

Research Centre websites guidance

This document provides guidance for managing research centre websites. The recommendations within are not mandatory but are intended to offer support and structure where needed. If you have any questions or concerns, the [Research Communications](#) team is here to help.

Website purpose and audience

Your website should act as a shop window for your research centre, providing a clear overview of its work while directing visitors to sub-pages for more detailed information.

Use your centre homepage to provide a quick overview of the centre with clear signposting to sub-pages for more information on events, projects and themes.

The average time spent on a webpage across all industries is 54 seconds ([ContentSquare 2021 Digital Experience Benchmark report](#)). Therefore, it's important to get the website visitor's attention quickly and explain your centre's purpose succinctly.

Website visitors typically scan content rather than reading every word. Keep text concise and prioritise key messages.

Consider the following:

- Use clear, descriptive page titles and headings that reflect what people are searching for and help break up the text
- Make sure the Centre name, research areas, expertise and key topics are clearly stated on the homepage
- Use short succinct paragraphs and avoid large blocks of text
- Use bullet points where appropriate, and aim for less than 15 words per bullet point
- Have a clear summary at the top of important pages
- Use high-quality, relevant images to help bring your research to life. Where possible, use images that show researchers, research activity, facilities, events or research in action rather than generic stock imagery.



Consider your target audiences and the actions you would like them to take. Your target audiences may include funders, external partners, internal and/or external academics, policymakers and local communities. Try to imagine their journey and make it as easy for them as possible to engage with your centre.

Website ownership and review

If possible, each research centre website should have a named owner responsible for reviewing content and ensuring information remains accurate and up to date.

We recommend reviewing content at least every six months, and we ask all centres to do this now following the Research Centres Review.

Regularly reviewing and removing older content - particularly images - will help streamline the website, making it easier to manage reducing loading times.

Please check your:

- Team and contact information
- Research themes and projects
- News and events content
- Calls to action and engagement opportunities
- Logos

When reviewing your website, consider:

- Does the homepage clearly explain the centre's purpose and research focus?
- Is the information accurate and up-to-date?
- Are all images and logos up-to-date and in line with the University's evolved brand?
- Are there any outdated projects, publications, news stories or events that should be archived or removed?
- Are contact details correct and easy to find?
- Is it clear how visitors can engage with the centre?
- Does the website – especially the homepage - reflect the centre's current priorities and activities?

Website structure and navigation

We recommend a research centre website structure along the following lines:

- **Homepage** - provides a summary, current projects and news and signposts to sub-pages
- **About us** – consider including the history, vision, objectives, impact etc.
- **Research themes** (or projects) – option for sub-pages for projects here
- **News and events** – only if you can manage and regularly update this
- **Team/people page** – academics involved in the centre with bios, photos, contact details. A good page to include a clear call to action here to contact the team or explain how website visitors can get involved with the centre. We recommend not duplicating full staff biographies if a central profile page already exists - a short, centre-specific description and link will be cleaner and easier to maintain.

The above list is not exhaustive or mandatory, and different centres may wish to have more information available on their websites to cover programmes, facilities, publications or partnerships.

We recommend limiting your main navigation menu to 5-7 items. Larger menus can overwhelm visitors and make it harder for them to find key information. This may dilute engagement overall. Additional pages can be made easily accessible by having them as sub-pages available via a dropdown in the main menu.

Please review your navigation menu to ensure that all links are relevant, up-to-date and organised in a logical order.

You can re-order your website menu by going **Edit > More > Sub pages > Reorder (button)**. You will see the list which you can drag and drop to change the order.

Visitors typically pay most attention to the first items in a navigation menu, so place your most important pages first.

Re-ordering pages and files

below <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/> ?

☐ Show non-visible pages & files ?

☐ Show deleted pages & files

Click and drag pages and files up and down to re-order them in the local navigation.

 Research News
 Recognition
 Research Partnerships
 Support for Researchers
 Our Research Facilities
 Our Research Impact
 Research Culture
 Warwick's Interdisciplinary Research Spotlights

If you wish to remove a page from your navigation menu, this can be done by selecting **‘Edit page properties’** and unticking **‘Show in local navigation’**.

News and Events

If a website displays old news or events, or has no events to display, it can appear outdated and irrelevant, leading visitors to believe that the centre is inactive - even if this isn't the case.

Please review your news and events feeds. If these are not being updated regularly, we would recommend removing them from public view or at least reducing their prominence on your page (eg. Not embedding the feed on the centre homepage).

If you have occasional news and events which you would like to shout about but you don't have the capacity to manage your own feed, please contact the [Research Communications team](#). We are here to help amplify your research, and we can support with sharing it on a range of channels including a [central news feed](#) and regular newsletters which reach a large internal and external audience.

Call to Action

Consider the actions you would like visitors to take and make it clear how they can engage with the centre.

Depending on the centre this could be through:

- Opportunities for collaboration
- Job opportunities
- Funding calls
- Subscribing to newsletters
- Events (open to internal or external visitors)
- Contact the centre: if you don't feel you can offer any of the above, we recommend that all centres provide **clear contact details** for people to get in touch

Accessibility

Having an accessible website is essential to align with university requirements and the standards we need to adhere to. The University offers a bank of [Digital Accessibility resources](#) to help you gain further understanding and ensure your webpages are compliant.

Some things to consider include:

- Use meaningful page headings and clear page structures
- Provide alternative text for images
- Use descriptive link text instead of "click here"
- Avoid large blocks of text
- Avoid providing downloadable PDFs or documents to share information. Hosting the information on a webpage instead

When writing any text for the website, you need to make sure that it is readable and understandable for all our audiences. This helps non-native speakers, as well as users who process information differently.

We recommend that you:

- Keep your text at a reading age of Grade 9 or below
- Keep your sentences under 25 words, and paragraphs under 50 words
- Avoid difficult words, metaphors, puns, contractions, abbreviations and acronyms

For more information, please visit the [Digital Accessibility hub](#).