

# TSC | TALLAHASSEE STATE COLLEGE

## Web Style Guide



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# Style Guide Overview



Terminal 4 is Tallahassee State College's content management system (CMS) and provides a user-friendly platform for keeping the College's web information accurate and up to date.

## Your Role as a Content Manager

TSC's website is one of our best tool for reaching potential students and for sharing all of the great programs and opportunities on campus with our current students and the broader community.

As a Content Manager, you are responsible for understanding the key elements of improving our website's performance and maintaining TSC's brand standards as outlined in this guide while you work within Terminal 4.

# Accessibility and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Overview



## User Experience

User experience describes the journey someone takes when navigating our website and impacts their opinion of our College.

Some things to keep in mind:

- We want our website to be welcoming and for it to provide a positive, helpful experience. The
- hierarchy of information on our website has very little to do with the actual departments that make up the College and more with what the user is looking for during a given visit. Our website is a tool
- used by potential and current students. It has to be functional.

## Accessibility

The strides we take at TSC to serve our students and meet the needs of anyone living with disabilities must be equally reflected on our website. Web accessibility refers to both the universal access to the technical and the content sides of a site. Your role as a Content Manager is to adhere to The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance.

Together we can provide access to our website, our College, and the opportunities and futures those represent for everyone.

To learn more, visit: [Resources for Content Writers | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)

## SEO

Search Engine Optimization refers to how our website performs in organic searches done through search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. Within the Office of Communications and Marketing, we work to increase TSC's SEO in a big-picture sense, but the best practices start on small scales.

By following the rules and tips described in the rest of this guide, you will be doing your part to keep our website as high performing as the rest of our College.

# Brand Standards



## TSC's Brand

A brand is more than a look or logo. The TSC Identity and Branding System represent the sum of all visual impressions associated with the College that express our mission and as such, it is important to establish standards for uniformity and reliability in all communications. You can access the elements of our brand in our [Brandfolder](#).

## Brand Color and Logo Rules

Maintaining TSC's Brand standards increases the confidence potential students have when viewing our web pages. Here are a few rules to follow:

- Do not alter brand colors or logos.

- Logos should always be at least one inch in diameter or larger.

- Logo should be surrounded on all sides by clear space where no other graphics, rules, typography, or other elements are present. As a general rule, this clear space should equal one-half the height of the logo.

- Do not use colors outside of what is provided in the Brandfolder.

- Do not create your own logos (if you need a logo created reach out to [communications@tsc.fl.edu](mailto:communications@tsc.fl.edu)).

# Text Standards



## Using AP Style

TSC follows the [Associated Press Stylebook](#), the standard for grammatical guidelines used by the media. Here are a few essential tips for writing in AP Style:

- Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks.
- Spell out numbers zero through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 and larger.
- For writing out the time, do not use zeros and the descriptors should be abbreviated with lowercase letters. So 11 a.m. is correct and 11:00 AM is incorrect.
- For specific dates abbreviate the month: Tuesday, Dec. 10.

As an additional resource, consider downloading [Grammarly's free browser extension](#)

Additional Style Tips and Rules:

- Format for phone numbers: (850) 201-0000.
- Format for emails: Firstname.Lastname@tsc.fl.edu and include a hyperlink.
- Avoid: &, overuse of italics, and using abbreviations without explaining their meaning.

## Writing for the Web

The average website user does not read every word on the page but instead skims the content. It is crucial to use clear and concise language.

Use bulleted or numbered lists.

Use meaningful headlines and sub-headlines to break up your content and make navigating the information on the page easier.

- With headers use title case, be specific and concise, and do not use them back to back. Minimize the length of your copy by about half of what you would include in a print piece or email.

Make links informative. "Learn More" and "Click Here" tell the user nothing and creates an accessibility issue for anyone with visual impairments using a site reader. Instead describe the function of the link: "Learn About Student Life" or "Click Here to Complete the Interest Form". Do not underline, italicize, or bold your text. Links will underline themselves.

## Consistency of Language

Consistent language across the website is a key element in improving the user's experience and strengthening the TSC Brand. Here are some best practices for ensuring consistent tone and voice:

- Use an active writing voice and strong verbs.
  - Active: He used a pencil.
  - Passive: A pencil was used by him.
- Use plain language and short sentences, and avoid using industry jargon. Keep your audience in mind while writing. The average person reads at a 7th-9th grade level and will lose interest in language that alienates them.
- You can use either first, second, or third person, but choose one voice for your content and stick to it.
- When in doubt, read your writing out loud to help yourself catch mistakes or odd phrasing.

## Graphic Standards



### Graphic Guidance

Images and videos increase user interaction with a webpage and improve user experience, but standards of accessibility, quality, and file size must be followed by all Content Managers.

- Every website image must be saved as a jpeg and be no larger than 500kb.
- Do not use clip art, animated images, or memes.
- Do not use images with text, such as flyers or informational graphics.
  - These are not accessible to users who rely on sight readers.
- Crop and scale your images to fit the page or content types.
  - Do not cut off people's faces, zoom too far into an image, or use images with watermarks. Keep
- images up to date by reviewing them at least every 6 months.

### Imagery Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Make it bright.
- Make it welcoming.
- Make it appealing to a broad audience.
- Make it representative of TSC's diverse community.

Don't:

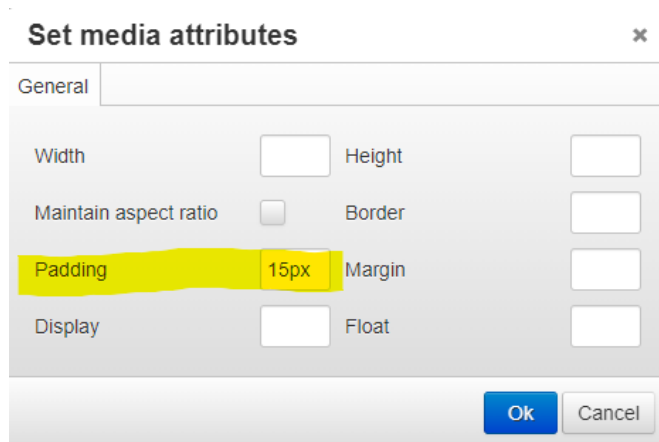
- Use blurry images.
- Use dark or shadowy images.
- Add text to an image.

## Media Library Use

Terminal 4's media library houses all of the digital files on TSC's website. It is the responsibility of the Content Managers to add new, up-to-date, files and to remove or delete old files. The media library is not for storing all of the media from your department and should only contain the files actively on the website.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind while using the media library:

- When adding an image or file include an alt/descriptive text. This makes the media accessible to site readers.
- Add media to your department's folders and not to the general "Categorized" folder double-check what folder you are in when looking for media you've previously added.
- When you insert an image onto a webpage, double-click the image and add a 15px padding (see below) to keep the format of the page neat.



## Video Guidance

When using videos on the website, only use content from [TSC's official YouTube page](#)

If you need a video that is not on this page or need a new video created, please reach out to our Director of Communications [Amanda.Clements@tsc.fl.edu](mailto:Amanda.Clements@tsc.fl.edu).

# Technical Tips



## Heading Formats

Generally, each web page has one H1 heading which gives context for the page's purpose. Underneath the H1 heading there can be several H2 headings to break the page into logical sections. Under each H2 heading there can be several H3 headings and so on.

Best practice is to use clear, short headings that describe the sections under them.

## Formatting Section Content

Section Content makes up the majority of the content on TSC's website. Text-based content is how you will convey most of your information, but it is important to break walls of text to improve the user experience.

Here are a few ways to change up how you're formatting your pages:

- Use bullet points or numbered lists.
- Use accordions.
  - Accordions are especially helpful for Frequently Asked Questions lists but do not hide prominent information behind an accordion tab.
- Use tables.
  - If you use a table make sure it is within ADA compliance.
    - Label column and/or row headers.
    - Make sure your table can be read from left to right and line by line.
    - Include a caption to describe the content in the Table by going to Table>Table Properties> and selecting Caption.
- Use other content types.
  - Be careful to balance different content types with keeping your pages neat and easy to navigate, When in doubt have your peers review the design to get second opinions or reach out to the Digital Communications Specialist at [Caitlin.Bradbury@tsc.fl.edu](mailto:Caitlin.Bradbury@tsc.fl.edu).
- Use PDFs for long, text-heavy content, or for printable material.

## Using Forms

TSC uses Machforms for most of its digital forms. Communications and Marketing can create forms for you upon request, or if you know you need a lot of forms or will need to edit your forms often, please reach out to [Caitlin.Bradbury@tsc.fl.edu](mailto:Caitlin.Bradbury@tsc.fl.edu) to request Machform training and access.