OP 01.13: WEB PAGES AND OTHER ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

PURPOSE

The quality of information published by Mississippi State University plays an important role in maintaining the strong reputation and image of the university. This policy sets standards meant to ensure that information published electronically meets the same high standards as other forms of published information.

The university also strives to ensure that web pages and online content are accessible to all members of the university community and, where appropriate, to the public generally. This includes individuals with disabilities. Consequently, this policy establishes minimum standards of accessibility for web pages and other online content.

Additionally, the university recognizes that web publishing is an essential component of its broader work to ensure the security of electronic information, and that such security requires adaptation in response to evolving concerns. Thus, this policy establishes the authority to prescribe standards and protocols for information security in connection with university web pages and content.

POLICY

I. Statement of Policy

Mississippi State University recognizes the value of publishing on the internet, and therefore allows and encourages faculty, staff, and students to do so. While the university recognizes the broad diversity of information appropriately conveyed by web publishing, the use of the university's name, internet domain, and other web-related resources are privileges that must be balanced against MSU's strong interest in ensuring cohesive standards with respect to security, accessibility, and visual identity.

To that end, this policy authorizes the university's Vice President for Strategic Communications to prescribe standards for the visual identity of web pages and web content, as well as the use of university symbols or images. It authorizes the university's Chief Information Officer to prescribe standards to ensure both accessibility and the security of electronic information in connection with university web pages and content.

Where prescribed standards are violated, this policy authorizes these officials to take appropriate remedial steps, up to and including the removal of content and/or the restriction or denial of further web publishing privileges. This authorization in no way limits disciplinary action that may be taken pursuant to other university policies.

The visual identify standards authorized under this policy apply to content on the university's home page, *www.msstate.edu*, to all other web pages and content under the domain *msstate.edu*, and to any official web page—as that term is defined below—maintained under another domain name. They do not apply to non-official web pages or content maintained by MSU-affiliated individuals or organizations, such as student clubs or individual faculty, that is not housed under the domain *msstate.edu*.

As described below, the web accessibility standards prescribed under this policy apply more broadly to any online digital content created, posted, distributed, or published by any university division, department, sponsored student organization, or individual acting in their capacity as a university employee.

Finally, while the subject matter of web publishing is necessarily broad, the privilege of using university resources ultimately stems from advancing the mission of the Mississippi State University. Consequently, web resources may not be used to create web pages or content for personal business or personal financial gain.

II. Web Page Classifications

This policy recognizes two general classes of web page: official and non-official. Both classes are subject to the accessibility, information security, and visual identity standards prescribed under this policy, and must adhere to all other applicable university policies and laws.

A. Official University Web Pages and Content

Official Mississippi State University pages are those publicly accessible electronic documents and other content that represent the university, colleges, departments, offices, services, other units, and governance-related organizations such as the Student Association, Robert Holland Faculty Senate, and Professional and Support Staff Advisory Council.

All official pages will include Mississippi State University's official, trademarked logo or the corresponding unit's official secondary signature logo as defined in the Visual Identity Standards, the date of last revision, the name and e-mail or form-based link to the person responsible for maintaining the information on the page, and a link to the Mississippi State home page at *www.msstate.edu*.

Official Mississippi State University documents on the World Wide Web are considered official communication and are electronic publications. Electronic publications are subject to the same policies and standards as print publications.

B. Non-Official Web Pages and Content

Non-official pages are those pages using an address in the university's internet domain, *msstate.edu*, that are created by and represent either a university-affiliated individual or a registered student, staff, or faculty organization, with the exception of governance-related organizations listed above.

Non-official pages are permitted but must not appear to be official. The following statement must

appear on the top page of non-official sites: *"The views and opinions expressed herein are strictly those of the page author or organization. The contents of this page have not been reviewed or approved by Mississippi State University."*

Unit heads may choose to authorize links to non-official pages from official university pages.

III. Visual Identity Standards and University Symbols

As described below, the university through its Vice President for Strategic Communications may establish standards for the appearance and visual identity of web publications. These may include but are not limited to the use of symbols, designs, logos, colors, words or phrases, or other imagery, as well as the overall layout, design, and functionality of web pages and content.

Generally, individuals may use the official symbols of the University on official pages, or on non-official pages to identify the author as a student, alumnus, or employee of Mississippi State University. Further, individuals or organizations may use a trademarked symbol of Mississippi State University as a click-on web link to the official Mississippi State home page.

However, university symbols may not be used in such a way as to suggest that non-official pages are, in fact, official university pages, nor may university symbols be used in such a way as to imply sponsorship or endorsement by the university where none exists.

IV. Accessibility

A. Standards

All university web content must meet the accessibility requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and regulations promulgated thereunder. For purposes of the accessibility requirements of this policy, "university web content" refers to:

1. Any online digital content created, posted, distributed, or published by any university division, department, sponsored student organization, or individual acting in their capacity as a university employee, including but not limited to university websites, social media accounts, online course content, or online applications. This includes but is not limited to all content posted on any web page hosted under the *msstate.edu* domain.

2. Any electronic system, software, or infrastructure developed or purchased by any university division or department for university business, to the extent these are deployed or made available to university students, university employees, or other persons to conduct university-related business.

The university's Chief Information Officer is authorized to prescribe standards for ensuring accessibility of university web content. Where these standards are more specific or demanding than applicable regulatory requirements, the standards will control.

Additionally, the university units purchasing or procuring software or other electronic or online products or services are responsible for ensuring that such products or services comply with all accessibility requirements under applicable law and university policy.

B. Exceptions

The following categories of content are generally exempt from the accessibility requirements of this policy.

1. *Archived Web Content.* Web content that meets all four of the following requirements is not required to meet accessibility standards:

    - The content was published online before April 26, 2027 or reproduces paper documents or other physical media created before that date; and

    - The content is kept only for reference, research, or recordkeeping and is not needed to access or participate in any university program, employment, service, or activity; and

    - The content is kept in a special area designated for archived content; and

    - The content has not been changed since it was archived.

2. *Preexisting Conventional Electronic Documents.* Electronic versions of conventional documents that meet the following requirements are not required to meet accessibility standards:

    - The documents are word processing, presentation, PDF, or spreadsheet files; and

    - The documents are not currently used to apply for, access, or participate in any university program, employment, service, or activity; and

    - The documents were published online before April 26, 2027.

    - This exception does not apply to documents published before April 26, 2027, then subsequently updated or republished in a new location or for a new purpose.

3. *Third Party Posted Content.* Content posted online by a third party not controlled by or acting on behalf of the university is not required to meet accessibility standards.

    - This exception would apply, for example, to comments by the public in response to a post on a university social media account or public message board.

    - This exception would not apply to, for example, content created by an external contractor or vendor for a university website, social media account, or application.

4. *Individualized Password Protected Documents.* Documents that are for use only by a specific individual, such as a bill or account statement, are not required to meet accessibility standards if:

    - The documents are word processing, presentation, PDF, or spreadsheet files, and

    - They are about a specific person, property, or account, and

    - They are password protected or otherwise secured.

- This exception does not apply to online academic course content published via a learning management system or other means.

5. *Preexisting Social Media Posts.* Social media posts published by a university social media account before April 26, 2027 are not required to meet accessibility standards.

C. Disability Accommodations

The above exceptions notwithstanding, any exempt content is subject to university policies governing requests for disability accommodation, including Operating Policy 91.122 (Students with Disabilities) and Operating Policy 60.123 (ADA Reasonable Accommodation in Employment). Accommodations may include taking steps to make exempt content accessible.

Upon receiving a request for accommodation from an individual with a legitimate need to access exempt content, the university will follow existing policies and use existing channels for assessing and, if approved, implementing the request. If no other policy provides an avenue for making the request, it may be directed to the university's Chief Information Officer.

V. Information Security

The information security requirements of Operating Policy 1.10 apply fully to all university web pages and university web content, regardless of type. Additionally, as described below, the Chief Information Officer shall have authority to implement such additional information security requirements or measures as they deem necessary to ensure the security of university web pages and university web content.

VI. Compliance and Enforcement

A. Visual Identity

The University's Vice President for Strategic Communications or his or her designee shall have authority to prescribe standards for visual identity of web pages and web content, as well as the use of university symbols or images, consistent with the requirements of this policy.

Standards prescribed under this policy may be applied to all university web pages or content, or to any subset thereof at the discretion of the Vice President for Strategic Communications. Further, the Vice President for Strategic Communications shall have discretion to identify appropriate timeframes within which compliance with standards must be achieved.

Where a web page or web content fails to comply with applicable policies or standards in these areas, the Vice President for Strategic Communications shall have authority to take such remedial steps as are deemed necessary, up to and including removal of the non-compliant page or content and/or the restriction or denial of further web publishing privileges. This authorization in no way limits disciplinary action that may be taken pursuant to other university policies.

B. Accessibility and Security

The University's Chief Information Officer or his or her designee shall have authority to enforce

policy provisions governing web accessibility and information security, and to prescribe accessibility and security standards and protocols, as well as procedures for monitoring compliance, for all web publishing and university web content covered by this policy.

Standards prescribed under this policy may be applied to all University web pages, or in the case of accessibility standards, to any university web content as defined herein, or to any subset thereof at the discretion of the Chief Information Officer. The Chief Information Officer shall have discretion to determine appropriate timeframes within which compliance must be achieved, and to determine the applicability of the exemptions listed in this policy.

Where university web content fails to comply with applicable policies or standards in these areas, the Chief Information Officer shall have authority to take such remedial steps as are deemed necessary, up to and including removal of the non-compliant page or content and/or the restriction or denial of further web publishing privileges. This authorization in no way limits disciplinary action that may be taken pursuant to other university policies.

With respect to web accessibility in particular, determinations as to establishment or enforcement of standards or protocols will be made in consultation with the University's Director of Regulatory Compliance.

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed every four years or more frequently as needed by the Vice President for Strategic Communications, the Chief Information Officer, and the Director of Regulatory Compliance.

REVIEWED BY:

/s/ Brett Harvey — 09/17/2026
Director of Regulatory Compliance — Date

/s/ Sid Salter — 09/17/2026
Vice President for Strategic Communications — Date

/s/ Trey Breckenridge — 09/17/2026
Chief Information Officer — Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham — 09/17/2026
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategic & Effectiveness — Date

/s/ Joan Lucas — 09/17/2026
General Counsel — Date

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mark E. Keenum — 11/23/2026
President — Date