

Visual Style Guide and Branding Policy Manual

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Why are visual identity standards important?



Over the past **one hundred years**, MTSU has grown from a small southern teachers college into a major state university with a national and international presence. One of the largest and most diverse public universities in the South, MTSU attracts nontraditional students, nontraditional students returning to school from the work-force, encourage distance learning, recruit graduate students from abroad, and retain faculty with diverse backgrounds. Our University family consists of tens of thousands of students, alumni, faculty and staff, friends, and supporters.

The colleges, departments, and programs of MTSU have strong individual identities. However, **it is essential for the University itself to present a consistent and unified brand** that builds on these successes, inspires new ones, and allows MTSU to continue into a second century with momentum and pride. Our brand is our promise. By sharing a common identity, we send a message that we are a single entity with one goal: being **the best comprehensive university in Tennessee**.

The process of branding builds **strength through consistency**—in the message and in action. Consistency ensures that the public perception of MTSU reflects our personality, mission, and educational offerings and differentiates MTSU from seemingly similar institutions. A unified voice is essential to presenting our message in a way that people will respect and remember.

This branding guide has been developed to

- present MTSU clearly and appropriately to multiple audiences,
- help units within the University present themselves consistently,
- provide a way for units within the University to enjoy the benefits of marketing under the MTSU brand, and
- offer visual tools to help MTSU stand out from competitive institutions.

Who should use this guide?

Every communication from the University reflects on the institution as a whole, and **every person sending out a University communication** is a guardian of MTSU's public image. **The MTSU brand should be a distinctive signature providing consistent representation of who we are.** If Middle Tennessee State University is to maintain a consistent image of quality, it is imperative that the University community adhere to established guidelines in respect to graphic standards, marks, and colors.

Well-prepared communication takes time. For help with any form of printing, publishing, or design, contact **Creative and Visual Services at 898-2896**. Questions about advertising or the MTSU brand should be directed to the **Marketing and Communications Office at 494-7800**. Questions about licensed use of MTSU's trademarked and registered logos should be directed to our **Collegiate Licensing Company representative at 494-8652**.

Points to remember

Each area of MTSU has different needs for print, web, and other types of media. This policy manual contains examples of various materials using appropriate colors, marks, and fonts as well as examples of improper usage.

The MTSU wordmark, seal, athletic symbols, and logomark are the only graphics approved to represent the University. **Colleges, departments, schools, offices, and other individual academic units are not permitted to develop and use logos** outside of the MTSU brand. The **MTSU seal** is for presidential-level and formal documents. It is used on diplomas, legal documents, official announcements, and certificates and is not available for departmental, office, student, or other uses.

The official wordmark and MT logomark **can be ordered via the Creative and Visual Services website** at www.mtsu.edu/publications/wordmarks.php. Creative and Visual Services staff can also help plan and produce printed and other materials while ensuring that branding guidelines are met. Please review the policies and procedures section of www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices. The Information Technology Division's web applications team can assist in planning electronic media. If producing materials for a desktop printer or multifunction device, Creative and Visual Services personnel are available to offer guidance.

MTSU Printing Services (898-2924) is the default printer for MTSU and is the only printer authorized to produce letterhead and business cards. To obtain an authorization number for printed pieces (required by the Tennessee Board of Regents), contact Creative and Visual Services (898-2896).

Design Standards for Print Publications

1. Middle Tennessee State University should be clearly and prominently identified on the cover/front panel of every publication, either by the full name or by the official wordmark.
2. The "True Blue" mark must also appear in all MTSU publications.
3. To promote a consistent visual identity and protect trademark licensing agreements, MTSU logos and marks may vary in size but cannot otherwise be altered, tampered with, modified, or overprinted, as described later in this manual. The Director of Creative and Visual Services (Marketing and Communications) must approve all commercial use of the wordmark.
4. Official MTSU marks appear in black or black and (PMS 300 or its equivalent) blue. The marks can be reversed in white out of colored backgrounds. Other colors are not permitted.
5. Only licensed vendors can produce items that bear the MTSU registered marks or name. The appropriate registration or trademark notation should appear next to the mark or name of the University. For more information about appropriate use of Middle Tennessee State University's federally registered trademarks, contact our Collegiate Licensing Company representative, Erika Austin, at 615-494-8652 or Erika.Austin@mtsu.edu.
6. A link to the MTSU web site (www.mtsu.edu) should appear in all publications.
7. **An equal opportunity statement is required by the Tennessee Board of Regents** to be on all materials for external audiences. Creative and Visual Services will provide this statement upon review and approval of the proposed publication. (See www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices.)
8. An **authorization number** is required for all publications for external audiences. Authorization numbers are required by Tennessee Board of Regents policy and are assigned by Creative and Visual Services, (898-2896) upon review and approval of the proposed publication. (See www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices.)

Graphic and Visual Elements

This section deals with basic identity elements: the wordmark, MT logomark, seal, #True mark, True Blue mark, mascot, colors, and typefaces that are the foundation of visual identity. The University's name, wordmark, MT logomark, #True mark, True Blue mark, mascot, and seal are trademarks and property of Middle Tennessee State University. These elements may only be used by authorized units of MTSU or, through approval, by certain entities for external use. When in doubt about which mark to use, please contact Creative and Visual Services (615) 898-2896.

What is a Trademark/Registered Mark?

A trademark (or mark) is any logo, image, symbol, name, nickname, letter(s), word, slogan, or derivative used by an organization, company, or institution to identify its goods/services and distinguish the institution from other entities or competitors. It is "owned" by the organization and cannot be legally used outside of the organization without permission. The name "Middle Tennessee State University" is a trademark and can be only be used on promotional materials or merchandise with permission. Other symbols and icons are also protected trademarks. When a product makes reference to Middle Tennessee (as the University), such reference requires approval. **Our brand is the primary means by which MTSU is recognized;** therefore, the University name, in the appropriate font that constitutes our wordmark, should appear on all forms of communication. The wordmark may not be visually altered, overprinted, connected to or paired with other images, bordered, changed proportionally, or otherwise tampered with.

Typography

Typography is integral to a consistent identity. The MTSU wordmark and logomark typeface family is **Optima** (aka Zapf Humanist), chosen for its modern, refined, and readable characters. Publication standards allow flexibility in body copy and text fonts, although they should be carefully chosen to complement the official font and be readable. Acceptable web font choices can be obtained from Information Technology and should be chosen for ADA and cross-platform consistency.

Optima ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



The MTSU wordmark, seal, athletic symbols, and logomark are the only graphics approved to represent the University. Colleges, departments, schools, offices, and other individual academic units are not permitted to develop and use logos outside of the branding system of the University.

The MTSU seal is for presidential-level University business and formal documents. It is used only on diplomas, legal documents, official announcements, and certificates.

Print (desktop and press), web/mobile, video, displays, and other types of media require different file types, colors, and formats. An appropriate version of the official wordmark and logo can be ordered via the Creative and Visual Services website at www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices. The Director of Creative and Visual Services (Marketing and Communications) must approve all commercial use of the wordmark.



wordmark



MT logomark



seal



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

True Blue marks



#True mark



Athletics mark



Lightning Mascot

MTSU Wordmark

The wordmark is the **primary mark** for MTSU. The only allowable modifications of the wordmark are the additions of department, office, center, or program names.

The wordmark should be used only in the configurations below and should appear superior and larger than any other MTSU identifier.

Use the correct mark for the media you are using. Creative and Visual Services can provide the correct file to you. Markes taken off of the website won't be appropriate for any other use.

These things are not allowed:

- Don't distort, change proportions, or redraw any part of the wordmark or font.
- Do not combine the MTSU wordmark with other graphics.
- Don't enclose the mark in a shape.
- Avoid placing the wordmark on a busy or strongly patterned background.
- Avoid placing text or graphics within 1/4" of the wordmark. Whenever possible, leave a clear field of space around the mark.
- The MTSU wordmark should not be reproduced smaller than 1 inch wide.



2-color version or four-color version
MIDDLE TENNESSEE and STATE UNIVERSITY
are black; only the "swash" is blue.



one-color version: all black



one-color version: Pantone Matching System
(PMS 300)



The wordmark can be printed or displayed in white on a solid background. A special mark with adjusted letter spacing has been created for this purpose. Contact Creative and Visual Services for more information.



The trademark or registration symbol should be next to any officially registered MTSU mark on items being offered for sale.

The wordmark should not be reproduced in any color other than black, MTSU blue, or white.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE and STATE UNIVERSITY are black; only the "swash" is blue.



Don't distort, change proportions, or redraw any part of the wordmark or font. **Don't enclose the mark in a shape.** Don't use elements from the wordmark, especially the "swash," to make a variation of the design for other entities. Avoid placing the wordmark on a busy or strongly patterned background. Please consult with Creative and Visual Services for advice on how to successfully incorporate the MTSU wordmark with other graphics.



Tennessee's Best



College of Basic and Applied Sciences

The marketing slogan, *Tennessee's Best*, is sometimes added below the wordmark as shown. Names of departments, colleges, centers, offices, and other units may be substituted in this space.

MTSU Signatures

Colleges, departments, centers, schools, and offices may all have marks designed for their use that incorporate the University branding and the entity's name.

The MTSU wordmark should appear prominently on all college and departmental communications, even when it is necessary to separate the unit name from the University wordmark. The MTSU wordmark should always occupy the superior position above the name or mark of any other entity. Some accepted graphic signatures are shown below.

Symbols representing professional affiliation or mission of an area may be used, but separately from the area's signature.



COLLEGE OF MASS COMMUNICATION



COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES
Engineering Technology Department
Occupational Health and Safety Concentration



Engineering Technology Department



Home and Community-Based
Early Intervention Program



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES
Engineering Technology Department



Department of Mathematical Sciences



COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES
Engineering Technology Department
Occupational Health and Safety Concentration

A **tiered identification system** will maintain the hierarchy of academic areas and identify them via typography and placement. Colleges and schools will be identified in all caps, departments will follow in caps and lower case, and programs and concentrations will appear last in italic. It is not mandatory that the full hierarchy be displayed at the same time.

How to get files

Wordmark files are available from Creative and Visual Services. Contact us to request a file via phone, email, or website (www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices). Let us know where the mark will be used and whether it will be all black or black and blue so that we can send the right file. Using MTSU marks implies agreement to follow the branding policy. Please don't scan the wordmark from printed pieces nor copy them from the website, both of which are prohibited for external publications due to the poor quality images. Don't try to build a mark from other available logos.

Only use files obtained from Creative and Visual Services. Request marks at www.mtsu.edu/publications/wordmarks.php or creativeservices@mtsu.edu.

The MT Logomark

While the wordmark is the preferred branding symbol for MTSU as an academic institution, a less formal icon has been developed for some applications. It incorporates the slanted, interlocking “MT” with the full name of the University. The MT can be centered above the name or positioned to the left. The typographic treatment remains the same as on the wordmark, with MIDDLE TENNESSEE in bold and STATE UNIVERSITY in regular weight (except when the full name is on one line).



The logomark must be accompanied by the name of the University for clarity.



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

The usage and color guidelines for the MTSU wordmark also apply to the logomark.

You can work with Creative and Visual Services to create a unique iconic “MT mark” for your college or department. Or we may also create a branded MT signature for use in non-academic settings.



JENNINGS A. JONES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



Mathematics and Science Education



Campus Communicators



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Health and Human Performance Department

How to get files

Wordmark files are available from Creative and Visual Services. Contact us to request a file via phone, email, or website (www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices). Let us know where the mark will be used and whether it will be all black or black and blue so that we can send the right file. Using MTSU marks implies agreement to follow the branding policy. Please don't scan the wordmark from printed pieces nor copy them from the website, both of which are prohibited for external publications due to the poor quality images. Don't try to build a mark from other available logos. Only use files obtained from Creative and Visual Services. Request marks at www.mtsu.edu/publications/wordmarks.php or creativeservices@mtsu.edu.

The MTSU Athletic Logos

MTSU athletic marks are used to represent sports teams and organizations. They also appear on trademarked merchandise regulated by **Collegiate Licensing Company** (615-494-8652). These marks, including Lightning, the Blue Raider mascot, are not appropriate for academic publications, electronic media, or web pages. They are reserved for Athletics use only.



The trademark or registration symbol should be next to any officially registered MTSU mark on items being offered for sale.

MTSU Colors

Color is as significant to a graphic identity as images. **The official colors of Middle Tennessee State University are BLUE and WHITE.** For readability, black is used with these colors to build the official marks and logos. Precise color matching can be difficult depending on the medium, art, or special effects being used. We recommend the following color formulas for consistency across media:



BlackPantone® Process BlackC: 0 M: 0 Y: 0 K: 100



MTSU BluePANTONE® 300C: 100 M: 44 Y: 0 K: 0

Web safe: #0066CC

RGB: R: 0 G: 102 B: 204



secondary light blue PMS 292
C: 50 M: 5 Y: 0 K: 0

MTSU Blue

For printing on paper, **PMS 300** is recommended for MTSU blue. For color matching of merchandise such as fabrics and plastics, most vendors have a “royal blue” available that is a close approximation of MTSU blue.

When printing **spot color**, PMS 300 should be used. If printing in **process color**, use the CMYK values: 100% cyan, 44% magenta. A color match prior to printing of any kind should be obtained and viewed in advance whenever possible. When in doubt, please consult with Creative and Visual Services.

PANTONE® is a registered trademark of PANTONE, INC.

The MTSU Seal

In general, the seal is for official or **formal materials** representing Middle Tennessee State University, specifically the President’s Office.

If rare authorization is granted for using the seal, the following applies **with no exceptions**:

- The seal may not be altered in any way or combined with other logos or marks.
- The seal may not be screened in patterns, stretched, condensed, or otherwise visually distorted.
- Use of the seal in any colors other than black, PMS 300, or metallic silver or gold must be approved by Creative and Visual Services.
- Authorization to use the seal is for one time only.

Vendors are encouraged to use the wordmark, logomark, or one of several versions of the athletic logo; both are appropriate for soft goods and novelty items.

For usage requests falling outside the above guidelines, Creative and Visual Services personnel or the Marketing and Communications Office will review the specific request and determine if the usage is appropriate.



black



silver foil



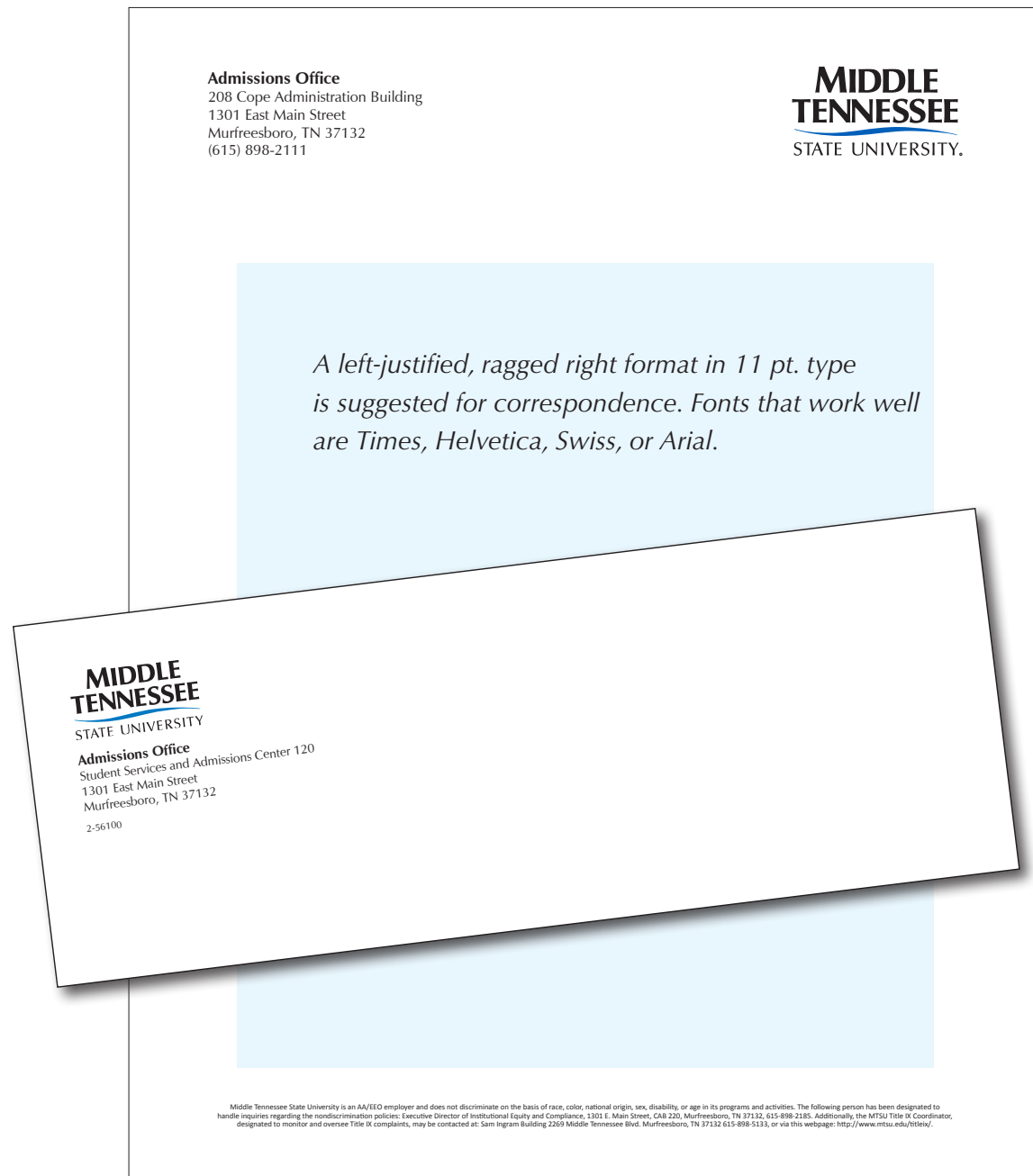
gold foil



PMS 300

Letterhead and Business Cards

MTSU letterhead is standard for all offices, departments, units, or centers. Personalized University letterhead is not sanctioned. **Letterhead and envelopes, including reprints, should be ordered through Creative and Visual Services** (online ordering system at www.mtsu.edu/publications/stationary.php) in one or two ink colors on white bond or white classic laid paper. **MTSU Printing Services** (898-2924) is the default printer for MTSU and is the *only printer authorized* to produce letterhead and business cards.



not to scale

The MTSU business card follows a standard template. Only official titles as designated by Human Resources can be used on business cards and other stationery. MTSU does not issue business cards to retired faculty, faculty emeriti, volunteers, students, graduate assistants, or adjuncts. We use a standard layout for all business cards and do not alter the formatting for individuals. It is possible to print additional information on the back of the card (a second language, for instance). You may print additional information on the back of your card for the cost of a two-sided card. Please contact Creative and Visual Services directly for those special orders at creativeservices@mtsu.edu. In the case of multidisciplinary or multiorganizational appointments, a second card is recommended. **Business cards, including reprints, should be ordered through Creative and Visual Services** (online ordering system at www.mtsu.edu/publications/stationary.php) in one or two ink colors on white bond or white classic laid paper. **MTSU Printing Services** (898-2924) is the default printer for MTSU and is the *only printer authorized* to produce business cards.



Templates

A variety of memos, notepads, labels, and other stationery items can be ordered via the online stationery ordering process at www.mtsu.edu/publications/stationary.php. **MTSU Printing Services** (898-2924) is the *only printer authorized* to produce MTSU stationery products.

Name badges

Magnetic name badges can be ordered through Creative and Visual Services (creativeservices@mtsu.edu). A standard design upholds a consistent display of the MTSU brand across campus and in the community. Badges are available in sturdy plastic or metal versions.

Athletic letterhead

Letterhead and business cards for athletic entities follow a different style than academic areas and are subject to a different set of guidelines.

Campus Signage

A campus-wide plan has been developed to promote a consistent visual standard for all University signage. Please consult with the **Campus Planning Office** before ordering any **internal or external** signage.

Merchandise and Licensing

Campus departments and student organizations sometimes purchase merchandise with University marks for promotions or events. Each of these items is an extension of MTSU's brand or image. Just as there are branding guidelines for printing, **similar policies hold true for merchandise**.

Since use of MTSU's name or other trademarks with an organization name implies association with the University, such usage must be sanctioned by Marketing and Communications and the Collegiate Licensing Company (615-494-8652).

Some of MTSU's registered trademarks include the words or phrases MIDDLE TENNESSEE, MTSU, MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, BLUE RAIDERS, and LIGHTNING, plus the SLANTED MT logo, the WORDMARK, and the LOGOMARK.



Digitized MTSU Trademarks

Official University marks can be combined with school or department names to comply with established standards for embroidered items. The digitized art is available to vendors through the Collegiate Licensing Company or Creative and Visual Services. This art has been modified specifically for embroidery while maintaining the visual integrity of the original design. When setting up for stitching, spacing of elements is important. Try to match, as closely as possible, the official blue (Pantone 300) for fabric or thread.

A sans serif font set in all caps is recommended for the name of the school, department, or organization when this type is set up by the vendor. All vendors don't use the same equipment or software, but a plain block font should be available. This alternative should offer some consistency in maintaining MTSU's visual standards.

What has to be licensed?

Printed materials covered under the policies of MTSU's Marketing and Communications Office such as brochures, letterhead, note cards, posters, and banners, for example, do not require licensing but do require approval. If any of these printed materials will be sold, such as a calendar or cookbook, the product must comply with MTSU's licensing policies, and the publisher must be licensed through Collegiate Licensing Company. The licensing process is simple, and the CLC representative housed in Athletics can help (615-494-8652).

Middle Tennessee State University reserves the right to disallow or request changes to designs that do not adhere to standards, that may conflict with current trademarks, or that might be seen as offensive or in poor taste. Sometimes, proposed designs fall into a "gray" area for which there is no firm standard, and in these cases the University again reserves the right to disallow a design and/or to recommend an appropriate alternative.

In general, items containing the MTSU name, logos, or other licensed marks; items obviously connected with the University in some way or conveying or implying MTSU sanction, support, or association; and items to be paid for by University funds must follow these guidelines:

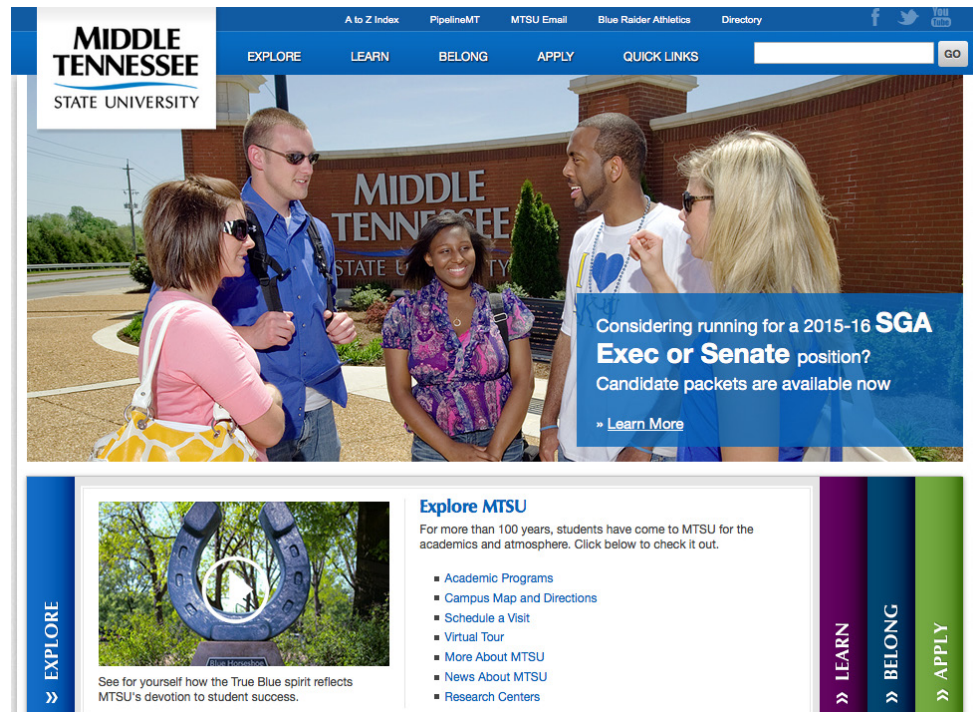
- Logos, symbols, and marks may vary in size but cannot otherwise be altered, tampered with, modified, incorporated into other marks, or overprinted with other words or design elements.
- Whenever an MTSU logo or mark is used, it must be prominent and separate from other designs or marks, including sponsor logos.
- The sponsoring department or organization must be identified. For example, a festival event can include the festival design/graphic and the text of the sponsoring department or organization name beneath it.
- To avoid being perceived as an official University logo, student **event** logos should not contain the MT Igomark or the Middle Tennessee State University name within them. However, stating that an event or organization is "at MTSU" in text may be acceptable. Separate, prominent, and clear use of an approved MTSU mark can be elsewhere on the item (for example, on a t-shirt the logomark might appear on a front pocket or a sleeve, while the independent event/organization design appears on the back).

- Small items such as lapel pins should use a single design in appropriate colors or metals. Longer or formal names for schools and colleges, departments, or events should be on larger buttons or badges, not lapel pins. Creative and Visual Services can recommend alternatives.
- Only those student organizations recognized by the MTSU Student Government Association are allowed to use the University's name.
- Use of a current student-athlete's name or likeness on commercial merchandise is a violation of NCAA rules and can result in the student-athlete being declared ineligible. Any use of a student-athlete's name, nickname, or picture must be approved by the Athletics Compliance Office.
- Use of art or other intellectual property owned by a third party must be approved by that entity in writing and submitted to Marketing and Communications along with the desired artwork.
- Student organizations and campus departments may include a sponsor name/logo along with University marks on products and some advertising. However, the student organization/department's name must be included in such a way as to convey that the relationship is a partnership and not an endorsement by MTSU. University departments will need to secure approval of any joint advertisement from Marketing and Communications.

Compliance Monitoring

This manual outlines branding on printed and electronic media and promotional materials. Approval of marks and logos for merchandise or retail sale must be obtained from Collegiate Licensing Company (Erika.Austin@mtsu.edu, 615-494-8652). Use of marks and logos on publications and electronic materials must be approved by Creative and Visual Services (creativeservices@mtsu.edu, 615-898-2896). Printed material that will be made available for sale must comply with MTSU printing policies as well as trademark and licensing policies.

Electronic Media



Since browsers can link to a page without going through pages that are logically “before” or “above” it, each home page should identify the department or unit and Middle Tennessee State University and provide a link to the MTSU home page.

All official pages should follow the MTSU styles for electronic information to maintain consistency in the use of punctuation, capitalization, titles, and the wordmark. Questions should be addressed to Marketing and Communications. Web page design should follow the standards established by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities. These federal standards can be viewed at www.section508.gov.

Web page guidelines

The World Wide Web is an important tool for communication, learning, and scholarship. MTSU provides web resources to departments and individuals for legitimate University business and for scholarly activity. Web pages must be regarded in the same light as publications and written communication. As such, all pages will abide by federal copyright laws and applicable laws and University policies. Personal web pages are encouraged, but content should be consistent with MTSU policies. Review these guidelines at www.mtsu.edu/itd/Approved_Web_Guidelines_v2_021010.pdf.

Any page linked directly from the MTSU home page must complement the main page design and navigation, as should the pages of all major colleges, departments, and schools marketed and promoted by MTSU. The **Marketing and Communications Office** and **ITD’s web applications team** can help main page links comply with this requirement.

The University recognizes the difference between official and personal pages. Official pages represent MTSU and its programs and should follow MTSU branding policy. Personal pages do not have to follow visual guidelines but should not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of MTSU.



Pages for schools, colleges, departments, units, etc., should use official MTSU colors and complementary colors in headers, banners, or other major design elements to maintain consistency with the home page. No page will link directly from the main home page if it is not in compliance with color schemes, navigation, and format as demonstrated by the home page. **Templates are available** to assist campus areas in complying with standards.

The **Information Technology Division** Web Design Committee oversees the appearance of the MTSU home page and the pages directly linked from the main page and reserves the right to review pages that are linked to University pages to ensure consistency.

Contacts

Please note that this policy manual does not cover every circumstance or variation that might possibly arise. When in doubt about how to proceed on a project, the contacts listed below are available to assist you.

Marketing and Communications

615-898-7800

Tara.Hollins@mtsu.edu

Creative and Visual Services

615-898-2896

creativeservices@mtsu.edu

www.mtsu.edu/creativeservices



Middle Tennessee State University is an AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its program and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance, 1301 E. Main Street, CAB 220, Murfreesboro, TN, 37132; 615-898-2185; Barbara.Patton@mtsu.edu.