



Quality checklist

for before you send your site live

Before sending a site live, first go through your site and check it against this list.

You can use this simply as a tick list, but if you do not understand the reason for any entry, check the further information on the following pages.

- Do all pages have content?
- Where pages have multiple columns, has content been provided for all columns?
- Have all required links been added?
- Have all links been checked that they are working and do not open in new windows?
- Are the contact details in the site footer correct?
- Have all 'click here's' been replaced by meaningful descriptive links?
- Don't start consecutive bullet points or navigation labels with the same word
- Indicate links to PDFs as such
- Use PDFs instead of Word documents
- Use bulleted lists to display lists of items
- Make sure each page has a meaningful descriptive `<h1>` (main heading correctly styled)
- Make sure each page doesn't have more than one `<h1>`
- Is the page `<h1>` consistent with the navigation label used for arriving at the page?
- Have large blocks of text been broken up into chunks and correct headings and subheadings used?
- Don't use bold text instead of subheadings
- Do not centre align or justify text
- Do not write in capitals or italics
- Does each page have a unique title tag and description?
- Do all diagrams used to relay important information have accessible text versions?
- Don't break web conventions or user expectations

1. Do all pages have content?

Often sites are submitted to go live either with pages that say "content to come" or with the page content simply missing. Check that all pages have content before submitting the site for quality check.



If some pages are awaiting content, do not publish those pages until the content has been provided.

Make sure you have enough content on a page also. A page shouldn't just be one paragraph of text.

2. Where pages have multiple columns, has content been provided for all columns?

Plan the page layout before building the page. Consider which page templates and mini templates are most suitable for displaying the available content.

Do not simply pick a two-column page template for all content pages and then leave some of the right-hand columns blank.

If you do not have enough content for a two-column page template, use a single column template instead.

3. Have all required links been added?

Check that all links have been added correctly and none are broken.

4. Have all links been checked?

Often content is copied from an older site and pasted into a new site. When doing this check that all the links still work and remain relevant.

5. Are the contact details in the site footer correct?

Footer details are edited in the subsite data file. Make sure that dummy emails, addresses and blank phone numbers have been swapped for genuine details before submitting the site to go live.

6 Have all 'click here's' been replaced by meaningful descriptive links?

When linking to web content, do not use 'Click here'. This also includes variants such as 'follow this link 'more information', etc. Links should still make sense when taken out of context.

The link label should be written in such a way that you know what information you are going to get before following the link. If you are not sure whether a link has a good title, consider whether it would make sense in a navigation bar rather than in the page content. There are two main reasons for this:

- Search engine optimisation - Google and other search engines give more weight to hyperlinked text when calculating the relevance of a page to particular



keywords. Ensuring your link text is meaningful and contains keywords will benefit your search engine rankings.

- Accessibility - A screen reader reads out link text to a user. If the link text does not make sense out of context, then the link will make no sense to the user.

7. Don't start consecutive bullet points or navigation labels with the same word

Users of websites tend not to read content when they are looking for information. They scan content instead, picking up on headers and links ahead of page content.

It is therefore important, when deciding on navigation labels, to place keywords at the beginning of the link. This enables people to scan down the left-hand edge and pick out information relevant to them.

Example: Which of these navigation menus is easier to use?

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| ▪ Home | ▪ Home |
| ▪ About us | ▪ About us |
| ▪ Our prospective students | ▪ Prospective students |
| ▪ Our staff | ▪ Staff |
| ▪ Our research | ▪ Research |
| ▪ Our news | ▪ News |
| ▪ Our events | ▪ Events |
| ▪ Contact us | ▪ Contact us |

8. Indicate links to PDFs as such

Users don't like to be surprised. Always let them know what to expect when they follow a link.

If a content link opens a PDF document rather than a web page, then indicate this by using either a small pdf icon (available using a CMS style) or the letters (PDF).

It can also be beneficial to include the file size of the PDF, so that users with limited bandwidth can make an informed choice before committing to downloading it.

9. Use .PDFs instead of word documents

Don't use a Word document instead of PDF, as it relies on the user having Word installed to be able to view the file. Adobe Reader is widely available and free.

10. Use lists to display lists of items or links

When displaying lists, whether it be lists of names, list of items or list of links, use the bulleted lists options. Do not just separate the items using <p> tags.



Using lists is not only technically correct from a code point of view, it makes the list look better and easier to scan.

11. Make sure each page has a meaningful descriptive <h1>

<h1>'s (selected from the styles menu as 'Heading 1') are used to tell the user and the search engine what the page is about. They are used by the search engine to assess relevance to specific keywords searches.

If you miss the opportunity to tell Google what your page is about, Google will try and work it out from the page content. This could negatively affect your search ranking.

12. Make sure each page doesn't have more than one <h1>

If a page has more than one <h1> then you are sending a conflicting message to Google as to what a page is about. Confusing Google could potentially impact on the search engine ranking for the page.

13. Is the page <h1> consistent with the navigation label used for arriving at the page?

Websites need to build trust. Users constantly need to be reassured that if they click on a link, they have ended up at the correct destination. Having consistency between link labels and the destination <h1> this builds trust.

If a user clicked on 'people' as a navigational label but ended up at a page called 'staff look up', even though these mean the same thing in a university context, the user would be unsure as to whether they had arrived at the correct location.

14. Have large blocks of text been broken up into chunks? Have headings and subheadings been used?

Large blocks of impenetrable text are hard to read and even harder to scan. This is very off putting for a user in a hurry who is quickly trying to find information.

Use of subheadings not only improves scanability, they make it easier for search engines to assess page relevance.

15. Don't use bold text instead of subheadings

Headings and subheadings define the page structure and tell Google about what information a page contains and the relative importance of that information. The bold button in the CMS creates the tag. This is a visual element. It makes text stand out to the user but does not communicate information about page structure to Google.



16. Do not centre align or justify text

People from western countries tend to read left to right, top to bottom. When scanning page content, we usually stick visually to the hard left-hand edge, looking for indented headings or bullet points. Centre aligning text breaks this hard left-hand edge and makes scanning much more difficult.

17. Do not write in capitals or italics

Lowercase is easier to read than uppercase. If content is written in uppercase it takes the user more time to process and thus cannot be scanned as quickly.

The same goes for italics. Use italics sparingly, only when really necessary.

18. Does each page have a unique title tag and description?

Firstly, make sure that each page has a title tag and a description. Title tags should contain your page contents most important keywords. As the page content is different for each page, so should the title tag be.

The description is shown in the search results. This should be written specifically to match the page content so the user can assess search result relevance.

19. Do all diagrams used to relay important information have accessible text versions?

Where diagrams are used to explain complex ideas, we have to make sure that the information they contain is accessible to all. The information shown in the diagram should also be available in the page content or as a separate downloadable text file.

20. Don't break web conventions or user expectations

When users navigate a website, they have expectations about where things should be and how the site should work. There is an assumption that links in the left-hand navigation will open up pages from within the site. Using the left-hand navigation to link to both internal and external pages is therefore confusing for the user.

Instead, try to place external links within the content of the page. Avoid the temptation to make external links open in a new window. This takes control away from the user. The user can open external pages in a new window if they wish. Taking this choice away from the user breaks up their journey and stops them from being able to use the browser back button effectively.

Another user expectation is that play buttons on a video thumbnail will play the embedded video on the page, rather than link to a separate website or download a video file.