Knoxville Campus Policy: IT0002-K Acceptable Use of IT Resources: UT Knoxville Website Hosting and Content	
Version 3	Effective Date: 11/04/2026

Objective

This campus procedure defines the appropriate use of UT Knoxville's website.

The university's website is our most visible and valuable digital communication and marketing platform. Its primary purpose is to communicate information from and about the university to external audiences in order to advance the institution's mission. This procedure is intended to ensure the website's infrastructure is secure, its content is accurate and accessible, and that it enhances the university's reputation.

Everything hosted on the university's website is a university-owned asset and should be utilized to support and enhance the brand of the university.

Scope

This campus procedure applies to UT Knoxville administrative and academic units and anyone who creates, manages, edits, or develops content for or otherwise contributes to a page or site on the university's website.

The university's website is not available for use by registered student organizations or non-university organizations, businesses, or individuals. It is also not available for employees or students to host personal content.

Use of the university's website is subject to university policies, procedures, and guidelines, including the Acceptable Use of IT Resources (Policy IT0002), as well as state and federal laws, including, but not limited to accessibility, privacy, copyright, and intellectual property.

As defined in the Acceptable Use of IT Resources policy, the .edu domain has rules restricting or prohibiting commercial use. Commercial activities not appropriate for the .edu domain but otherwise permissible using university resources must use other domain designations (ie: .com). All sites and pages officially representing the university at alternate domain designations are considered part of the university's website, and requirements within this procedure may be applied to them.

Before publication of this procedure, many if not most sites on the *utk.edu* domain were created in ways that did not fully adhere to this procedure. Any site created after the publication of this procedure will be governed by it. As pre-existing sites are migrated into the university's enterprise web hosting environment, they will be governed by this procedure. Pre-existing sites that are not in the university's enterprise web hosting environment may be required to meet certain requirements

to fulfill the intent of this procedure, as determined by the university's central Website Support Team.

Roles

The Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) and the Office of Innovative Technologies (OIT) manage the university's website and associated systems. OIT is responsible for infrastructure, security, technical maintenance, content management system, and hosting. OCM is responsible for content strategy, user experiences, user interface, global analytics, and brand identity.

Together, staff in OCM and OIT comprise the university's central Website Support Team. The Website Support Team is responsible for managing the enterprise-level website hosting environment, granting site administrator and editor permissions, providing technical support, facilitating training, reviewing and approving technical requests, managing subdomains and URLs, and conducting periodic audits of the university's website content.

The Website Support Team is charged with making decisions about the university's website in accordance with this procedure. Any circumstances that require executive review or consideration will be escalated by that team to the vice chancellor for communications and the vice chancellor for innovative technologies for a final decision. Because everything hosted on the university's website is a university-owned asset, the vice chancellor for communications retains final control and approval authority, as necessary, over all content on the university's website.

Every academic college and administrative division has a lead communicator, often a director or manager. Lead communicators or their designees are the key decision-makers about all website-related activities within their colleges and divisions and serve as primary points of contact between the Website Support Team and their areas.

Site sponsors are individuals who acknowledge responsibility for the content on a site within the university's website and ensure its compliance with this procedure. Every site must have a site sponsor—someone who holds a title within the university's *deans, directors, and department heads (DDDH)* group. This person is assigned as the primary point of contact with the central Website Support Team for everything related to that unit's site.

Website contributors represent UT Knoxville's divisions, colleges, departments, offices, and units. They are responsible for maintaining content on the pages and sites within the university's website assigned to their areas. Typically, contributors are staff with communications and marketing responsibilities, though those roles may be assigned to other university employees and vendors with sponsored NetIDs. Contributors are assigned by site sponsors, who ensure compliance with

this procedure.

Definitions

University's Website

The "university's website" consists of all pages, sites, and subdomains within the *utk.edu* web domain. It also includes all other sites and pages officially representing the university at other domain designations (ie: .com) due to restrictions on the .edu domain.

Site

A "site" is a collection of web pages within the university's website. Sites are typically created and managed by administrative and academic units and hosted at a *utk.edu* subdomain (ie: chancellor.utk.edu)

User

For the purposes of this procedure, "user" refers to someone who visits the university's website. A group of similar users is commonly referred to as an "audience."

Contributor

For the purposes of this procedure, "contributor" refers to anyone who is granted administrative or editing access to a page or site within the university's website. Professional communicators and marketers are the primary contributors to pages and sites.

Procedure

I. Technical Requirements

To ensure compliance with security, privacy, and other requirements, and to maximize the reach and potential of our content, all pages and sites within the university's website must adhere to the following technical requirements. Any exceptions to these requirements must be reviewed and considered by the Website Support Team.

A. Hosting

The university maintains a primary, enterprise web hosting environment for the *utk.edu* domain, managed by OIT. All academic and administrative content within the university's website must be hosted, centrally, within the enterprise environment.

Alternative, secondary hosting environments are managed by OIT to service custom web applications and some sites on the *utk.edu* domain. Use of a secondary hosting environment is uncommon and will be determined by the Website Support Team on a case-by-case basis.

B. Content Management System

The university maintains a single, enterprise content management system for the *utk.edu* domain, managed by OIT. All content within the university's website must be hosted, centrally, within the enterprise system. Exceptions to the CMS usage requirement may be made for sites that are hosted within a secondary environment.

C. Official University Theme

The university maintains an enterprise visual theme for the university's website, managed by OCM. The theme, which is maintained and updated regularly, includes standardized, brand-aligned user interface and user experience elements, which must be used. Exceptions to the theme usage requirement may be made for sites that are hosted within a secondary environment.

D. Customizations

The official university theme is intended to service almost all content needs within the university's website. Requests to implement custom developed plug-ins or extended functionality will be considered by the Website Support Team on a case-by-case basis.

OIT and OCM are not responsible for developing, maintaining, or supporting custom code. Site sponsors are required to register all customizations with the Website Support Team before custom code is deployed and will be assigned responsibility for its maintenance.

II. Contributor Requirements

The university's website is a marketing communications platform, therefore professional communicators and marketers are the primary contributors to its pages and sites. All contributors are required to participate in training and maintain accurate content that both advances the university's reputation and achieves their unit goals.

A. Contributor Access & Permissions

Every site within *utk.edu* must have a site sponsor who is deemed responsible for the content within their site. Only university employees may be site sponsors.

Individual contributors may be granted access to sites within *utk.edu*. Only university employees and vendors with sponsored NetIDs may receive site access.

Access to sites within the university's website is granted by the Website Support Team, in consultation with site sponsors.

B. Mandatory Training

All contributors to the university's website, regardless of access level, including sponsored vendors, must complete mandatory training and onboarding before being granted access to a site. Training includes basic technical instruction, as well as information to familiarize users with relevant laws and policies.

Contributors may be required to complete periodic re-training to maintain site access.

Sponsored vendors may be required to attend additional onboarding, initial training, and/or re-training sessions.

C. Annual Review

Site sponsors must complete an annual recertification of their sites. The process will include review of assigned access permissions and content, as well as notice of any changes or updates to technical requirements. The review must ensure that the website complies with local, state, and federal laws and statutes, as well as all relevant university policies, procedures, and guidelines.

III. Content Requirements

We strengthen our brand when we are thoughtful and responsible with our website content. Contributors must ensure the content on their pages and sites is accurate, relevant, accessible, and legally compliant by adhering to the following content requirements. Because everything hosted on the university's website is a university-owned asset, the vice chancellor for communications retains final control and approval authority, as necessary, over all content on the university's website.

A. Relevancy & Accuracy

All pages and sites within the *utk.edu* domain must contain accurate information that is relevant to an external audience. Contributors are responsible for posting and maintaining appropriate content that advances the university's reputation. Site sponsors are responsible for ensuring all site content—including, but not limited to words, images, videos, and documents—is appropriate and properly maintained.

In addition to the annual content review referenced in *Procedures, Section II*, the Website Support Team will conduct periodic content checks and alert site sponsors if any content is outdated or needs to be corrected. If necessary, the Website Support Team may make content updates on the contributors' and site sponsor's behalf.

B. Content Compliance

All content on the university's website must comply with local, state, and federal laws and statutes, as well as all relevant university policies, procedures, and guidelines. Mandatory website training will cover areas of compliance. Contributors are required to know and understand how to maintain content compliance within their site.

Relevant policy and legal compliance information includes, but is not limited to IT security, acceptable use of IT resources, brand standards, editorial guidelines, processing university data, handling sensitive information, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), copyright, and licensing.

Pages and sites for research projects that handle Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) must be disclosed to the university. In accordance with the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) for CUI, the project's principal investigator must certify that content on any such page or site does not include CUI as defined by 32 CFR Part 2002 and is cleared for public release. Website contributors should work with project PIs to ensure no CUI data is presented on such sites that they maintain.

IV. Site Initialization & Support

The Website Support Team is responsible for the creation and technical support of sites and subdomains within the university's website. The Website Support Team consults with site sponsors and lead communication and marketing professionals across the institution to ensure technical approaches enable colleges, divisions, and units to meet their objectives.

A. Requesting a New Site

All pages and sites within the *utk.edu* domain are part of the university's website. They are extensions of our brand and have both inherent value and risk.

Requests for a new site are considered by the Website Support Team on a case-by-case basis, weighing the risks and benefits to both the institution and the requesting unit. Decisions about creating a new site will include review of the purpose, audience, and intended usage of the site. Other factors, such as the impact on the overall user experience, as well as redundancy of existing, related sites will also be considered.

Requests for new sites must be made by a lead communicator or their designee. Before considering requests for new sites, the Website Support Team will first consult with lead communicators within the associated college or division.

Once a new site is approved and a site sponsor has been identified, contributors will be required to complete mandatory training before being granted access to their site (see *Procedures, Section II*).

B. Subdomains & URLs

All academic units, administrative units, programs, centers, and labs with sites are required to use the *utk.edu* domain. Most unit sites are represented by a subdomain URL (ie: *site.utk.edu*).

Every subdomain within the *utk.edu* domain is an extension of our brand, therefore every request for a new subdomain will be carefully considered by the Website Support Team.

Typically, a new subdomain is created as part of establishing a new site (see above). Requests for a new subdomain outside a new site request are considered by the Website Support Team on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the associated lead communicator.

At its discretion, the Website Support Team may protect certain subdomains, especially those that include university trademarks or have brand implications. The final decision on whether to assign a new subdomain rests with the Website Support Team.

Requests for subdomains for the purposes of removing them from circulation or reserving them for potential future use (ie: "squatting") is not allowed.

C. Technical Support

The Website Support Team provides technical support for the enterprise-level infrastructure of the university's website. This includes regular maintenance of the hosting environment, CMS, and theme, as well as managing access permissions and coordination with site sponsors, administrators, and contributors.

Neither OIT nor OCM is responsible for the technical maintenance of any customizations

developed to extend the functionality of the official university theme. This is the responsibility of the site sponsor (see *Procedures, Section I*).

The Website Support Team is not responsible for maintaining content on sites or pages (*see Procedures, Section III*).

The Website Support Team will provide contributors with training on how to use the university's enterprise CMS and theme. Site administrators and editors can request support or make technical requests through the OIT support portal (Help Desk).

Penalties/Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance

Contributors who do not meet the requirements within this procedure, or who manage content on pages or sites that do not meet these requirements, may have their university website access permissions revoked, temporarily or permanently.

Any violation of university policies relevant to this procedure may result in discipline as a violation of one or more provisions of the general standard of conduct in the student handbook or to discipline under the Code of Conduct (HR0580 – Code of Conduct) in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures.

Making a false or fraudulent statement in the CMMC certification may subject the individual to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties under applicable federal laws, including 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

Campus Responsible Official & Additional Contacts

Subject Matter	Office Name	Telephone Number (xxx) xxx-xxxx	Email/Web Address
Procedure Clarification and Interpretation	Associate Vice Chancellor, Marketing & Communications	(865) 974-0765	jrudolph@utk.edu
	Deputy CIO & Chief Academic Technology Officer	(865) 974-4909	dharder@utk.edu
Technical Information	OIT Help Desk	(865) 974-9900	help@utk.edu

Related Policies/Guidance Documents

Acceptable Use of IT Resources
https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/it0002-acceptable-use-of-information-technology-resources/

Accessibility
https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/it0006-accessibility/