

Visibility of system status

The system status on the home page is visible but the tabs are too crowded in the middle of the page. This interferes with the “whats happening section”. I wasn’t sure whether clicking on the tabs would make the top change or the bottom of the page change. However, when you click on them, you can tell where you are at because the page changes colors according to the tab you select.

On the footer, there are some links that lead you to other pages with more information. They do have labels on the top of the page, but they can be overlooked because they are the same font and color as the rest of the text. There are no lines separating page titles to the rest of the information. Only the size of the text separates the page title to the rest of the information, which can cause some confusion. There are also different tabs on the contact and help pages than in the home page which might confuse the user about where to go and how far he/she has traveled.

Match between system and the real world

The page speaks the users language. Its useful for parents and students researching the university. There is nothing too fancy about the wording. There are no acronyms or secret words that a general user shouldn’t know when visiting the site.

User control and freedom

The biggest problem I had with user control is that the home page looks so different from the rest of the pages. The tabs are so different that the user has to go all the way back home just to have an idea of the path that they wondered on. The website would be a lot more useful if there were more breadcrumbs because I had to use the back button on the browser a lot more than any other button.

Consistency and standards

There is a news and events section that I wasn’t sure if it contained information exclusively about the university or about the whole country. After looking at some articles, I believe that the news was about the country. The site should include information that specifies where the news is coming from. Since the site is a University website, I assumed there would only be news about the school.

There were also some consistency issues about the different pages on the site. The home page was the only site that looked like itself. Other pages were similar to each

other, but not to the home page. This can make the user believe he/she has gone to another site not belonging to the university.

Error prevention

I think the site doesn't do a very good job at informing the users about the errors. It does a good job at telling the user there was an error, but not what caused it or how to fix it. Some of the search bars tell the user no results were found or they don't understand what the user means, but not what the user can change to make their search more effective.

Recognition rather than recall

The user has to recall what page they are on. There are indicators of what page you are on but the user will not remember which pages he/she has been to so far. There should be an easily available navigation bar so that the users can see where they came from and where they are going. This will also make it easier for the user to move around the page and back to where they were first. Some of the titles are not specific which might have the user recalling their names.

Flexibility and efficiency of use

There are some accelerators on the pages which make the site more efficient for students and staff. They are on the bottom of the page which is fine that they are not that visible because its for regular users and they will eventually find the information they need a lot faster. The search bar might be useful for someone to find something they know is on the page. They have a A-Z section. This is useful for someone experienced with using the site.

Aesthetic and minimalist design

Some of the information on the pages is very cramped. A lot of the links are very close to the main information on the page, which might make the user not want to read anything at all. This affects the visibility and the hierarchy of the categories. The homepage is very simple and a lot easier to find information.

Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

If the site receives an unidentified URL, it effectively guides the user to fix the error. The site contains plain language understandable to anyone who speaks English.

Also, the site suggests some solutions about what the user might have typed in. It is helpful that this page keeps its consistency because the user can see how to go back home on the tabs. The color change to dark blue helps the user by letting them know something does not fit with the other pages.

Help and documentation

The system does provide help on the bottom of the page. It is effectively placed among other similar categories to help the users. These links lead to other pages that help categorize larger data sets. The contact information is right next to the help button, which is useful if you have any other questions. Once you are on the bottom of the page, you can contact the university and look for more help. Its nicely placed in case you are not interested in that information.