

Author: Josephine Koonce Evans  
Thanks to William C. Welburn, Joyce L. Tolliver, and Doug Jones for suggestions.  
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## **Assessment Design Checklist for Web Site Review** **Josephine Koonce Evans**

**Graduate and Professional Admissions and Academic Support Unit**  
**Graduate College**  
**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

**This tool was initially created as part of a larger research project, and is intended to be used as an aid to determine Web site usability with respect to graduate student recruiting and admissions.**

**My thanks to Douglas L. Jones, Julie B. Misa, Joyce L. Tolliver, and William C. Welburn, all from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for comments and suggestions.**

The top five recommendations for essential information on your Web site:

- 1). Display relevant information (application deadlines, program information, and areas of research) in a user-friendly format that is easy to find and read, is aesthetically pleasing, and meets [widely accepted recommendations and standards for accessibility](#); be cautious of too much text on a page.
- 2). Use words that everyone will understand, even if the person viewing the content is not a native English language speaker; if you must use acronyms, define them.
- 3). Provide student and faculty bios; present a picture of not only the academic community, but also the social and cultural community created by your department.
- 4). Provide information related to admission decision-making (criteria for admission, criteria for continuing in the program), and a timeline for your admission process.
- 5). Provide links to other campus units that impact the recruiting and admissions process (Graduate College's Graduate Admissions and Academic Support, Educational Equity and Fellowship offices, Office of Student Financial Aid,

International Student and Scholar Services, etc.), to create a Web site that acts as a portal to all relevant applicant/student information.

## Content Area Checklist

- Check the appropriate box for each question, and then circle the rating that you think best summarizes that content area.

(Four content areas are included, with space for a fifth content area to be defined by the department/program):

- 1: Departmental Application and Admission Information
- 2: General Application and Admissions Information
- 3: Departmental Expertise and Excellence
- 4: User-friendliness
- 5: \_\_\_\_\_(department/program defined area)

### **Content area 1: Departmental Application and Admission Information**

#### **(General International Student Applicant Content)**

- Yes  No Are application requirements clearly stated in a simple format?
- Yes  No Are international degree-seeking student requirements clearly stated?
- Yes  No Is a Bachelor's (or Master's) comparable prior degree requirement clearly stated?
- Yes  No Is a 3-year European degree OK (Bologna agreement), and included in prior degree requirements section?
- Yes  No Are 3-year India, UK or Australian degrees excluded from list of acceptable, comparable degrees, and is this information clearly stated in prior degree requirements section?
- Yes  No Is the financial documentation requirement for the application process clearly stated?
- Yes  No Is the department's minimum TOEFL or IELTS (academic test) score (Paper-based TOEFL score, Computer-based TOEFL score, iBT score, IELTS academic test score) requirement for admission clearly stated?

- Yes  No Is the University's minimum TOEFL or IELTS score (Paper-based TOEFL score, Computer-based TOEFL score, iBT score, IELTS academic test score) for admission with an exemption from having to satisfy English language requirements (ESL courses) clearly stated, or a link provided?
- Yes  No Are minimum TSE, iBT speaking sub-scores, or IELTS speaking sub-scores, for an international graduate teaching assistant, clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are all test score requirements/averages for admission (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS, TSE) clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are departmental conditions of admission (pre-requisites, GPA minimums for continuation) clearly listed?
- Yes  No Are average times-to-degree for master and doctoral students listed?
- Yes  No Are average costs for attendance listed, or links provided?
- Yes  No Are deadlines for applications for each entry semester clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are degree majors, concentrations and minors or specializations listed and defined?
- Yes  No Are all application materials for degree and non-degree applicants clearly listed or is a checklist provided?
- Yes  No If all or part of the degree requirement can be completed on-line, is that information clearly stated?
- Yes  No If all degree requirements can be completed on-line, and international students will not be traveling to the US to enroll, is it clearly stated that international students will not be issued visa-entry documents (I-20 or DS-2019)?
- Yes  No If applicable, is specialized accreditation information clearly stated?
- Yes  No Is program and departmental contact information provided?
- Yes  No Is there a timeline for application to admission to orientation/enrollment included?
- Yes  No Is the department or program admission philosophy included (specifically, what weight test scores and GPA have in the process, and include other important factors that influence admission selection)?
- Yes  No Are links or information provided regarding the CIC Traveling Scholar Program?

**(International Exchange Student Applicant Content)**

- Yes  No Are international exchange student application requirements and conditions clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are TOEFL or IELTS scores as a requirement for the international exchange student application process and admission clearly stated?

- Yes  No Is the prior-degree requirement for exchange student admission clearly stated (e.g.: Bachelor's comparable degree; in final year of completion of the comparable Bachelor's degree).
- Yes  No If the student can apply for degree-seeking status at the University while still an international exchange student, is the process explained?
- Yes  No Is the financial documentation requirement for the application process clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are deadlines and conditions of acceptance/enrollment clearly stated?

**(General Domestic Student Applicant Content)**

- Yes  No Are application requirements clearly stated in a simple format?
- Yes  No Are degree-seeking student requirements clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are non-degree-seeking students admitted to the department or program? If yes, are admission requirements clearly stated, and are applicants referred to non-degree applicant instructions on the Graduate College Web site?
- Yes  No Is a Bachelor/Master program available, and if so, are requirements clearly stated?
- Yes  No Are links or is information provided regarding the CIC Traveling Scholar Program?

**(Underrepresented Student Applicant Content)**

- Yes  No Are there links to the Graduate College's Educational Equity Programs Web site?
- Yes  No Are links (located via the Graduate College Educational Equity Programs Web site) or is specific information provided regarding the following programs for underrepresented students:
  - Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP)
  - Summer Pre-doctoral Institute (SPI)
  - Project 1000
  - FreeApp program
  - Applying to Graduate School PDF
  - CIC Traveling Scholar Program
- Yes  No Are links to the Graduate College Fellowship Office available for information regarding general fellowships and traineeships?
- Yes  No Are links or is information provided regarding department-specific financial aid opportunities for underrepresented students?
  
- Yes  No Are links or is information provided regarding admitted and enrolled student demographics?

- After answering Yes/No to the Departmental Application and Admission Content questions above, how would you rate your departmental/program Web site with respect to this content area?

### **Department Application and Admissions Content Rating**

- 1 Least satisfied; includes no or few content items
- 2 Moderately satisfied; adding some content items would improve communication
- 3 Most satisfied; includes most or all content items

### **Content area 2: General Application and Admissions Information**

- Yes  No Are there links to the Graduate Admissions' lead-in page to the application?
  - Yes  No Are there links to test center Web sites (TOEFL, IELTS, TSE, GRE, GMAT)?
  - Yes  No Are there links to the Graduate College Handbook on the Graduate College Web site regarding minimum acceptable scores for admission and continuation?
  - Yes  No Are degree (master and doctoral) requirements clearly listed?
  - Yes  No Are there links to the University's accreditation information provided?
- After answering Yes/No to the General Application and Admissions Content questions above, how would you rate your departmental/program Web site with respect to this content area?

### **General Application and Admissions Content Rating**

- 1 Least satisfied; includes no or few content items
- 2 Moderately satisfied; adding some content items would improve communication
- 3 Most satisfied; includes most or all content items

### **Content area 3: Departmental Expertise and Excellence**

- Yes  No Are there links to or is there information about faculty (such as links to bios or pictures)?
- Yes  No Are there links to or is there information about areas of research/scholarship?

- Yes  No Are there links to or is there information about awards/nominations?
  - Yes  No Are rankings/ratings clearly listed, with links to additional information?
  - Yes  No Are academic activities, as well as social activities, listed/highlighted/showcased (giving the applicant a sense of the department as community and the role of graduate students in that community)?
- After answering Yes/No to the Departmental Expertise and Excellence questions above, how would you rate your departmental/program Web site with respect to this content area?

### **Departmental Expertise and Excellence Rating**

- 1 Least satisfied; includes no or few content items
- 2 Moderately satisfied; adding some content items would improve communication
- 3 Most satisfied; includes most or all content items

### **Content area 4: User-friendliness**

- Yes  No Are there links to or pictures/videos of Champaign-Urbana (maps, campus, surrounding area, walking times between buildings/housing)?
- Yes  No Is information presented in a well-defined and organized format (using bulleted lists, avoiding large blocks of text) with pictures?
- Yes  No Are there links or is information presented about the Office of International Student and Scholar Services?
- Yes  No Are there links to the University Housing Web site?
- Yes  No Are there links to the University Financial Aid Web site?
- Yes  No Are there links to the Graduate College Fellowship Office Web site?
- Yes  No Are there links to the Graduate College Web site?
- Yes  No Is content readily available with one or two clicks?
- Yes  No Is the process for receiving an I-20 or DS-2019 clearly listed or are links provided?
- Yes  No Is the process for international students who are transferring from another U.S. higher education institution clearly defined or are links provided (including both academic transfer and SEVIS-record transfer)?
- Yes  No Are there testimonials from other international students listed?

- Yes  No Are current and past underrepresented student bios/experience statements/research areas/photos available?
- Yes  No Is the term "University" (preferred) being used instead of "College" or "Higher Education"?
- Yes  No Is Web content available in multiple languages?
- Yes  No Are there links to the University's nominations and awards or breaking news pages?
- Yes  No Is the Web site aesthetically pleasing (good use of color, not text-heavy, easy to read/view)?
- Yes  No Does the Web site meet W3C guidelines for accessibility?

- After answering Yes/No to the User-friendliness questions above, how would you rate your departmental/program Web site with respect to this content area?

**User-friendliness Rating**

- 1 Least satisfied; includes no or few content items
- 2 Moderately satisfied; adding some content items would improve communication with applicants
- 3 Most satisfied; includes most or all content items

**Content area 5: \_\_\_\_\_ Content area and questions defined by department**

- Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

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Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

- After answering Yes/No to the questions above, how would you rate your departmental/program website with respect to this content area?

**Rating**

1 Least satisfied; includes no or few content items

2 Moderately satisfied; adding some content items would improve communication with applicants

3 Most satisfied; includes most or all content items

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