General layout of pages on the non-responsive template

There are several locations within a web page to strategically communicate information.

- **Left-hand navigation:** This refers to the column on the left hand side of a page which displays the names of pages within the section.
- **Main content area:** This should be used for the main message of the page and calls to action.
  - The main content area should contain no more than 4 buttons.
- **Top banners:** These are the images that appear at the top of a page. All banners need to be designed by UCM and should use OU photography when possible. Banners are used to add a graphic element that makes a page more visually appealing – they are not meant for extensive information or content. They should contain little or no text.
  - Home or “index” pages can contain 1 to a maximum of 4 rotating banners; sub-pages should have 1 static banner.
- **Additional content area:** This is located on the right-hand side of the page. This space should be used for additional contact information, calls to action and buttons. This area should not be used for extensive information and the length should not exceed the total length of the main content area. This area should contain a maximum of 3 buttons.
- **Quick links box:** These are only permitted on the home or “index” page of a web section. This is used for internal links relating to the particular web page.
  - A maximum of 12 links can be used in this space.
- **Top links:** This location is used for the most important information or calls to action on a given section. This is also a good place for “Meet the Staff or Faculty” pages. This content should be saved as a shared asset and added to each sub-page within the section.
- **Contact information and social media:** This information should be listed beneath the left-hand navigation, and only contain social media links that are active and regularly updated. Contact information should be provided for the main department contact. A secondary location may be added if necessary. This content should be saved as a shared asset and added to each sub-page within the section.
- **News and events:** These auto-lists will appear on the right-hand side of the home or “index” page of a web section, beneath the additional content area. These will only be displayed if there are active news or events pertaining to a web section, otherwise this area will not be displayed. This can be added or removed at any time. Event feeds will display events in chronological order, news feeds will display articles in order of creation with the most recently created on top.

General layout of pages on the responsive template

This section explains updates to the general layout of pages on the responsive template. Much of the above information also pertains to the responsive template so only important changes will be noted below.

- **Main content area:**
  - **Section home page:**
    - The main content area consists of the section title, followed by an intro paragraph, then the rest of the main content. Formatting for these sections is built into the page template and should not be changed.
- This page can contain 2-4 buttons beneath the main content area. These buttons should be used for calls to action or to highlight important pages within the section or in other internal web sections.
  - Top banners: These banners should contain no text.
    - All pages can contain a single static banner.
  - Additional content area: This section does not exist in the responsive template. Any relevant information that was located here should be relocated to the main content area.
  - Quick links box: This section does not exist in the responsive template. Any relevant information that was located here should be relocated to the main content area.
  - Top links: This section does not exist in the responsive template. Any relevant information that was located here should be relocated to the left-hand navigation.
  - Contact information and social media: There is now a secondary area on a page for the section’s location shared asset to be displayed. When viewing a page on a mobile device, the address appears at the bottom of the section’s navigation. Only one location can be displayed here.
  - News and events: These auto-lists will now appear at the bottom of the home or “index” page of a web section. The events auto-list will be located beneath the buttons, the news auto-list will be located beneath the events auto-list.

Content

- Always create content with an end goal in mind. Ask yourself, “what do I want the user to know or accomplish by visiting my page?”
- Each page should contain unique content. Avoid duplicating content on multiple pages within a section. Duplicate content may negatively impact a page’s SEO value. It can also confuse a user and make it more challenging to find the information he or she needs. In addition, duplicate content within the same page could potentially result in an ADA compliance violation.
- All pages within a section should be utilized and contain copy. For example, a left-hand navigation page which opens a menu of sub-pages when a user clicks on it, should also contain unique content. This increases the SEO value for the page and can serve as an introduction to the sub-pages beneath it.
- Content should be updated frequently for relevance and accuracy.

Collapsible boxes and tabs

Content on pages can be organized using collapsible boxes and tabs.

- Collapsible boxes:
  - Pages with collapsible boxes should have explanatory content above them, called positioning copy. This space should be used to introduce the information in the boxes and encourage the user to read further.
  - This tool should be used when there is an extensive amount of information that all belongs on the same page. This is a great organizational tool to split up the content so that users can easily locate the information they need and read more.
  - Collapsible boxes on tabs: Collapsible boxes can be used within a tab to further divide content. If you would like to use this organizational tool, please contact your UCM Account Manager for assistance in adding this to your page.
- Tabs:
  - Pages with tabs should have explanatory content above them, called positioning copy. This space should be used to introduce the information in the tabs and encourage the user to read further. The tabs themselves should be laid out in a sequence that makes sense, whether it be in order of steps to take, chronological order, etc.
○ The maximum number of tabs a page can hold is generally 4-7 on the non-responsive template (depending on factors like the length of the tab titles and whether there is content in the additional content area on the right-hand side of the page). Tabs should never be stacked on top of each other, forming two or more lines. This will happen if there are too many tabs.
○ Pages on the responsive template can contain up to 8 tabs and they will automatically stack into 2 rows.

Basic Rich Text Content

● Pre-selected headers:
  ○ In Percussion, the rich text editor has an option for pre-selected headers. Headers 1-4 appear much larger on live pages than they appear on the edit screen. Always use header 5 when using the pre-selected options.

● Fonts:
  ○ All content should be 12px, Helvetica or the operating system default font. Fonts should not be changed using inline styles.
  ○ Bold or underline may be used to emphasize very important content only. Keep in mind that a screen reader (software used by visually impaired computer users) will read bolded content first.

● Capitalization:
  ○ Content should be written using proper capitalization on the first word of a sentence. Full words should never be spelled in all capital letters for emphasis. This format should only be used if the word is an acronym or the capitalization is the official spelling for a proper name of a company, organization, etc.

● Bullets:
  ○ Unorganized lists should use closed bullets for the root items and open bullets for the child items.
  ○ Organized (numbered) lists should use standard integers (0-9) for the root and children list items.
  ○ These settings are enabled by default in the rich text editor; no special code is required to attain these specifications.

● Tables:
  ○ General: Tables should span the full width of the parent container (100% width); static widths should be avoided. Table height should be automatic. If a border is desired, use “1” in the Table Properties window.
  ○ Header: Column headers may use a bold font. The background of the header row may be gray.
  ○ Alternating colors: Table rows may have all white backgrounds or each row can display alternating colors (white and light gray). If you require a table to use alternating colors in the non-responsive template, please speak with your UCM Account Manager to have this style added. Tables in the responsive template will automatically display alternating colors.

● Links:
  ○ All links should be dark gold and underlined.
  ○ All links should be black, bold and underlined when the mouse is hovered over them.
  ○ Links should not be formatted in any way other than what is built into the template.
  ○ Links to an OU web page should be displayed in the same window. External links should open in a new window.
  ○ Links should be checked frequently to ensure they are working and accurate.

Files and Documents

● Linking to PDF files or other documents should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. If a document is uploaded to Percussion for use on a web page, it must be fully ADA Compliant.
● The best alternative option to using PDFs or other files is to incorporate the relevant information on a web page.
Google forms maybe be used as an information-gathering tool. The forms may use a background color that aligns with OU’s color scheme (beige, gold, gray, white) and should be embedded on an OU web page.

Images and Videos

All design elements (graphics, buttons, banners) must be designed by UCM, as noted in policy 488. To upload any graphics on a web section, clients should contact their account manager.

- General image guidelines:
  - Photos should never be stretched. Instead, crop images to the desired pixel dimension based on the content area prior to uploading into Percussion.
  - Utilize Oakland’s photography archive when possible, and limit the use of stock photography.
  - All images must include a Title and a descriptive Alt tag when they are uploaded to Percussion.
  - The use of images on web pages should be limited to instances where they are necessary to enhance the content of the page (for example: staff headshots).
  - Logos of external companies should only be used on OU web pages if absolutely required by the organization, and only after approval from UCM. Written consent is required for copyright compliance.

- Professional headshots:
  - Should be used on faculty/staff pages. Headshots can be scheduled for entire departments through your UCM Account Manager, or utilize the free monthly headshot form – [http://wwwp.oakland.edu/amguidebook/misc-information/monthly-headshots/](http://wwwp.oakland.edu/amguidebook/misc-information/monthly-headshots/).
  - The standard size for headshots on OU faculty/staff pages is 115 px wide by 138 px high.

- Video guidelines:
  - Videos should be uploaded to YouTube at either 1920p or 720p HD video. MP4 and MOV formats are required in an H.264 codec.
  - A video title and description should be prepared for each video. The title should be short, enticing and descriptive of the content. The description should be 2-3 sentences, explaining the video’s content and link to the section of the website where applicable.
  - All videos need a custom thumbnail to interest the viewer. YouTube allows custom thumbnails to be uploaded, so take advantage of this feature.
  - Videos may be embedded in the main content area using an <iframe> width of 100% OR linked to via buttons or text.
    - Only one video may be featured on a page.
  - Videos created for marketing purposes should be “Public” on YouTube so the general public can find and share the content. Videos whose primary use is informational (ex: commencement requirements, advising session details) should be “Unlisted” on YouTube and linked/embedded within the section’s page content.
  - All videos must be fully transcribed for ADA Compliance. A text file of the transcription must also be provided to the client’s UCM Account Manager.

- Banners:
  - There are specific dimensions for banners, depending on the type of page.
  - Non-responsive template: All banners should be 728 px wide by 200 px high.
  - Responsive template:
    - Sub-pages: 1440 px wide by 620 px high.

- Buttons:
  - Be careful not to overwhelm or confuse your user with too many buttons on a page. They should be reserved for calls to action or to highlight important pages. Instead, use links in text wherever possible.
  - There are different size options for buttons, depending on where the button will be used on a page.
  - Non-responsive template: There are 5 available button sizes.
Button size A fits three across when the additional content area is used. This button size works well for demonstrating steps a user should take when visiting your section's home or "index" page. This size does not work well in the additional content area.

Button size B fits two across on the home or "index" page when the additional content area is used. It also fits in the additional content area. This button size works well in a grid or series to highlight links to your desired next steps for the user.

Button size C fits two across on the home or "index" page when the additional content area is used. They also fit in the additional content area. This button size works well in a grid or series to highlight links to your desired next steps for the user.

Button size D fits two across on the home or "index" page when the additional content area is used. They also fit in the additional content area. This button size works well in a grid or series to highlight links to your desired next steps for the user.

Button size F fits two across on the home or "index" page when the additional content area is used. This button size works well on department home pages to draw the user into important pages on your section.

Responsive template:
- Home page buttons: All buttons on a section’s home page (regardless of how many are being used) should be 800 px wide by 600 px high. 2, 3 or 4 buttons may be used.
- Sub-page buttons: Small gold buttons are formatted at the page template level and are the only buttons that should be used on sub-pages. Clients should speak with their UCM Account Manager to request a button like this on a page.
News & Events

● News
  ○ All news articles posted to the website must follow journalistic principles. News must include the five 
  ○ All articles posted to any web section’s “news” folder will funnel up into the News at OU. There is also 
  an option to display articles on the OU home page if deemed appropriate by UCM’s editorial team. In 
  order for a news article to be featured on the home page, it must be accompanied by an image of the 
  proper dimensions (listed below).
  ○ Write headlines and event names for search engines and for people who may find the listing outside 
  of the context of your web section. For example, don’t use the event title “Info Session,” use “Study 
  Abroad Info Session.” Headlines should always:
    ■ include keywords that people would use to search for the news or event item
    ■ be enticing and in an active voice
    ■ sound clear and concise
  ○ The news page request form can be found here https://www.oakland.edu/ucm/service-request-forms/
  ○ The main image for a news story must be 480 px wide by 320 px high in order to display properly on 
  the OU home page and News at OU page. Additional images within the story may have different aspect 
  ratios.
  ○ News should not be used to post short departmental announcements.
  ○ News feeds should not contain links to external news stories. If a client wishes to highlight a news story 
  from an outside source, he or she should write a brief introductory news story that links to the outside 
  source. This allows OU to properly credit the original author of the article and avoid copyright 
  infringement.

● Events
  ○ An event calendar listing should be created for public facing events. Fill out the form on 
    https://www.oakland.edu/calendar/calendar-policy 
  to have an event listing created. Events may be 
  elevated to the Featured Events section on the OU homepage if deemed appropriate by UCM. A client 
  may also request that an event be featured. These events are chosen based on broad appeal and 
  represent Admissions, Campus Life, Academics, Arts/Culture, Campus Milestones and Alumni. In order 
  for an event to be featured on the home page, it must be accompanied by an image of the proper 
  dimensions (listed below).
  ○ The main image for an event page must be 480 px wide by 320 px high in order to display properly on 
  the OU home page.
  ○ All event pages funnel up to the main OU Calendar, therefore, an event may only be posted on one 
  individual section’s events feed. If multiple sections wish to display the same event, they may do so 
  through a text link.
  ○ If a client has more than five event requests at one time, the bulk calendar request form found here
    https://www.oakland.edu/calendar/calendar-policy should be used.
  ○ Do not duplicate an event item as a news article.

Managing SEO

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or web page in a search 
engine's "natural" or un-paid ("organic") search results. All Percussion user levels have the ability to edit content and 
page descriptions for SEO purposes.

If you are interested in optimizing specific pages of the OU website, please contact your account manager for more 
information or assistance. See below for more in-depth information.
Guidelines for meta content

- Page title
  - A page title (or title tag) is the main text that describes an online document. It appears in three key places: browsers, search engine results pages and external websites.
  - Utilize page titles containing fewer than 70 characters -- the limit Google displays in search results. Page titles longer than 70 characters will be truncated in the results.
  - All page titles need to follow this naming convention: page - section - website
    - (example: How to Apply - Graduate Education - Oakland University)

- Page description
  - Page descriptions (or meta description) are extremely important in gaining visits from search results. These short paragraphs are a content manager’s opportunity to advertise to visitors and to let them know exactly whether the given page contains the information they’re looking for.
  - Use the page description to create a compelling description that a user will want to click. The description should be between 150-160 characters.
  - Avoid duplicate meta description tags.

ADA Compliance

All content should be made as accessible as possible. Below are some basic guidelines to ensure ADA compliance, but clients should contact their account managers for further details.

- Minimize the general use of multimedia and limit use to those situations where multimedia adds value to the information and content.
- Media (ex: an audio segment) must have an alternative (ex: a text transcript).
- All graphics must use titles and alt text, which are added when an image is uploaded into Percussion.
- Fixing broken links and correcting misspellings improves usability for all site visitors and Content managers should audit pages regularly for any errors.
- Complex images, such as images that contain text, should be avoided.
- Accessibility compliance requires that all content be navigable with the keyboard alone. Navigation order is especially important for those who rely on keyboards for access. Review the tutorial WebAIM Keyboard Accessibility for information and design suggestions.
- Documents must be presented in accessible formats. Review the suggested accessibility materials for the software used to create documents. In general, acceptable fonts include Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Helvetica, or Calibri. The smallest acceptable font is 10 pt. Color contrast ratio between foreground text and background color should be at least 4.5:1.
- Extra formatting (such as background colors) should not be added at the page level. The page template and graphics provide the design elements of a page and they are designed to ensure ADA Compliance.