

	<i>Policy Level:</i>	President's Cabinet
	<i>Responsible Department:</i>	Information Technology
	<i>Effective Date:</i>	11/14/2025
Website Governance		

PURPOSE:

Website governance is essential to the sustained success of Niagara University’s (NU) online presence. Given the involvement of multiple content managers in making and requesting changes across a variety of sites, a comprehensive governance plan is crucial. This plan outlines the processes for managing and publishing content, enabling NU to uphold the integrity of its websites while continually enhancing content quality.

NU’s website is home to information critical to the success of prospective and current students. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that all published information is timely, accurate, consistent, and accessible throughout the site.

SCOPE:

Niagara University community

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

None

MAIN PROVISIONS:

Website governance provides the collaborative, centralized governance for the ongoing development, deployment, delivery, and maintenance of NU’s online presence, to achieve a unified look for official university webpages and digital properties, ensure consistent, accurate content, and to appropriately represent the university brand through standard processes, roles, responsibilities, and practices.

Website governance refers to people, policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines that govern the creation and maintenance of our official website and digital properties. These include pages managed in NU’s content management system (CMS), university calendar, websites created and managed within niagara.edu and niagarau.ca, secondary websites (e.g. Mediat, Adirondack, Slate, Library, Levesque, etc.) and other tools supporting e-communications, and university video hosted on internal and external sites.

Governance of NU's web properties is jointly overseen by the Web Development Team (IT) and the Enrollment Management team. These groups are responsible for implementing and enforcing the standards outlined in this policy.

PROCEDURES:

Web Request Process

Requests for updates to website content, creation of new pages, addition or removal of Website Content Managers (WCMS), or any other content-related changes should be submitted via an IT service request or by emailing itsupport@niagara.edu.

New content submitted will be reviewed, approved, and published within five to seven business days.

Any changes to content categories such as news, events, or critical updates will follow a separate, expedited review process as determined by Enrollment Management. These categories should be defined clearly in a supplementary document.

Requests for brand new sites, structural design changes, or new projects are not subject to this policy. Timeframes will be determined after initial evaluation. See Centralized Web Development and Maintenance for more information.

Centralized Web Development and Maintenance

All website creation, design, and development must be managed internally by the designated web development team. Departments or individuals are not authorized to engage third-party vendors for the creation, redesign, or significant modification of websites or web pages without prior approval from both the web development team and senior management. Requests for such engagements must be submitted to Information Technology through the official service request system or by emailing itsupport@niagara.edu for review.

When requesting the creation of a website, the following information must be submitted: the purpose of the site, whether it is associated with a grant, the required content, the target audience, timeline for the site, budget, and any other relevant details. The web development team and senior management will review the request and recommend an appropriate solution.

Departments that engage external vendors without approval may face the following consequences:

- The unauthorized website will be requested to be removed from any live or public-facing areas. This could involve taking the site offline until it meets all the necessary approval processes, including design, security, and accessibility standards.
- The website will face significant delays in deployment or go live due to the need for retroactive approval and compliance checks.

- Resources, including time and funding, could be wasted if the site doesn't meet the university's needs, or if it needs to be rebuilt or restructured due to non-compliance with university guidelines.
- Face internal reviews or disciplinary actions for failing to adhere to governance policies.

Domain and Branding Compliance for Niagara University Websites

For audit and compliance purposes, any website branded as a Niagara University website must be hosted on the official niagara.edu domain. Websites branded with "NU" or any university identifiers that are not on the approved niagara.edu domain will be immediately asked to be removed from public view.

Approval Process for External Vendors

If it is determined that a third-party vendor is required by the web development team for the website project, please refer to the Third-Party Vendor Management (TPVM) policy to ensure a thorough evaluation and review of the vendor's credentials, reputation, financial stability, and past projects.

External vendors may only be engaged for website projects if the project is approved by the web development team and all appropriate internal bodies. When the budget, security approvals, and necessary documentation are in place to satisfy the TPVM policy requirements:

1. Departments must adhere to approved design templates and user interface standards when creating or updating any web content. Any site design requests that involve outside vendors must align with the organization's branding guidelines and user experience standards.
2. Review and negotiate terms in the vendor's contract, ensuring it includes clearly defined deliverables, timelines, security requirements, confidentiality agreements, and any other terms relevant to the project.
3. Vendors must have a clear understanding that the website will be relocated and hosted on niagara.edu, rather than on an external domain.
4. Establish a process for regular performance reviews and audits to ensure the vendors are meeting contractual obligations and maintaining the agreed-upon standards

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Accessibility

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community that develops open standards to ensure long-term growth of the web. The W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) develops standards and support materials to help to understand and implement accessibility. These standards are called Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

NU websites must comply with the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards. These standards ensure content is usable by individuals with a wide range of disabilities and improve the general usability of all digital platforms.

Branding

The Brand and Style Guide was developed to assist Niagara University employees as they prepare copy or graphics in any form for internal and external communications. These brand guidelines provide us with essential tools necessary to ensure greater consistency among the 4 university's printed and electronic publications, advertising, and social media presence. Branding includes but is not limited to the colors, fonts, logos, voice and tone.

The [Brand and Style Guide is located in myNU](#) or by requesting the information from the Department of Enrollment Management.

Guidelines and Standards

The Department of Information Technology has developed the guidelines, standards, and how to easily implement accessibility on NU's websites. Making websites accessible and best practice guidelines are located in [myNU](#).

REFERENCED POLICIES:

- [Third-Party Vendor Management](#)

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS:

None

POLICY HISTORY:

- Originated: 5/31/2022
- Current Effective Date: 11/14/2025
- Next Review Date: **11/14/2025**
- Revision/Renewal Log:
 - Revised 11/14/2025 – revisions included policy name change from “Website Content Governance”