

## Design for Interaction Week 6: Screen Design Exercise

Today you will imagine that you represent a company that wishes to win the contract for redesigning the website for the University of the West of Scotland ([www.uws.ac.uk](http://www.uws.ac.uk)). Your task is to produce a new home page screen design for the UWS website plus a suggested layout for the site's main section pages. You could do this either individually or in a group (of no more than three members). The first stage of your design process should be to analyse the current UWS site and try and understand its workings.

What do you need to consider? Well for a start there is how effectively the screen space is used and the overall screen layout. You will also need to think about what options are offered to users. The current University web site tries to deliver a variety of messages to the various potential audiences that the institution needs to address, and therefore has the various options grouped in a particular way. Can you see why this grouping has been used; are there alternative groupings which could be more effective in delivering the site's key messages? It also has multiple pathways to get to the same items of information – could these be organized more efficiently or clearly? Does the current site follow the principles and guidelines of the lectures on usability and screen design? How could you make it better?

You should also look at the websites of other universities, both local and further afield for purposes of comparison. You might find that some of them do things quite differently to UWS. Can you think reasons why this might be the case – for example, to do with the structures of these institutions, or the markets they might be specifically aiming for?

Using a drawing application, or paper and pencil, produce a set of screen prototypes which could be used as a basis to pitch for the site redesign contract. Include layouts for a range of pages in your newly designed site. Discuss your designs with a lab demonstrator, and retain your work for possible incorporation into your assessment portfolio. You should also create a Word document giving your analysis of the current UWS site design and discussion of how it compares with competitor websites, as well as the rationale for the design prototypes you have produced.