

The Student-Centered Starter Kit is a series of tools that you and your colleagues can use to explore the content and design of your website through the lens of prospective and current students. These worksheets are intended to be considered in sequential order, but can also be independently deployed depending on your current needs. Above all, the tools provide easy-to-use methods and prompts that will help you bridge the gap between your prospective student's desires and your college's priorities, providing opportunities and insights for decision making and resource allocation related to your website.

Worksheet content developed by SmallBox.



Web Audit

INTRO (PURPOSE + BENEFIT)

This audit will help you quickly identify the problem and opportunity spaces of your website as you begin to generate and prioritize ideas for student-centered improvements.

CONTENT & BRAND

- Upon entry on the website, it is immediately clear what you do and who you do it for. (Review homepage and all landing pages).
- Visual brand is consistent across the website, including brand colors, fonts, and use of icons and graphics.
- Pages are scannable and not overly dense with text. Page design is not cluttered (organized, enough white space).
- Images and graphics render quickly at the appropriate resolution.
- Images and text are inclusive and representative of your audiences.
- Calls To Action (CTAs) are consistently and clearly labeled. They are easily identified on visual scan.
- Students and prospective students can easily and quickly find key information.
- Website copy is consistent in tone and uses language appropriate for your audiences.
- Repeating information (such a contact information, event information, etc.) is consistently presented throughout the site.
- Visitors are able to freely navigate the site without forced interruptions such as pop ups.

NAVIGATION & CONTENT STRUCTURE

- Main navigation is intuitive for your audiences, using vocabulary that's appropriate to them.
- Navigation is identical across all pages that have it.
- Navigation menu contains all important pages for your audiences.
- Pages are clearly titled and organized for your audiences, using vocabulary appropriate to them.
- Pages are linked to each other. It is easy to get back and forth between content.
- The site has flat architecture and any page can be reached in 4 clicks or less.
- The header logo links to homepage on all pages of the website.

FUNCTIONALITY

- Critical actions such as searching for degree programs are easy to accomplish for users.
- Repetitive actions such as managing their application process are effortless for users.
- Hyperlinked text is presented consistently.

- Clickable elements such as links and buttons have a hover state to indicate action.
- Links that lead offsite are clearly labeled.
- Links that download documents are clearly labeled.
- Information is presented as web content and not downloadable content, where possible. (Minimize PDFs).
- Forms are clearly labeled.
- Form fields show errors before the form is submitted.
- Success message is generated when forms are submitted.
- Calls to Action are distinct and descriptive (Avoid “Learn More” or “Click Here”).
- All functionality works consistently across relevant browsers. (Consult analytics data or [browser market share statistics](#))

COPY AND TEXT

- Fonts are legible in all forms - all caps, italics, bold, etc.
- Font styles are consistently used.
- Text is clear and concise written in a tone and vocabulary appropriate for audience.
- Text does not exceed 75 characters per line for optimal readability.

ACCESSIBILITY

- HTML tags indicate headings, subheadings, lists, call-out text, etc.
- Body text at least 16 px
- Text contrast ratio 4:5:1
- Bold and linked text contrast ration of at least 3:1
- Line spacing at least 1.5
- Anchor text is clear.
- Text can be enlarged or made smaller.
- Images have detailed alt text.
- Audio & video have subtitles or transcripts.
- Can pause, mute, or exit audio and video content.
- No images of text or tables
- Can navigate and function with only keyboard.
- Page titles are present, accurate and informative
- Headings are used to break up the hierarchy of the page
- Headings are accurate and informative as labels for the sections they describe

Online tools to check accessibility are available online for free, including <https://coolors.co/contrast-checker/112a46-acc8e5>

RESPONSIVE DESIGN

- Site content adapts to different screen sizes including mobile devices, tablets, laptops, desktops, and large displays.
- Typography scales for different screen sizes to ensure optimal flow of content and avoid unwanted breakpoints.
- Interactive elements (including the mobile menu) have a minimum clickable area of 46 pixels.
- Content stacks neatly on mobile devices without unnecessary horizontal scrolling.
- Relationships between content and corresponding images when stacked.
- Pages not excessively long when viewed on smaller screens.
- Connection between user interaction and results are clear (Carousels, tabs, etc).