

# The Enrolment-Optimised University Website

## A 10-Part Self-Test on Key Website Features and Performance Standards



### Honing your most important recruitment tool

Survey research shows that a university’s website is the primary source of information about universities students are considering. Accordingly, few other factors have as great an impact on students’ impressions of you.

Unfortunately, many universities have struggled to keep up with the innovations that have transformed website design in recent years. This is understandable. Website modifications, challenging under any circumstances, are doubly so when it comes to higher education, due to the organisational complexity of universities.

EAB’s new white paper, “The Enrolment-Optimised University Website,” cuts the challenge down to size by helping you identify targeted interventions that can rapidly and meaningfully improve the performance of your website. This infographic shares highlights from the diagnostic toolkit around which the white paper is built.

**75+** additional self-test questions included in the white paper

### Ensuring maximum online visibility for your institution

1	<b>Search engine optimisation</b> Are you doing all you can to ensure that university-bound students are finding you online?	<b>Keyword Optimisation</b>	We compare ourselves to our competitors	We compare our search-rank performance for key enrolment-related queries (e.g., universities in our region offering our most strategically important courses of study) with that of our competitors; we rank at least as high as they do for these queries.
		<b>Infrastructure</b>	Our enrolment team has SEO experts	We have staff proficient in identification of SEO-relevant web page errors, including technical errors, navigation problems, and issues related to content quality; keyword and share-of-voice analysis; and assessment of mobile web-page load time (ours and competitors’).

### Effectively engaging key audiences

2	<b>Content</b> Are you addressing questions students care about most, in a format they favour?	<b>Messaging</b>	We never show “unbuffered” cost information	Information on cost of attendance and other topics that might trigger student concern over debt never appears without value information adjacent to it (including, for example, information on outcomes).
		<b>Formats</b>	We use advanced multimedia formats	Our enrolment-active pages use highly interactive and immersive media that combine different formats (photos, text, video, etc.), leveraging the unique strengths of each and giving users with different learning styles maximum opportunity to engage.
3	<b>Information architecture</b> Can prospective students quickly find the information that matters most to them?	<b>Site Organisation</b>	Our website is organised with prospective students in mind	The organisation of our website mirrors the interests and priorities of prospective students and their parents. All enrolment-active pages feature navigation elements specific to key audiences (prospective students and parents) and enrolment-critical topics.
		<b>Troubleshooting</b>	We take multiple approaches to understanding navigation problems	We analyse data from the following sources to identify information prospective students are looking for and to reveal problems they are having finding it: user testing, Google Analytics, surveys, and queries submitted by students via our site’s internal-search feature.
4	<b>Mobile optimisation</b> Is use of your website equally engaging on all device types?	<b>UX Standards</b>	It is easy to see and interact with our site on a phone	Anyone looking at our site on a phone can find content on key enrolment topics in under 30 seconds from anywhere on our site. Pinching and zooming are never required to view content on our enrolment-active pages or to perform key actions.
		<b>Editorial Focus</b>	Our enrolment-active pages focus on essentials	We pare down material included on our enrolment-active pages to the absolute essentials, to improve ease of navigation on phones and to help avoid cluttering mobile layouts. This process is informed by clear criteria we have about which content matters most, and why.
5	<b>Website analytics</b> How effectively are you using website data to boost audience engagement?	<b>Data Capture</b>	We capture website interaction at the level of the individual user	Our information systems capture data on individuals visiting enrolment-active pages on our website; data on their interactions with our website across successive visits is attached to their records, creating a detailed profile that evolves over time.
		<b>Prospect Identification</b>	We can tell which visitors to our site are prospective students	We use data and analytics (e.g., pixel tracking) to identify students from our prospect pool among anonymous visitors to our site.
6	<b>User testing</b> How well do you understand what students like and don’t like about your site?	<b>Frequency</b>	We regularly evaluate our website via user testing	We ask key audiences, including both prospective students and their parents, to user-test our website’s enrolment-active pages at least once per year and whenever major changes to our site are planned. Our test groups reach across a full demographic spectrum.
		<b>Facilitation</b>	We train our facilitators	Our testing is facilitated by individuals who have at least basic familiarity with related best practice, including how to design effective testing prompts.

### Cultivating a capable and responsive web team

7	<b>Personnel</b> Does your organisation have the right staff to ensure optimal website performance?	<b>Enrolment Team</b>	Our enrolment team has sufficient website expertise	We can easily and reliably execute the following functions for enrolment-active pages on our universities website: front-end development, CRM integration, content creation, search engine optimisation (SEO), content strategy, and website analytics. If sufficient capacity cannot be secured from institution-level staff, it is provided “locally” by enrolment-team staffers and/or contractors.
8	<b>Organisational effectiveness</b> Are you doing all you can to ensure efficient and impactful cross-departmental collaboration?	<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	We use evidence to engage academic department heads	We use data to help secure the cooperation of academic department leaders when making changes to enrolment-active academic programme pages, including percentage of academic programme page traffic originating on the admissions page; benchmarked engagement metrics for academic programme pages, including bounce rate; and qualitative feedback on academic programme pages gathered from prospective students.
9	<b>Performance assessment</b> Do you know how effectively your website is serving your enrolment goals?	<b>Enrolment-Active Pages</b>	We track and report key performance metrics on a monthly basis	Traffic metrics we track include daily page views (total, unique, and percentage new users) and sources of traffic (organic, email, referral, etc.); engagement metrics we track include bounce rate, average time on page, and percentage of users retained; and technical metrics we track include average page-load time and percentage of pages with critical errors.
10	<b>Systems infrastructure</b> Do you have the right systems in place to support optimal website performance?	<b>Connections Across Systems</b>	Our systems talk to each other	We have built out automated data connections between our content management system (CMS) and the other systems we use to gather, store, and analyse data on prospective students, including our customer relationship management (CRM) system. These connections enable us to associate all data on our interactions with a particular student to a single record for that student.