privacy: All websites, web resources, pages, and/or documents must comply with all UAH privacy statements, applicable state and federal laws, and any privacy policy implemented in the future by UAH.
- Website Security: All websites, pages, and/or documents must comply with the security standards set by OIT and any current UAH security policies or any security policies implemented in the future by UAH.

Content on any website, page, and/or document not in compliance with applicable state law, federal law, or UAH policies is strictly prohibited and subject to removal.

Any website, page, and/or document, including any unofficial UAH website, that displays any indication of a security risk or threat, including malicious code or inappropriate content, is subject to be taken down, removed, or blocked immediately and without any prior notice being given to the site authorizer.

The appropriate administrative unit(s) that publishes information on an Official University Website is fully responsible for factually accurate content and currency of information. Websites

that contain out-of-date information may be requested to make the necessary corrections by the Office of Marketing and Communications or by the appropriate vice president or his/her designee. OMC will perform routine checks across the site to verify the content and currency of information. Websites failing to comply following such request may be unlinked by the Office of Marketing and Communications.

All Official University Websites must present information using the highest editorial standards (spelling, punctuation, grammar, style, etc.). Websites that contain editorial errors may be requested to make the necessary corrections by the Office of Web Communications or by the appropriate vice president or his/her designee. Websites failing to comply following such request may be unlinked by the Office of Marketing and Communications.

### **New Web Initiatives**

Any new Official University Website or other web resource must be approved by the Office of Marketing and Communications and follow the [Brand Guidelines](#), [Web Style Guide](#), and all applicable UAH policies.

### **Website Accessibility**

UAH will outline the requirements and guidelines for ensuring the accessibility of the UAH website in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other relevant accessibility laws and standards. UAH will provide equal access and opportunity to individuals with disabilities, including students, faculty, staff, visitors, and members of the public, to access the digital content and information available on our website.

Responsibility and Accountability: UAH is committed to maintaining an accessible website, and the responsibility for compliance with this policy lies with the following parties:

- The Office of Marketing & Communications: OMC will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and adherence to this policy. The group will work closely with content creators and other relevant stakeholders.
- Content Creators: All individuals involved in the development and maintenance of the website, including content creators, and administrators, are accountable for creating accessible digital content.

Compliance with WCAG: UAH will adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) in its most recent version, as published by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The minimum standard for web accessibility will be met, and efforts will be made to go beyond this level where possible.

Accessibility Training: To ensure proper implementation of accessibility guidelines, all web developers, content creators, and relevant staff will receive training on first being granted editing access about web accessibility best practices, ADA compliance, and how to use accessibility tools and testing methods. Further training will be provided annually at a departmental workshop.

Ongoing Monitoring and Testing: The Office of Marketing and Communications will conduct regular accessibility audits and testing of the website to identify and address any accessibility barriers or issues. This includes utilizing automated testing tools as well as conducting manual reviews for users with disabilities.

Reporting Accessibility Issues: The Office of Marketing and Communications will address any reported accessibility-related concerns or problems encountered while using the website. These reports will be addressed promptly, and remediation efforts will be taken to resolve identified issues.

Adoption and Communication: This policy will be communicated to all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, through appropriate channels, such as the institution's website, internal communications, and training sessions.

Compliance Review: The Office of Marketing and Communications will conduct periodic reviews to assess compliance with this policy and report progress to relevant authorities and stakeholders as required.

UAH is dedicated to creating an inclusive and accessible digital environment, and we are committed to continually improving our web accessibility efforts to ensure equal access and opportunity for all users.

### **Commercial Activity**

Any Official University Website desiring to conduct commercial activity, including receipt of online credit card payments, must receive authorization from the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. This Office will review the Website's plan, including the adequacy of transaction security, make recommendations on the type of electronic credit card or other process needed, and provide cost information. If the commercial activity involves receipt of online credit card payments, the Office will obtain a merchant ID or terminal ID, if appropriate, under the domain of UAH's central credit card contract, and provide training on securing the data, as well as recording and depositing the funds in UAH's records. Any Website discovered to be in violation of this provision is subject to removal from the UAH domain.

Links to commercial entities must be related to UAH's missions of research, teaching, and service and must not imply endorsement by UAH.

### **Third-Party Contractors**

The Office of Strategic Communications at UAH recognizes the importance of maintaining a consistent and cohesive public image. To ensure the highest level of quality and alignment with our institution's mission, values, and objectives, any efforts to engage third-party contractors who will be involved in communication, branding, public relations, marketing, media, design, development and related activities on behalf of UAH on any UAH web property must undergo a thorough vetting process and collaborate directly with the Office of Marketing and Communications to uphold the institution's reputation and messaging. This vetting process will

include involvement in any requirements discussions prior to any contract being signed.

The technology provided by or through the third-party contractor may require the Office of Marketing and Communications administrative access to include but not limited to any third-party content management system (CMS), Application Programming Interface (API), database, and server. Should administrative access to such technologies be required but denied, this denial qualifies for failure to complete the vetting process.

Should the third-party fail the vetting process, the Office of Marketing and Communications reserves the right to deny both service and support to any services already in progress even if contracts are pre-existing without the knowledge and consent of the Office of Marketing and Communications.

For additional information or questions, contact the Office of Marketing and Communications, 256-824-6414.

## Definitions

- **Breach** - any incident that results in unauthorized access of data, application, services, networks and/or device.
- **Inappropriate content** – dangerous or derogatory images, text, or assets that do not reflect the goals and strategic plan of UAH.
- **Malicious code** – program code intended to perform an unauthorized function or process that will have adverse impact on the confidentiality, integrity or availability of a web resource.
- **Official University Website** – Websites or webpages created by UAH entities including, but not limited to, its colleges, schools, departments, divisions, research centers, and administrative offices authorized to represent UAH.
- **Content Creator** - a faculty/staff member/student worker employed by UAH, and assigned by a college, school, department, division, research center, and/or administrative office to oversee the approval and quality of Official University Websites that fall under within their college, school, department, division, research center, and/or administrative office.
- **Third-Party Contractor:** Any individual, agency, firm, or organization external to the institution that is considered for contractual work related to communication, branding, public relations, marketing, media, design, development and related activities.
- **Threat** – any circumstance or event that has or indicates the potential to exploit vulnerabilities and to adversely impact UAH operations, assets, individuals or other organizations.
- **Unofficial University Website** – Websites or webpages that are not sanctioned by a UAH college, school, department, division, research center or administrative office to represent UAH, including, but not limited to, websites or webpages created by individual UAH employees, faculty, staff, students, and student organizations to represent individuals, groups, or organizations.
- **Vetting Process:** a. Prior to engaging any third-party contractor, the Office of Marketing and Communications shall conduct a thorough vetting process to assess the contractor's qualifications, expertise, and alignment with the institution's values and objectives. b. The vetting

process may include, but is not limited to, reviewing the contractor's portfolio, conducting interviews, checking references, and evaluating the contractor's ability to meet project requirements effectively. c. Only after successfully completing the vetting process and obtaining approval from the Office of Strategic Communications can a third-party contractor be considered for collaboration.

- **Web resources** – web applications, webpages, videos, images, documents (including pdf's), APIs and other digital materials delivered via the web.

## **Review**

The Vice President for Strategic Communications is responsible for the review of this policy every five years (or whenever circumstances require).

Related Policies:

06.01.10 Web Servers and webpages

08.01.02 Branding and Logos