Web design guidelines 2009
Introduction

The new University of Nottingham website has been designed to have a specific look and feel. It is important that you read these guidelines to get a feel for how the site should look and how you should treat the content of that site. This document comes with a comprehensive set of photoshop files. Please refer to these files for the original artwork and extra visual tools.

The site should never feel content heavy. This is the reason why each page should always look extremely clean and uncluttered. The generous margins around all content areas and the intelligent use of visual elements such as the heading’s colour-coded bullets and the link circles will help you in producing pages that are extremely fast to scan and easy to read.

The second important fact to always keep in mind is the central role of photography. The beautiful, charming and inspiring location of the University’s campus has always been part of the University’s identity and reputation. As a result, the concept focusses on communicating the feeling of the campus throughout the whole user journey.

Secondly, the extended use of background photographic elements is intended to keep the site fresh and interesting. Therefore, any content or imagery that is incorrectly positioned or designed will affect the overall impact of the concept. Please see the “Photography” section of this document for more information.

These guidelines refer to example page templates to illustrate the overall design and templating approach.

Support

For queries, guidance, original artwork and visual tools please contact the University’s Web Team at web-team@nottingham.ac.uk
The visual framework

Homepage

- Global masthead
- Navigation
- Rotating features
- Background theme
- Virtual tour module
- Footer

Landing page 1

- Site-wide tools
- Campus options
- Expandable panel
- Global content modules

Additional elements:

- Secondary navigation
-Breadcrumb
- Section title
- Colour-coded content areas
- Optional corner detail
- In-page tools
- Shared resources module
The visual framework

Landing page 2

Welcome area
Content modules
Internet portal panel
Events module

Internal page

Secondary navigation, selected item
Section title
Third level navigation
Primary contents
Secondary contents
Background theme

Welcome area

Note: The above diagrams illustrate the visual framework of the University of Nottingham's website, highlighting key elements such as the welcome area, content modules, and navigation structures. The diagrams are used to explain the layout and hierarchy of information on the website, ensuring a consistent and user-friendly experience.
The visual framework

School’s sub-site: homepage

School’s navigation
The page opens the Faculty’s primary menu.

School’s content modules
Their layout and design follow the Faculty’s primary theme.
These can be displayed in three or four columns.

School’s in-page tools
The background of graduate studies.
Faculty’s primary theme.

Welcome area

School’s mainhead

Faculties, Schools & Academic Departments

Contacts and visitor information
The links are between the Faculty’s primary theme.

Background theme

School’s sub-site: expanded navigation and various content samples

School’s fully expanded navigation
a) First level
b) First level, selected here
c) Second level
d) Second level, selected here
f) Third level
i) Final level, selected here
j) Fourth level
k) Fourth level, selected here

“in this section” module
This indicates the category of a section heading.

Fully expanded breadcrumb

Quotes module

Listings module
The background theme follows the Faculty’s primary theme.
The colour palette

The website colour palette uses the main corporate blue rendered in different percentages and gradients as unique primary colour. Additional shades and gradients of black have been used to produce shadows and other subtle visual effects.

This restricted palette should be applied to all sections of the site. Exceptions to this rule are allowed only for the Undergraduate and Postgraduate sections (coded in lime green and light blue respectively), and for the individual schools’ page which follow the primary colour of their own faculty.

The colour coding is mainly applied to the key visual elements. Please find below a comprehensive list:
a) the gradient inside the rounded bullet next to each heading;
b) special content areas such as the search boxes in the prospective students page;
c) the left hand navigation edge (in third level pages and schools’ pages);
d) the background of the schools’ related tools and contact areas, located at the top and at the bottom of the page;
e) light colour gradients used in the school’s listing pages.

The web palette *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Hex value</th>
<th>Where this colour must be always used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate primary blue</td>
<td>#003766</td>
<td>All page titles, primary navigation items, site-wide tools background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary blue</td>
<td>#336699</td>
<td>All hyperlinks, secondary navigation background, site-wide tools background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Grey 1</td>
<td>#484F4F</td>
<td>Left-hand navigation panel, first level background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Grey 2</td>
<td>#2C2C2C</td>
<td>Left-hand navigation panel, expanded second level background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>#FFFFFF</td>
<td>Secondary horizontal navigation items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Grey 3</td>
<td>#333333</td>
<td>All in-page headings and body text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Grey 4</td>
<td>#666666</td>
<td>Listings results, body text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>#000000</td>
<td>Left-hand navigation, 4th level selected item background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate blue</td>
<td>#5080D1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate green</td>
<td>#09C800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>#147908</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, Law and Social Sciences</td>
<td>#461E4B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>#B9C5D3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health Sciences</td>
<td>#0095A1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>#00663B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Environment</td>
<td>#4E933C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For more information please visit the original online brand guidelines available at this address: http://www.irissociates.com/notts_dev/basicelements_colours.html
Global masthead and navigation

The global masthead is the top area of the site and includes the site-wide tools, the University's logo, the horizontal navigation (primary and secondary), and the breadcrumb.

The contents of each section in the main navigation can be previewed by simply rolling over an item. This functionality is available for the primary navigation only. When an item is clicked and the user leaves the homepage, the style of the selection will be reversed in white text on blue. This rule is not applied for sections that do not expand further deep in the site architecture. Particularly, the Homepage and the Faculties, Schools & Academic Departments section maintain their original style when selected.

Within the main site, the horizontal navigation covers the first two levels of the site architecture, while all the subsequent levels will expand on the left hand vertical panel.

The schools’ individual sub-sites will only keep the primary global horizontal navigation, while their own internal navigation will be showed on the left hand side.
School’s masthead

All individual school and department sub-sites do not feature a second level horizontal navigation and maintain only the first level with the **Faculties, Schools & Academic Department** item selected. Their relationship with the parent Faculties’ sections or with any other page that linked to them is showed in the breadcrumb only.

The school’s name is rendered below the global masthead, and comes together with a placeholder for a logo or a photography. If none of them is available for a particular school, only the name of the school will be displayed, and it will be aligned to the left margin of the page, similarly to a landing page title. If a photography is used, it must be rendered in the correct size and style (included the rounded corners). If a logo is available, this should be resized to a **maximum height of 80 pixels**.

The standard typeface and colour of the school’s title cannot be changed, and the title’s and logo’s central points should always be aligned horizontally.

Please see the **Text Styles** chapter for more information.
The layout

Homepage and overall width of the concept

Page margins

Page margins

- a maximum margin of 20 pixels (vertical) should be applied around the content area of the page.
- a maximum vertical margin of 20 pixels (vertical) should be applied above the content area.
- a maximum horizontal margin of 30 pixels (horizontal) should be applied between the columns area.
Photography

Homepage

In order to fully portray the atmosphere of the University’s campus and match the overall composition of the concept, the main picture of the homepage must comply with the following standards:

a) all shots must be in high resolution and panoramic;
b) all shots must be taken during daytime, on a sunny day;
c) the main subject of the shot should sit on the right hand side of the picture;
d) the subject of the picture should focus on the University’s campus (i.e. the Trent Building);
e) the top margin of the picture should stay clear;
f) the space occupied by the rotating feature must be rendered as full white space (or as a very light solid colour);
g) where possible, the lower part of the picture should feature an accent colour, like a green field, or a reddish-brown wood.

Please see the opposite page for a set of examples. The red items flag a wrong application of these guidelines.
Photography

All internal pages feature a background element at the bottom (a-b), while the landing pages can have an extra optional element on the right-hand side (c), just below the global masthead. Similarly to the homepage, the lower background picture must be panoramic and shot in high resolution. Moreover, it should be taken on a sunny day and have its sky background removed. Please refer to the provided example for the distribution of its structural elements.

The in-page photography placeholders come in a set of fixed dimensions and styles. In order to ensure high publishing standards, please keep in mind these simple rules:

a) avoid stereotypical subjects and make sure that genders, ethnic backgrounds and the key stakeholders are equally represented in all the categories of your picture library;
b) avoid dark and gloomy backgrounds, and always choose bright and colourful subjects;
c) avoid pixelation and blurriness, and always sample your pictures from high resolution originals.

Please see the relevant files in the visual assets library for each individual size and style.

Please find below the composition's requirements for all background themes:
a) the subject of the picture (students relaxing on the grass) should never be covered by the page;
b) both sides of the picture should show generic elements such as trees, distant buildings, etc;
c) the optional corner element can be used to add a seasonal theme to the page and must be a close shot of a generic detail, such as a tree branch, a flower, a palm, etc.
Text styles

All textual elements should be rendered as HTML text, and must use the system font VERDANA as primary typeface. Only the University’s and Ask Nottingham’s logos can be rendered as images.

Primary horizontal navigation:
Verdana regular, 11pt, 1.1em, #003366

Secondary horizontal navigation, site-wide tools:
Verdana regular, 11pt, 1.1em, #003366

Left hand navigation, all levels:
Verdana regular and bold, 11pt, 1.1em, #FFFFFF

Hyperlinks, in-page tools
Verdana, 11pt, 1.1em, #336699

Section title, School's name

**Verdana, 30pt, 3em, #003366**

Standard content heading:

**Verdana, 18pt, 1.8em, #333333**

Standard body text, listing results

Verdana, 11pt, 1.1em, #333333

Verdana, 11pt, 1.1em, #666666
The visual assets library

Global masthead, primary and secondary navigation styles

In-page elements

Left hand navigation
The visual assets library
Accessibility guidelines

Accessibility

The following accessibility considerations must be applied when developing, editing or extending the University of Nottingham HTML templates and website pages edited within the content management system.

Content

As the fundamental building block of any website it is vital to ensure that the content is carefully constructed to fit with the need of the site users. Content must be written with the target audience in mind and address them at suitable level. The use of language must be inclusive and be written so that it is as clear and simple as possible.

Colour contrast ratios

This relates to the relative luminance of the text colour and the background colour on which it is displayed.

The contrast must comply with the following minimum contrast ratios:

- 3:1 for large scale text
- 5:1 for normal sized text

Link text

The text associated with links must be fully descriptive and unique on the page within which it is placed. Where this is not possible additional supporting text must be applied to the link and hidden with CSS. This ensures that screen readers users are exposed to the full meaning and context of the link that would otherwise be inferred visually.

Text sizes

All text sizes must defined in ‘em’ units.

Text Re-sizing

Both in-page text and the website style sheets will be coded to facilitate browser-based accessibility features such as font enlargement, zoom and Windows accessibility features.

Alternative text

Site pages must be designed to enable sensible reading and navigation by screen readers, speech browsers and mobile devices. Alternative text is only applied when the image adds meaning to the context of the page and supporting copy. The ‘alt’ text attribute must be in place for screen reader users and is a requirement of good practice HTML coding. Images that do not add to the meaning of the page (for example decorative images) must contain a blank tag (alt="") to highlight this fact to screen readers.
Accessibility guidelines

Non-JavaScript alternatives

The University of Nottingham templates must apply the principle of progressive enhancement in all uses of JavaScript. This means that all functionality is available in a simplified form for all users. Additional JavaScript dependent functionality is only ever layered on top of this base HTML.

Form labels

Form labels are essential to convey the detail of forms to screen reader users. This is also best practice HTML coding and as such should be applied as standard to all forms. For example:-

<label for="firstName" title="Required">.

If a form element does not require a visual label, a label should still be applied but hidden using CSS.

CSS for layout

All layout is to be achieved using CSS (not html tables). This is to avoid prescriptive page formatting and layout. HTML tables for are for use as data tables only.

Valid XHTML/CSS

All University of Nottingham templates must use valid HTML and CSS.
http://www.validator.w3.org/

Technical Design Considerations

The templates have been engineered for use with the following browsers:

- Internet Explorer version 6 and 7.
- Safari version 2 and 3.
- Mozilla Firefox version 2 and 3.
- Opera version 9.

The templates are also designed to function on the following platforms:

- Microsoft Windows XP
- Microsoft Windows Vista
- Apple Macintosh OS X 10.4
- Apple Macintosh OS X 10.5

Any new templates or modifications to

- Extensible HTML 1.0 Strict (XHTML 1.0).
  This will be the main markup language for the construction of the site.

- Cascading Style Sheets level 2 (CSS 2).
  These will provide a consistent appearance to the page content.

Screen resolution

Vertical scrolling of the designs will depend on the amount of content on the page, but the designs will not scroll horizontally on screen resolutions of 1024 x 768 and above.