Assessment Design Checklist for Web Site Review
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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.

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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?
Are current and past underrepresented student bios/experience statements/research areas/photos available?

Is the term "University" (preferred) being used instead of "College" or "Higher Education"?

Is Web content available in multiple languages?

Are there links to the University’s nominations and awards or breaking news pages?

Is the Web site aesthetically pleasing (good use of color, not text-heavy, easy to read/view)?

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 ________________________________
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
References


http://exchanges.state.gov/education/educationusa/eir.htm


http://exchanges.state.gov/education/educationusa/internlfriendlyinst.htm


http://exchanges.state.gov/education/educationusa/intl_web


