

WEB POLICY

1. POLICY PARTICULARS

DATE OF APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:
Information Technology Steering Committee:

DATE OF APPROVAL BY SENATE:

DATE OF APPROVAL BY COUNCIL:

COMMENCEMENT DATE:

REVISION HISTORY: New Policy

REVIEW DATE: 2019

POLICY LEVEL: Council

RESPONSIBILITY

- IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING: Manager: Web Services Unit → Director: Communications & Advancement
- REVIEW AND REVISION: Information Technology Steering Committee → Senate → Council

REPORTING STRUCTURE: Manager: Web Services Unit → Director : Communications & Advancement → Information Technology Steering Committee → Senate → Council

2. REASON FOR POLICY

2.1 PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to govern the corporate control and management of the website (see definitions) of Rhodes University. The aim of the policy is to ensure that staff, students, suppliers and contractors of the University adhere to the web guidelines and standards in order to support both the University's position as a research-intensive institutions as well as its' internationally recognizable brand.

2.2 SCOPE:

This policy is applicable to the websites of the University and therefore to all faculties and departments, support service divisions as well as other units and centres affiliated to the university

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 POLICY DECLARATION:

www.ru.ac.za and/or my.ru.ac.za and/or ross.ru.ac.za are official communication channels of the University, playing an important role in the positioning of the University as a research-intensive institution.

Knowledge production and dissemination is core to the University's mission to promote research, teaching and learning and greater integration with broader society. The use of web-based delivery of information is increasingly central to carrying out the University's mission. Acknowledging this fact, the University is committed to ensuring equal access to information for all its stakeholders.

This policy establishes standards for all University web pages linked to/from the RU website. It is intended to establish and maintain a coherent appearance for the University, promote a positive image and ensure accountability for information presented in the name of the University.

3.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Web Policy are to:

- provide consistent visual and content standards across RU websites
- ensure accessibility for all users of RU websites
- ensure compliance with RU legal requirements
- provide an improved website user experience, and

- meet industry best practice standards on web development

DEFINITIONS:

For the purpose of this policy:

- **RU** – refers to Rhodes University
- **Web content** - refers to text, images, documents, video and audio files, links etc., available through a web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer, Firefox, Lynx), regardless of device (e.g. PC, tablet, mobile phone).
- **Websites** - is the collective term for websites, web pages, web applications and web enabled corporate applications through which the University is represented in the online environment.
- **Domain name** – refers to the part of a network address which identifies it as belonging to a particular domain.
- **Hosting** – refers to storing a website or other data on a server or other computer so that it can be accessed over the Internet.
- **URL** is an acronym for **Uniform Resource Locator** and is a reference (an address) to a resource on the Internet.
- **University website** - refers to official University website at www.ru.ac.za
- **Communications and Advancement** – is the name of newly merged Communications and Marketing and Alumni and Development divisions.
- **WCAG** - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are part of a series of web accessibility guidelines published by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the main international standards organization for the Internet.
- **TerminalFour, T4** – refers to the content management systems used by Rhodes University, that allows publishing, editing, modifying, organizing, deleting, and maintaining content from a central interface. Such systems of content management provide procedures to manage workflow in a collaborative environment.
- **Content moderator** – refers to a person who has been tasked with moderating the content, structure of a website and assuring the accuracy of information on the website that they are responsible for

3.3 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF FRAMEWORK:

3.3.1 IT Steering Committee

- The IT Steering Committee is the overarching IT governance body of the University. Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development. Its role is to: provide executive leadership and direction on matters related to all ICT functions and as a consequence to oversee the

effective use of University resources for proposed or actual web delivery of information and services.

- The Director, Communication and Advancement (previously Communications and Marketing), provides strategic guidance for all related web issues to the IT Steering Committee and is the web contact for IT Steering Committee enquiries.
- For matters related to this policy, the IT Steering Committee is the primary and official forum for consultation and communication with the University's stakeholders.

3.3.2 Web Services Unit

- The Web Services Unit positioned within the Communications and Advancement division, is the University's principal contact in relation to day-to-day operational web matters, including those involving external organisations as clients, partners or suppliers.
- The Web Services Manager, acting as the agent for the Director, Communications and Advancement, is responsible for matters related to content moderation, functionality, usability, accessibility and the representation of the University on the web.
- In consultation with key stakeholders, the Web Services Manager develops and manages University-wide strategies and processes to enable the University to achieve its goals in the web environment.

3.3.3 Content Moderators

- Content moderators must follow and apply the conventions of the Web Style Guide .
- All faculties, departments, support divisions and other units in the organisation are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of the information published on their websites
- Content moderators are responsible for uploading web content on allocated web pages.
- Content moderators have a responsibility to ensure that information is accurate and timely, or to remove it from their websites if it becomes out-of-date or misleading.
- Content moderators are responsible for approving the publication of content on the University website for their specified area, and ensuring the

information is accurate, relevant and consistent with the regulations of the Web Policy.

- External people may create or coordinate University web pages, provided that a designated staff member accepts ultimate responsibility for the information published.
- Content moderators may not necessarily create the web pages, but they should have a clear idea of the objective of their web presence. Content moderators are responsible for ensuring web pages are maintained in their sites, for example, coordinating the work of the content authors and periodically reviewing the pages in their specified areas.
- Content moderators will also typically receive and be expected to respond to reports from Web Coordinators (Communications and Advancement division) indicating broken links within a reasonable time frame.

3.4 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

The University is committed to providing equal access to its website and web-based information for all users. This includes persons with disabilities accessing the web through disability software/hardware.

In order to ensure equal access to information for all users, all the University's websites are urged to reference guidelines from the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#).

3.4.1 Acceptable Content

Content on the website must be specific to the official work of the University and not expose the University to risk in relation to its reputation, the conduct of its business, or its legal or ethical obligations.

3.4.2 Unacceptable Content

The website must not:

- contain or link to content unrelated to the official activities of the University;
- contain or link to outdated, inaccurate, misleading, offensive, obscene, defamatory or threatening content;

- contain or link to content of commercial or non-University activities performed by staff members or their families or their commercial and or business associates;
- contain recognisable images of people unless a Photo Release form including specific release for web use has been completed and signed by those in the images (still or video). Photo release forms can be obtained from Communications and Advancement division. Existing pages prior to the finalisation of this policy should attempt to identify pages where images have been used and retrospectively gain written agreement or change the image.
- contain content owned by external organisations unless approved by the Director, Communications and Advancement as per 3.4.3
- contain copyrighted content unless written permission from the copyright holder is held.

3.4.3 Promotional Space

- Advertising for the purposes of commercial gain (e.g. revenue-raising) is not permitted on website.
- Promotional space on the University home page must only be used to enhance the brand reputation of the University, or to drive student recruitment. Publishing of any promotional banners or buttons that do not clearly fulfil these requirements will be at the discretion of the Director, Communications and Advancement. Such discretion is usually granted in the following scenarios:
 - Acknowledgement of sponsors on the website is permitted where the sponsorship is directly related to the other content on the page on which it appears, for example, the inclusion of links to the websites of organisations sponsoring conferences or projects is permitted.
 - Notwithstanding the above, mentioning of a sponsors' name is not permitted on the main entry-points to the site (e.g. the University's home page) and must only appear on the relevant pages within Departments and Divisions.
 - Sponsor's name or company logo should not exceed the dimensions of the University logo published on website. If this is not possible, please contact the Web Services Unit for advice.

3.4.4 Friendly URLs

- Friendly URLs are to be used in place of actual web addresses for commonly referenced content in print publications or promotional material. An example of a friendly URL would be "http://www.ru.ac.za/admissions" for references to the Admissions page.
- Requests for allocation or changes to friendly URLs can be obtained and submitted for approval to the Web Services Unit.

3.4.5 Web brand standards

The University is committed to being a leader in South Africa and internationally and its digital environments should strive to portray this leadership position by effectively employing the latest web technologies and trends where appropriate. This necessitates redesign from time to time to ensure that the visual, navigational and technical standards conform to international best practice.

The University's public web brand standards strive for all websites and collaboration platforms to follow a uniform standard. RU websites make use of a common technology platform with a semi-fixed design where common elements are shared. The principle of consistent presentation, behaviour, style and design is applied throughout, enabling visitors to navigate seamlessly from site to site within the RU domain.

3.5 DOMAIN NAME AND HOSTING

The official Rhodes University domain name is www.ru.ac.za. All official units of Rhodes University must use hosting provided by, or approved by Communications & Advancement (for hosting units website on the Terminalfour platform) or Information & Technology Services (for hosting websites that are not on the Terminalfour platform). Requests for independent hosting, commercial or private, of university resources or information under other domains, must usually be approved by the Director: Communications and Advancement. Exceptions to this would be web pages created for benefit of research within Computer Science or other technical areas but content on these pages is governed by this policy in terms of website accessibility and appropriate content (see 3.4)

3.6 PROPRIETARY RIGHTS

The copyright and other intellectual property rights (which include the University's brand and logo), which are owned by or licensed to the University,

existing in and attaching to websites, are the property of the University. These include but are not limited to text, content, design, layout, graphics, organisation, digital conversion and other information related to the website.

Users are granted a non-exclusive, non-transferable, revocable licence to:

- access and use the RU website strictly in accordance with these terms;
- use the RU website solely for personal, non-commercial purposes; and
- download or print out or distribute content from the website, or any part thereof, solely for personal, non-commercial purposes, provided that all copyright and other intellectual property notices are unchanged.

Users who wish to use the content from this website for commercial purposes may only do so with prior written permission from the University.

3.7 PRIVACY

The University is firmly committed to protecting the privacy of users of the website. No personal information about users of the website will be disclosed to a third party without the prior consent thereto by the user. [Personal information shall at all times be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013) and the [Emergency Access to Electronic Information Policy](#)].

The University reserves the right to automatically collect information on users' usage of the website (for example, via cookies) in order to improve users' browsing and interaction with the University and for non-personal statistical purposes.

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 REVIEW PROCEDURE:

The Information Technology Steering Committee will, at its first meeting of 2019, review the effectiveness of the policy.