

## **OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND: What's the big picture?**

**Write a concise overview of the topic, problem, or issue, including relevant historical or background information that sets the context for the research.**

- What does “Navigation” mean in this research?
  - Website navigation is the act of clicking and looking through resources on the internet, such as the various pages that make up a website. Users navigate websites using a web browser and clicking on links that transport them to other pages when clicked.
  - Navigation also includes acts such as searching google or a website for a specific page that is needed.
  - Intrasite navigation is defined navigation within a website and its provided resources.
  - Intersite navigation is defined by navigation through an external source, such as a search engine or a site with a gathering of external links.
- The Willamette website serves as a primary place for prospective students to gather information, make inquiries, and apply for various graduate programs. As plans to redesign the website are underway, understanding the current site's strengths and weaknesses in terms of navigation is critical.

## **OBJECTIVE: What is the purpose of this research project? It should answer the question, “Why are we doing this research?”**

- The research seeks to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of navigating to various inquiry forms and applications on the graduate website, particularly the MBA website ([willamette.edu/mba](http://willamette.edu/mba)) with the aim of informing the navigation design of the future website.

## **PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the classifications of participants that this research looks for?**

- Prospective graduate students.
- Consider current Willamette students not in their senior year, or those who are unfamiliar with Willamette's graduate programs
- Junior, Sophomore, and First year WU students

## **RESEARCH QUESTION(S): What is the specific question that we are seeking to answer?**

- How efficiently can users navigate to inquiry forms and applications on the graduate website?
- What navigation barriers or challenges do users face on the current site?

## **HYPOTHESIS: What might be potential theories about the research question?**

- It is difficult to find RFI and application links on the current website, especially in the MBA section of the website.
- Current website design elements might be impacting the user's navigation experience.

## **SCOPE: What are the boundaries of the research? Geography, timeframe, segments of audience, or other relevant parameters.**

- The research will focus solely on the MBA areas of the website including willamette.edu/mba and subpages.

## **METHODOLOGY: Guidance on preferred methods (qualitative vs. quantitative, survey, focus groups, analysis, etc.)**

- [Pre-Survey](#)
  - We will administer a pre-survey to participants before the usability test in order to gauge their previous knowledge or experience navigating the MBA website
- Usability Test (Synchronize: on zoom, recorded)
  - Usability tests will consist of a recorded zoom meeting where participants' attempts to navigate the MBA website will be recorded, and data including timestamps, pauses, and auditory descriptions of thought processes will be recorded as data.
  - Usability tasks will be created by researchers, for example: from the MBA main page, please locate or go to [name of form] form.
- Post-Survey
  - We will administer a post-survey to participants after the usability test to know their opinion and feedback on how the usability test went and what are the design recommendations for the MBA site (focuses on navigation)
- Analysis: Review zoom recordings, mark timestamps, compiling pre-survey & post-survey answers
  - We hope to create a report and presentation at the end of the semester to our class and WITS staff.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA HANDLING:** Directions related to the confidentiality of the research data and/or findings, as well as specific requirements related to storage, sharing, etc.

- All data obtained will be anonymized, with no direct references to any individual participants. Findings will be stored securely with access restricted to authorized personnel only.
- At the outset of any studies, participants will be informed that their participation has no bearing on their admission to the university, positive or negative.

**DELIVERABLES:** Clearly list what is expected at the end of the research project. Report, presentation, raw data, analysis, recommendations, etc.

- Report or presentation analyzing or summarizing key findings.

**TIMELINE:** Provide key milestones and deadlines, from the start to the end of the research project.

- Project follows class schedule - through December 2023

Date	To Do's:
Oct 4 2023	Submit Project Proposal
Oct 4-9 2023	Create Pre-survey & Post-survey Draft Submit IRB form
TBD	Create Usability Tasks Draft
TBD	Find participants (administer consent form & pre-survey)
TBD	Conduct usability tests
TBD	Data analysis (review zoom recordings, etc.)

**BUDGET:** What is the available budget for the research project?

- \$0

**CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS:** Any restrictions or challenges anticipated or already known that might affect the research? This could relate to budget, time, data collection, etc.

- Limited time frame for study completion.
- No budget for participation incentives.

**ASSUMPTIONS:** What are the assumptions of this project?

- Users actually navigate the site (as opposed to just search).
- The website's navigation will remain unchanged during the research timeframe.

**CONTACT:** Who are the people that could be beneficial to the researcher to understand the topic or context better?

- JR Tarabocchia
  - 503.327.4219
  - [jtarabocchia@willamette.edu](mailto:jtarabocchia@willamette.edu)
  - Chris will add JR to Discord and/or create google group to communicate

**QUESTIONS:** What questions do we need to ask/answer? What is good to know?

- willamette.edu/mba
  - 2 program flavors: Early Career, Career Change; and MBA for Professionals
  - Form URLs (there may be additional ones)
    - <https://grad-apply.willamette.edu/register/?id=9986ef44-4302-4357-9a57-4b7069f27bff>
    - <https://grad-apply.willamette.edu/register/request-info>
    - <https://grad-apply.willamette.edu/register/mba-rfi>
    - <https://grad-apply.willamette.edu/register/?id=30a3da07-546e-4dc7-a40e-02fd863e5efa>
    - <https://grad-apply.willamette.edu/register/mba-msds>
    - <https://grad-apply.willamette.edu/register/one-year-mba-info>