Moorhead Web Standards Guide

Overview

The Moorhead Web Standards Guide defines the styles, standards, and procedures for Minnesota State Moorhead websites. This is a living document and will be updated as needed to reflect evolving best practices.

Typography

The Moorhead website follows the official University Visual Identity Guidelines for primary and alternate typefaces.

Text and Color Usage

- Body text color: **Moorhead Gray (#544f47)** on a white background (#ffffff)
- Accent text color: **Moorhead Red (#c8102e)**
    - Used only for hyperlinks and approved page or section headings
    - Must be used on a white background to maintain WCG 2.1 AA contrast compliance

Font Size

The minimum font size for web copy is:

- **16px=1em, 1rem, 100%**

Color System

Primary Palette

- White: #ffffff (rgb(255, 255, 255))
- Red: #c8102e (rgb(200, 16, 46))
- Gray: #544f47 (rgb(84, 79, 71))
- Black: #000000 (rgb(0, 0, 0))

Secondary Palette

- #262626 (rgb(38, 38, 38))
- #303030 (rgb(48, 48, 48))
- #5e5e5e (rgb(94, 94, 94))
- #bababa (rgb(186, 186, 186))
- #f6f6f6 (rgb(246, 246, 246))

Accessibility Standards

All web content must meet **WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards** and comply with **Minnesota State System Office, State of Minnesota, federal and Minnesota State Moorhead accessibility policies**.

Reference Policies & Standards

The following resources define the standards and policies that govern web accessibility compliance.

- **Minnesota State Moorhead Digital & Academic Materials Accessibility Policy**
  https://www.mnstate.edu/about/policies-procedures/list/digital-academic-materials-accessibility
- **WCAG 2.1 Guidelines (W3C)**
  https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/
- **State of Minnesota Digital Accessibility Standard (MNIT)**
  https://mn.gov/mnit/government/policies/accessibility/
- **Minnesota State Accessibility Policy (Board Policy 1B.4)**
  https://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/1b04.html
- **Section 508 (U.S. Federal Law)**
  https://www.section508.gov/
- **ADA Web Accessibility Guidance (U.S. Department of Justice)**
  https://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/

Requirements

- Ensure sufficient **color contrast**
- Provide **descriptive alt text** for all images
- Maintain proper **heading hierarchy** (H1 → H2 → H3)
- Ensure full **keyboard navigation**
- Use **descriptive link text** (avoid “click here”)

Content & Copy Guidelines

Readability

- 1–4 sentences per paragraph
- 60–75 characters per line (recommended)
- Use bullet points for clarity and scannability
- Avoid dense text blocks

PDF Usage

PDFs should only be used when content must:

- Be printed, or
- Retain an exact visual format

Required Page Elements

All pages must follow the standard University layout:

- Two-column template (default)
- One-column template (as needed)

Required Components

- Header
- Footer
- Introductory paragraph clearly describing page content

Naming & Reference Standards

University Naming

- **Minnesota State University Moorhead**
  (official/legal name; no hyphen or comma)
- **Minnesota State Moorhead**
  (preferred first reference)
- **Moorhead**
  (subsequent references)
- **MSUM**
  (limited-use abbreviation—for space-constrained contexts only)

Degree Formatting

Do not use periods in abbreviations:

- BA — Bachelor of Arts
- BFA — Bachelor of Fine Arts
- BS — Bachelor of Science
- MA — Master of Arts
- MS — Master of Science
- EdD — Doctor of Education

Departments & Offices

- Spell out full names on first reference with abbreviation:
  - *Comstock Memorial Union (CMU)*
- Use abbreviation on subsequent references (no periods)

Capitalization Rules

- Capitalize official names:
  - *School of Media Arts, Design & Entertainment*
  - *Student Academic Conference*
- Use lowercase for general references:
  - *the department*
  - *the program*

Standard Terminology

Use the following preferred forms:

- Freshman
- Upper Class
- On Campus
- Online

Example:

- “The benefits of a Moorhead accounting degree…”

Links & Navigation

- Use **relative links** for internal pages
  - Example: /schoolofbusiness
- Use **absolute HTTPS links** for external sites
- Open external links in a **new tab**

Images & Media

General Guidelines

- Use high-quality images suitable for resizing and cropping
- Optimize all images for fast load times
- Preferred format: **WEBP**

Standard Image Sizes

- Main image: 1366 × 911 px
- Directory photo: 160 × 160 px

- Side-by-side content: 600 × 400 px
- Event image: 714 × 400 px

Digital Marketing

For digital campaigns (email, social media, etc.):

- Use the **Google Campaign URL Builder**
  https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder/

This enables accurate tracking in Google Analytics.

Website Platform Requirements

University CMS (Required for Official Websites)

All official University websites—including academic programs, departments, offices, and services—**must be created and maintained within the University's approved content management system (CMS).**

Requirements

- Must use official Moorhead templates
- Must be hosted on University-managed domains (mnstate.edu)
- Must follow all University web standards and accessibility requirements

Support Includes

- Site setup
- Training and documentation
- Ongoing support through the Web Team

Use of non-CMS platforms for official University websites is not permitted.

Employee and Personal Webpages

Faculty and staff may create personal or supplemental websites outside of the University CMS.

Options include

- University CMS-based personal pages (e.g., mnstate.edu/lastname)
- Stand-alone websites hosted on University servers (e.g., web.mnstate.edu)

Important

- These sites must still follow all University web standards and accessibility requirements
- These sites are not considered official University program or department websites

Website Removal Policy

Upon separation from the University:

- Access is **removed immediately**
- Website copies may be requested within **6 months**
    - University CMS sites: provided as PDFs
    - Stand-alone sites: provided as zipped files
- Websites are permanently deleted after **6 months**

Additional Information

For details about:

- Website setup
- Hosting options
- Software availability

Please contact the **Moorhead Web Team** at webteam@mnstate.edu.