

STANDARD: Outsourcing

Outsourced Website Development

Updated 9/28/22

Outsourcing the design, development or maintenance of a UTSA website is a viable option for university entities that do not have the staff needed to do the work internally. However, the utilization of multiple external website vendors across the university makes it more challenging to maintain security and accessibility standards, as well as cohesiveness in terms of visual identity/brand and user experience.

This standard provides requirements and guidelines for working with third-party website vendors to ensure all sites and web applications adhere to university policies and procedures. The following parameters apply to all outsourced UTSA websites (official and affiliated) and web applications.

VENDOR SELECTION

As outlined in UTSA's [procedure for new and redeveloped websites](#), the first step in any website project is to consult with your Division Web Sponsor and/or the university's Web Services Team to determine if site development can be handled through in-house resources, or whether outsourcing is the best option.

Based on the project scope, budget and specific needs, the Web Services Team can offer recommendations and guidance on vendor selection. Utilizing this service results in the following benefits for the requesting office:

- Higher assurance of a quality end result on a manageable timeline
- Helpful guidance regarding vendors that have worked with the university in the past, their quality of work, specializations and capacities
- Communication directly with the vendor to ensure they understand all UTSA requirements, removing some of a burden on the part requesting entity
- Assurance the site meets all compliance parameters at the outset, eliminating unnecessary redevelopment expenses and delays down the road
- Establishes a connection between the vendor and UTSA for any technical concerns or issues over the lifespan of the site

VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

As part of the evaluation process, third-party website vendors should meet the following criteria:

- **A proven ability to adhere to UTSA's [Website Accessibility Policy](#).** The vendor should have a proven track record of developing sites that conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard, making them inclusive to all UTSA community members and members of the public with disabilities. Accessibility should be included in any Request for Proposals created for UTSA website development.

- **Agreement to adhere to UTSA's website development procedures.** Selected vendors will need to be amenable to working both with the client and the Web Services Team, recognizing that UTSA makes all final decisions regarding security, data integrity and any other elements to align with university policy and established best practices.
- **A track record of building websites according to high professional standards.** Selected vendors should be well-established companies with vast portfolios of successful work for reputable organizations.
- **Inclusion in UTSA's vendor database.** New vendors to UTSA can register for the university's vendor payment system through our [Supplier Setup](#) page.

OUTSOURCED SITE REQUIREMENTS

UTSA official and affiliated websites developed by third-party website vendors must meet the following criteria:

- Site development must follow UTSA's [procedure for new or redeveloped websites](#)
- Sites must adhere to all [UTSA site requirements and criteria](#)
- Sites must follow UTSA's standard for [Content Management Systems](#) when making a CMS selection
- Sites must follow UTSA's standard for [Hosting and Security](#)
- Sites must incorporate required [Global Elements](#) and reflect the university's [logo and visual identity guidelines](#)
- Sites must follow UTSA's standard for [Website Lifecycle](#)