

## How-to Guide – Changing your website

This is an overview of key elements you should think about if you're making significant changes to your website, or if you're merging two or more sections of content to create a new one.

### Before you read any further

It's important to work out who in your centre/school can currently author and publish content before you undertake major changes.

Most business areas will have multiple authors and approvers with access to edit content. Some of these people should be experienced in the day-to-day maintenance of web pages in the ECU WebCMS.

If required, consolidate the groups down to manageable sizes. Incorporate these people into your project and leverage the experience and familiarity they have in the system to help make the changes you require.

### Work out what you currently have

Before starting any redevelopment work you should do a stocktake of what web pages your business area has control over or has influence over. This includes content that may be available across ECU public (red) and private (blue) webpages.

Assign ownership to these pages and content, and then you'll know who you'll need to work with to make changes.

### Website analytics can help

Data can be collected to tell us about visitors to ECU's websites and individual web pages. This is done through Google Analytics and it can be useful when deciding on what web pages to keep or archive, and how to group content.

You may be surprised at how few visits some of your current pages get. The online journey people are taking to get to some of your pages can also be enlightening.

For more information about analytics, visit our [Website statistics page](#).

### The customer experience

Before you start on actual content, even if you have some old content you're planning to move to the new site, think long and hard about your audience.

Think about why they're visiting your site.

What are they actually looking for? Where would they look for this?

A good customer experience on a website is one where someone finds what they're looking for quickly and easily.

It starts with the architecture. Your menus and sub-menus (child pages) are really important to get right. Start at the bottom and then look at how you can logically group content. The WebCMS supports left-hand menu structures to 3 levels down.

When naming pages, give them logical titles that your audience will relate to. This also helps search engines find your information.

The less clicks to get to information the better, but don't get hung up on clicks, or how many clicks.

Most people find content via search. And the less pages you have in your site, the more likely someone will find it easy to use.

Resist the temptation to replicate organisational structures for your web content. Structure information around services or tasks. This is how users on the web look for information.

If you have information for specific personas, remember the University already has established destinations for content relating to these, e.g. future students, current students, past students.

## Mobile first approach

ECU's websites have been built to respond to the devices people use to view web pages – from desktop computers to laptops to tablets and smartphones.

So when you're ready to look at the content for each page in your revamped website, you need to think about how your audience is going to view those pages.

Your internal audience (ECU staff) will most likely view your pages on their desktops or laptops. But the rest of the world is more likely to be looking – especially the first time – at a tablet or phone.

So please keep your content short – with key information at the top.

If your page must contain more than a couple of paragraphs, break it into sections with meaningful sub-headings.

Bulleted lists are also a good way to convey information easily.

Remember: People scroll, swipe and scan; they're not hanging off your every word! They are looking for clear, short headings.

For more tips on content, please see our [Writing for the web](#) pages.

## Link less

Please minimise the number of links to other web pages.

If you must have a link to another page/site, put it at the end of a sentence and, if you can, at the end of the page. That way, people won't click away from the page too early and miss your main message/information.

You should also make your links descriptive, e.g. 'for more information, please visit our How to apply web page.'

Please don't use 'Click here' or 'See more' links, as these don't work for a person using an assistive web browser.

Your link wording should also match the page name/header you're sending someone to.

This helps your readers, people using assistive technologies, and the search engine robots.

## Moving, re-naming, redirecting and archiving pages

If you move a page in the WebCMS, the system automatically makes a record to redirect the old web address to the new location.

If you rename a page in the WebCMS, you'll also need to remember to update the page URL. Having page names with matching URLs helps search engines find your information.

If you're making significant changes and building all new web pages, you'll need to create a redirection matrix. This records all the old URLs and the corresponding new URLs.

Make sure to archive old unused content, including documents. This ensures people are not seeing old or orphaned content.

## Need more information?

If you need to clarify any of the information in this guide, please send an email to us at: [corporateweb@ecu.edu.au](mailto:corporateweb@ecu.edu.au)