Web Policy

Policy Volume	Volume C – Support Services
Policy Chapter	Information & Technology Services
Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty	Division of Communication and Advancement
Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager	Director of Communication and Advancement
Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals	2015; 2022
Policy Approval Pathways (e.g. committee, Senex, Senate, Council)	Information Technology Steering Committee, Senate, Council
Revision History: Approved Reviews	2015, 2022
Review Cycle (e.g. every 2/5/7 years etc)	5 years
Next Review Date	2027

1. POLICY PARTICULARS

1.1 Policy Title	Web Policy
1.1.1 Policy Statement	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 are 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 the information presented in the name of the University.
1.1.2 Reason for Policy	**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to govern the corporate control and management of the website (see definitions) of Rhodes University. The policy aims to ensure that staff, students, suppliers, and contractors of the University adhere to the web guidelines and standards to support both the University's position as a research-intensive institution as well as its' internationally recognizable brand. **SCOPE:** This policy applies to the website of the University and therefore to all faculties and departments, support service division as well as other units and centers affiliated with the University
1.1.3 People affected by this Policy	All units of the University and all Affiliated Entities
1.1.4 Who should read this Policy	All website owners, content owners, and content managers
1.1.5 Implementers of this policy	Director: Division for Communication and Marketing Manager: Multi-media Platforms Website owners Content owners Content moderators
1.1.6 Website address/link for this Policy	https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policiesa-z/

2. RELATED DOCUMENTS FORMS AND TOOLS

2.1 Relevant Legislation
Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA)
Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (PAIA)
Copyright Act, 1978
2.2 Related Policies
Web Content Management Policy
2.3 Related Protocols
Brand Manual

2.4 Forms and Tools
Writing for the web: https://www.ru.ac.za/webunit/webtools/
Course Material: https://www.ru.ac.za/webunit/training/

3. POLICY DEFINITIONS

No	TERM	DEFINITION
3.1	RU	refers to Rhodes University
3.2	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).
3.3	Web Content Manager	person formally tasked with maintaining the content of a Rhodes University website or a section of such a site
3.4	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.
3.5	Domain Name	refers to the part of a network address that identifies it as belonging to a particular domain.
3.6	Hosting	refers to storing a website or other data on a server or other computer so that it can be accessed over the Internet
3.7	URL	is an acronym for Uniform Resource Locator and is a reference (an address) to a resource on the Internet.
3.8	University Website	refers to the official Rhodes University website at www.ru.ac.za
3.9	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.
3.10	Terminalfour, T4	refers to the content management systems used by Rhodes University, that allow 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.
3.11	Outdated content	content that has become outdated, irrelevant, or content that has become factually incorrect. Content that is older than 365 days, where the content is not an event, press release, archived, requested to be excluded from expiring and has been approved by the Director for the Division of Communications and Advancement, or content that is part of the website framework (e.g. gateway layout)
3.12	Content Moderator	refers to a person who has been tasked with moderating the content, and structure of a website and assuring the accuracy of the information on the website that they are responsible for

4. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Web Policy are to:

4.1 provide consistent visual and content standards across RU websites

4.2 ensure accessibility for all users of RU websites

4.3 ensure compliance with RU legal requirements

4.4 provide an improved website user experience, and

4.5 Rhodes University Web Policy meets industry best practice standards on web development

5. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF FRAMEWORK

5.1.1 IT Steering Committee

5.1.1.1 The IT Steering Committee is the overarching IT governance body of the University. Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development.

5.1.1.2 Its role is to: provide executive leadership and direction on matters related to all ICT functions and therefore to oversee the effective use of University resources for proposed or actual web delivery of information and services.

5.1.2 The Director, Communication and Advancement

5.1.2.1 The Director, Communication and Advancement provide strategic guidance for all related web issues to the IT Steering Committee and is the web contact for IT Steering Committee inquiries.

5.1.2.2 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.

5.1.3 Multi-media Platforms Unit (previously Web Services Unit)

5.1.3.1 The Multi-media Platforms Unit positioned within the Communications and Advancement Division, is the University's principal contact concerning day-to-day operational web matters, including those involving external organizations as clients, partners, or suppliers.

5.1.3.2 The Multi-media Platforms 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.

5.1.3.3 In consultation with key stakeholders, the Multi-media Platforms Manager develops and manages University-wide strategies and processes to enable the University to achieve its goals in the web environment.

5.1.4 Content Moderators

5.1.4.1 Content moderators must follow and apply the conventions of the Web Style Guide.

5.1.4.2 All faculties, departments, support divisions, and other units in the organization are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of the information published on their websites

5.1.4.3 Content moderators are responsible for uploading web content on allocated web pages.

5.1.4.4 Content moderators have a responsibility to ensure that information is accurate and timely, or to remove it from their website if it becomes out-of-date or misleading.

5.1.4.5 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.

5.1.4.6 External people may create or coordinate University web pages, provided that a designated staff member accepts ultimate responsibility for the information published.

5.1.4.7 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 on their sites, for example, coordinating the work of the content authors and periodically reviewing the pages in their specified areas.

5.1.4.8 Content moderators will also typically receive and be expected to respond to reports from Multi-media Platforms Coordinators (Communications and Advancement division) indicating broken links within a reasonable time frame

6. 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. 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).

6.1 Acceptable Content

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

6.2 Unacceptable Content

The website must not:

6.2.1 contain or link to content unrelated to the official activities of the University;

6.2.2 contain or link to outdated, inaccurate, misleading, offensive, obscene, defamatory, or threatening content;

6.2.3 contain or link to the content of commercial or non-University activities performed by staff members or their families or their commercial and or business associates;

6.2.4 contain recognizable images of people unless a Photo Release form including a 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 the Communications and Advancement division. Existing pages before the finalization of this policy should attempt to identify pages where images have been used and retrospectively gain written agreement or change the image.

6.2.5 contain content owned by external organizations unless approved by the Director, Communications and Advancement as per 6.3

6.2.6 contain copyrighted content unless written permission from the copyright holder is held.

6.3 Promotional Space

6.3.1 Advertising for commercial gain (e.g. revenue-raising) is not permitted on websites.

6.3.2 Promotional space on the University's 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 fulfill these requirements will be at the discretion of the Director, Communications and Advancement. Such discretion is usually granted in the following scenarios:

6.3.2.1 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 organizations sponsoring conferences or projects is permitted.

6.3.2.2 Notwithstanding the above, mentioning a sponsor's 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.

6.3.2.3 Sponsor's name or company logo should not exceed the dimensions of the University logo published on the website. If this is not possible, please contact the Multi-media Platforms Unit for advice.

6.4 Friendly URLs

6.4.1 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.

6.4.2 Requests for allocation or changes to friendly URLs can be obtained and submitted for approval to the Multi-media Platforms Unit.

6.5 Web brand standards

6.5.1 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 practices.

6.5.2 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, behavior, style and design is applied throughout, enabling visitors to navigate seamlessly from site to site within the RU domain

6.6 Domain name and hosting

6.6.1 The official Rhodes University domain name is www.ru.ac.za.

6.6.2 All official units of Rhodes University must use hosting provided by or approved by Communications & Advancement (for hosting websites on the Terminalfour platform) or Information & Technology Services (for hosting websites that are not on the Terminalfour platform).

6.6.3 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 the content on these pages is governed by this policy in terms of website accessibility and appropriate content

6.7 Proprietary rights

6.7.1 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 attached to websites, are the property of the University.

6.7.2 These include but are not limited to text, content, design, layout, graphics, organization, digital conversion, and other information related to the website.

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

    6.7.3.1 access and use the RU website strictly following these terms;

    6.7.3.2 use the RU website solely for personal, non-commercial purposes; and

    6.7.3.3 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.

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

6.8 Privacy

6.8.1 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 by the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013) and the Emergency Access to Electronic Information Policy].

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

CONTACTS

Area of Concern	Division/Faculty/Department	Telephone	Email
Manager: Multi-media Platforms	Communication and Advancement	+27 (0) 46 603 8821	webmaster@ru.ac.za

POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

Manager: Multi-media Platforms Unit →Director: Communications & Advancement →Information Technology Steering Committee→Senate →Council.