

Web Production Specialist; Office of the Vice President for Research

Job Title: Web Administrator 2	Position Title: Web Production Specialist
Reports to: Communications Director, OVPR	% Effort or Wkly Hrs: 100%
Department: Office of the Vice President for Research	

Position Overview:

Background: The vice president for research (VPR) is the Institute's senior research officer and has overall responsibility for research administration and policy at the Institute. The VPR sets MIT's strategic research direction, fosters an outstanding research environment for faculty, students, and staff, and enables major multidisciplinary research initiatives. The VPR is responsible for research integrity and compliance and plays a central role in the Institute's research relationships with the federal government, industry, and other sponsors. The VPR oversees MIT Lincoln Laboratory and more than a dozen interdisciplinary research laboratories and centers. In addition, Research Administration Services, the Office of Strategic Alliances, Transactions & Translation, the Office of Research Computing and Data, the International Scholars Office, the Office of Postdoctoral Services, and the Division of Comparative Medicine, among other units, report to the VPR. To learn about the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), please visit <https://research.mit.edu/>.

This position: The Web Production Specialist, a member of the VPR Communications team, is a versatile digital/editorial project manager who maintains and enhances the websites (or other digital communications platforms) of the Office of the Vice President for Research. The OVPR currently maintains 10 public-facing websites (e.g., research.mit.edu, ras.mit.edu, coi.mit.edu, postdocs.mit.edu, others) and an intranet, all built on Drupal and externally hosted. These materials address a variety of complex policy topics and service areas. The Web Production Specialist oversees the content management system (CMS); executes and validates changes, in conjunction with an outside web development vendor; and provides advice to the Web Communications Manager and the Communications Director regarding the technical execution of improvements to the architecture, presentation, functionality, accessibility, security, upkeep, and overall coherence of OVPR websites. On an ongoing basis, in consultation with the relevant subject experts and the Web Communications Manager, this position takes a proactive and hands-on approach to ensure the OVPR websites provide content that is timely, accurate, clear, and user-centric. For certain sites, the Web Production Specialist will train designated staff colleagues to maintain the content in Drupal, providing ongoing guidance as needed; however for most of the sites, the Web Production Specialist is the person directly responsible for staging and publishing approved changes in the CMS. The Web Production Specialist will also be directly involved in the production of any new OVPR websites, or redesigned or rebuilt sites, working with the Web Communications Manager and external or internal web developers to ensure the timely delivery of high-quality products that are aligned with best practices and that support the VPR's strategic goals. The position draws on technical knowledge, good marketing sense, excellent interpersonal communication skills, meticulous attention to detail, awareness of best practices in web development and design, and an ability to synthesize input to generate creative solutions.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities (Essential Functions):

1. Implement, maintain, and monitor the content, functionality (e.g. webforms, links, search), accessibility standards, and access restrictions of the OVPR websites, via the content management system (CMS) and peripheral file storage systems.
 - Integrate efforts with the workflow of the broader Communications team and subject-matter experts to proactively identify the need for changes, follow appropriate approval processes, and coordinate any changes with broader communications objectives or time-sensitive announcements.
 - Proofread content and consistently apply an editorial style guide.
 - Execute changes accurately and on time, validate successful implementation, and keep stakeholders apprised.
 - During periods when major web projects are underway — potentially including full-scale redesign and redevelopment of VPR websites — it will be necessary to perform work associated with those projects alongside continuing, time-sensitive work on existing sites.
 - It will occasionally be necessary to publish changes outside of normal working hours, typically with some advance notice.
2. Manage the work of outside web development vendor(s) on projects such as upgrades, changes to design or functionality, troubleshooting efforts, exploratory projects, and new sites. This will require a strong understanding of core concepts in web development and design, strong project management skills, and excellent communication with outside vendors, the Communications team, MIT Information Systems & Technology, and non-technical stakeholders.
 - Scope, define, and communicate action items for outside developers in alignment with Communications goals and specs.
 - Advise the vendor on prioritization and sequencing, within resource constraints.
 - Oversee execution of work, monitor progress, assist with troubleshooting, and evaluate whether actions have been completed fully and successfully.
 - Communicate between developers and stakeholders regarding progress toward execution. Elevate to the Communications Director any gating/decision points or roadblocks in the project.
 - Develop and personally execute a suitable testing plan for each change.
 - The Web Production Specialist is expected to be the first responder for any website outages/issues. This position monitors the sites for signs of problems, swiftly brings these to the attention of the web development vendor or hosting service as needed, identifies and informs affected users or stakeholders, monitors progress toward resolution, and validates and confirms resolution. This time-sensitive responsibility will occasionally require attention outside of normal working hours.
3. Propose and advise on new approaches and solutions to advance VPR goals.

- Keep up to date on evolution of best practices in areas such as AI, SEO/AEO, accessibility, design, and security, in order to proactively suggest improvements to the websites.
- Contribute creatively to design discussions (e.g. wireframing, user journeys) and conception of future web projects, likely to include a full-scale redesign of the OVPR websites.
- Participate holistically in supporting the goals and priorities of the Communications team, with substantive awareness of the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the MIT research enterprise, and how these translate into operational/business requirements.

Other duties as assigned.

Supervision Received:

Reports to the Communications Director for the OVPR. Will receive work assignments and additional supervision from the Web Communications Manager.

Supervision Exercised:

No staff supervisory responsibility. Along with the Communications Director and the Web Communications Manager, this position manages vendor/contractor relationships (e.g., web design and development, research/consultants, web hosting, or related services).

Qualifications & Skills:

MINIMUM REQUIRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Bachelor's degree.

Minimum of three years of experience in web production, using content management systems including Drupal.

Strong knowledge of, and ability to communicate clearly about, web development approaches, principles, and best practices. (However, significant coding is not an expectation of this position.)

Experience in bringing digital communications materials (such as webpages, PDFs, videos, graphics, etc.) into alignment with accessibility best practices.

Outstanding ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously.

Strong writing and editing skills. Ability to distill complex information into clear and precise summaries.

Excellent interpersonal and communication skills essential. Ability to work independently and as part of a team, and interact collegially with a wide variety of individuals.

Facility using standard Microsoft Office tools, Google collaborative tools, and site monitoring tools (such as Google Analytics, Site Improve, or similar). Facility with HTML. Basic graphics editing capability.

Tact and discretion in handling sensitive or confidential information.

An appreciation for the distinctive culture and values of MIT.

PREFERRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:



Experience successfully executing or project-managing a website redesign/rebuild from beginning to end with an outside design/development vendor.

Experience managing a large, information-dense website is preferred.

Experience working in higher education. Exposure to research administration or other policy-driven aspects is a plus.

Hybrid work arrangement considered.