

Website Content Style Guide

Overview

The Samuel Merritt College website (www.samuelmerritt.edu) is primarily used as a medium for recruiting new students and serving as a resource for current students, faculty and staff. It is the responsibility of each department to maintain current and accurate website content.

Each department has individuals which have been identified as content owners – persons who may contribute, edit and/or publish content for the College, department or public facing audience. All content on the Samuel Merritt College website is the property of the College. Content that does not adhere to the guidelines in this document will be modified or removed at the discretion of the Web Applications Development department of Information Technology Services.

Only appropriate and necessary content should be available on the website. All content is considered a reflection of the College as well as your department.

Examples of appropriate content:

- Information necessary for interested or prospective students.
- Information necessary for the educational success of current students.
- Event notification to the applicable audience.
- Department contact information.
- Human resource benefits.
- Academic resources for faculty.

Examples of inappropriate content:

- Personal information.
- Private or sensitive information.
- Personal contact information.
- Unapproved photographs.

If you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of content, consult your content publisher or the Web Application Development Manager. If you are a content publisher it is your responsibility to determine appropriateness prior to publishing.

Copyright

All materials posted or published on the Samuel Merritt College website are both protected by and subject to the provisions of Federal Copyright Law Title 17.

Anyone publishing content is responsible for compliance with current copyright laws. Copyright laws protect material and gives exclusive rights to the owner of the copyright that include but are not limited to:

- The right to copy.
- The right to make modifications.
- The right to distribute.
- The right to transmit.

This includes copyright information being posted online. Copyright material posted on the Samuel Merritt College website may only be posted with the owners permission and the person publishing this content is responsible for investigating copyright issues and acquiring this permission.

Material that is frequently copyrighted includes but is not limited to:

- Photographs

- Articles in electronic and print media
- Styles and formatting in electronic and print media
- Music
- Art

For further information, you may consult the [Federal Copyright provisions](#).

Privacy and Legality

Private information regarding Samuel Merritt College, its students and its business practices should never be published to the website. It is the responsibility of the content publisher to ensure their published content conforms to federal, state and local law as well as the policies of the College.

Information regarded as private by these laws includes but is not limited to:

- Statements implying illegal or immoral conduct of an employee
- Disclosure of an employee's medical condition to co-workers
- Disclosure of information contained in employee's personnel file
- Publication of private facts, for example, income tax data, sexual relations, personal letters, family quarrels, medical treatment, photographs of person in his/her home.
- Publication that places a person in a false light, which is similar to defamation. A successful defamation action requires that the information be false. In a privacy action the information is generally true, but the information created a false impression about the plaintiff.

In accordance with federal and state law, Samuel Merritt College reserves the right to examine material stored or transmitted in its technology facilities. Members of the community should be aware that privacy cannot be guaranteed in electronic communications, even information that has been deleted. This includes information on the content management system and the Samuel Merritt College website.

Content Management System (CMS)

Designated content owners are responsible for editing, updating and publishing content to their department's pages of the Samuel Merritt College website.

If you are responsible for editing or publishing website content and need to request CMS user access or sign up for training, please contact the Samuel Merritt College Helpdesk at 510.869.6836 or helpdesk@samuelmerritt.edu. Becoming a content contributor or publisher will require permission from your supervisor.

Content Contribution

It is the responsibility of the content editors and publishers to maintain current, relevant and accurate content.

Content which is contributed to the Samuel Merritt College exists as the page body. The page structure, menus, formatting and accessibility is not available for editing and publication by content contributors. These elements of the website are designed for consistency, accurate and efficient information accessibility and 'branding' and are the responsibility of the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services and the Website Development Manager.

All published content that are orphaned pages, or not available via any links will be deleted.

Web Page Standards and Protocols

Content publishers are responsible for meeting the following standards on all content that is published to the Samuel Merritt College website.

Font

The font size and font face is fixed and cannot be altered by content contributors. Limited font styles can be set by the content contributor including:

- *Italics*
- **Bold**
- Underline
- ~~Strikethrough~~

These font styles should only be used to highlight important information. They should be used sparingly and with discretion. Never use a font style on more than a single sentence, and very rarely on more than a single word. If you have any question as to the appropriateness of your font styles please contact the Web Development Manager.

Text

Text can be organized using subtitles, headings, subheadings, bullets, numbered lists and paragraphs.

- Paragraphs will be left justified and separated by a space.
- Subtitles, headings, subheadings and lists will have a carriage return on either side (double space).
- Subheadings, headings, subtitles and titles all must be cased according to standard titling rules: the first letter of each word is capitalized unless they are prepositions or articles, except for the first word which is always capitalized (e.g. The Title of the Century).
- No word will be 'all caps' unless it is an acronym, or part of a brandname.

All text should be grammatically formatted and punctuated according to [xxx English Writing Guide].

Names, Dates and Contact Information

It is important to maintain consistency across the website through using naming conventions, date conventions and title conventions in the same way.

Dates

In paragraph text dates must appear as **Month DD, YYYY** (e.g. January 1, 2006). If appearing in a matrix or table, and space is an issue, they can be displayed as MM/DD or MM/DD/YY.

Names

Names are written First Last, and if appearing as a list, are sorted alphabetically by last name.

Contact Information

Contact information should be displayed as follows:

First Last

Title

Department

510.111.2222

flast@samuelmerritt.edu

Phone Numbers

Phone numbers are separated by a period (e.g. 888.555.1212).

File Names

It is important to maintain consistency across document naming and file formatting. Not only does it create predictability and set standards for expectation, but it allows simple, understandable document navigation and communication across the organization.

- Acceptable Characters:
 - ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 - abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
 - 01234567890
 - .-_-
- No whitespace; use underscore "_" instead.
- Use Mixed Case for Clarity.
- Name should be descriptive.
- Break up name with dashes between designators.
- Revision date should be included yyyy-mm-dd.
- Example of foregoing rules: Leave_of_Absense_Form-2005-06-27.pdf.

Tables

Tables should only be used when the information being conveyed requires a matrix or columned presentation to be comprehensible.

- Tables will have no border.
- Text should be horizontally left justified and vertically top justified.

Lists

Lists should only be used when information needs to be organized in an ordered or unordered list for comprehension.

- Lists of departments, divisions, contacts, and programs will be alphabetized.
- The first word of each bulleted list or numbered list item must be capitalized, with the remainder of the item should be handled according to the nature of the list item.

Hyperlinks

Content contributors can create hyperlinks within their content. Hyperlinks, or 'links', fall into five categories – file links, internal page links, external page links, email links and anchor links. Each should be treated according to its link type. Links need to be checked on a regular basis to confirm accuracy and avoid content changes or 'broken' links. Broken links are links which go to pages that no longer exist.

File links

File links are links that open a document file that is stored on the Samuel Merritt College website server. Files can be uploaded using the CMS file manager. All documents should be Adobe Acrobat file format, which have a .pdf file extension. If you have any questions regarding links or need assistance in creating Adobe Acrobat files please contact the Samuel Merritt College Helpdesk at 510.869.6836 or helpdesk@samuelmerritt.edu. Files that links open should be kept up to date and accurate. Link style for file links should always be set to 'Open in a new window'.

All lists of .pdf files must include a notification that PDF files require Adobe Acrobat Reader to view and print. In addition a link to the Adobe Acrobat download site must be provided, using the image file in the main image folder.

Internal Page links

Content contributors may link to other pages inside the Samuel Merritt College website, when appropriate. Internal pages can be renamed or deleted so be sure to check these links regularly. Internal College pages should be set to 'Open in the same window'.

External Page links

If necessary, content contributors can link to pages outside the Samuel Merritt College website. It is the content publishers responsibility to ensure the credibility of the external link. These links must adhere to the standards and protocol set forth in this document. External Page links should be set to 'Open in a new window'.

Email Links

Hyperlinks which open a 'Compose Email' window from Outlook or a user's email client are called email links. Email links are currently prohibited on the Samuel Merritt College website. Email contact information should be typed out and not presented as a link. This is to avoid contributing to College spam.

Intra-Page Anchor Links

Content contributors can reference specific locations within a page using intra-page or anchor links. Anchor links should 'Open in the same window', and should always provide the anchor 'Back to Top', or a similar way for the user to negotiate back to the table of contents of the page.

Images

Content contributors can add images to web pages from the CMS image library. Images that a contributor wishes to use that are not in the image library may be submitted to the Web Development Manager for licensing approval, and any adjustments to meet image standards.

Multimedia

Flash is the preferred format for interactive media, while QuickTime is the preferred format for video media.

Accessibility