M-NIMBS Style Guide

Michigan Nanotechnology Institute for Medicine and Biological Sciences

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1   Introduction

This document defines style specifications and guidelines for the Michigan Nanotechnology Institute for Medicine and Biological Sciences (M-NIMBS) website. Most pages share the same global layout; header area which includes a global navigation menu, page content area, and footer. Global style and layout conventions will be described here as well as specifications for content area elements. Also included in this style guide are guidelines for writing content and general rules for handling functionality.

Measurements in these guidelines that are specified in 'ems' are approximate and apply to a 1024 x 768 pixel screen resolution. Since 'em' measurements are based on the main font size set for the site (the default font size for most browsers is 16px), actual measurements may also differ according to each user's screen resolution and the font size settings for their browser. The base font size for this site is set to 90%; so 1em on this site is equal to approximately 14px.

2   Global Layout

Most web pages on the M-NIMBS site share an overall style with a standard layout, color scheme, and page elements. Page components in the global layout include the Header area, Global navigation area, Page content area, and Footer area. All page components are contained within an area that is 90% of the browser window.

Figure 1: Global Layout
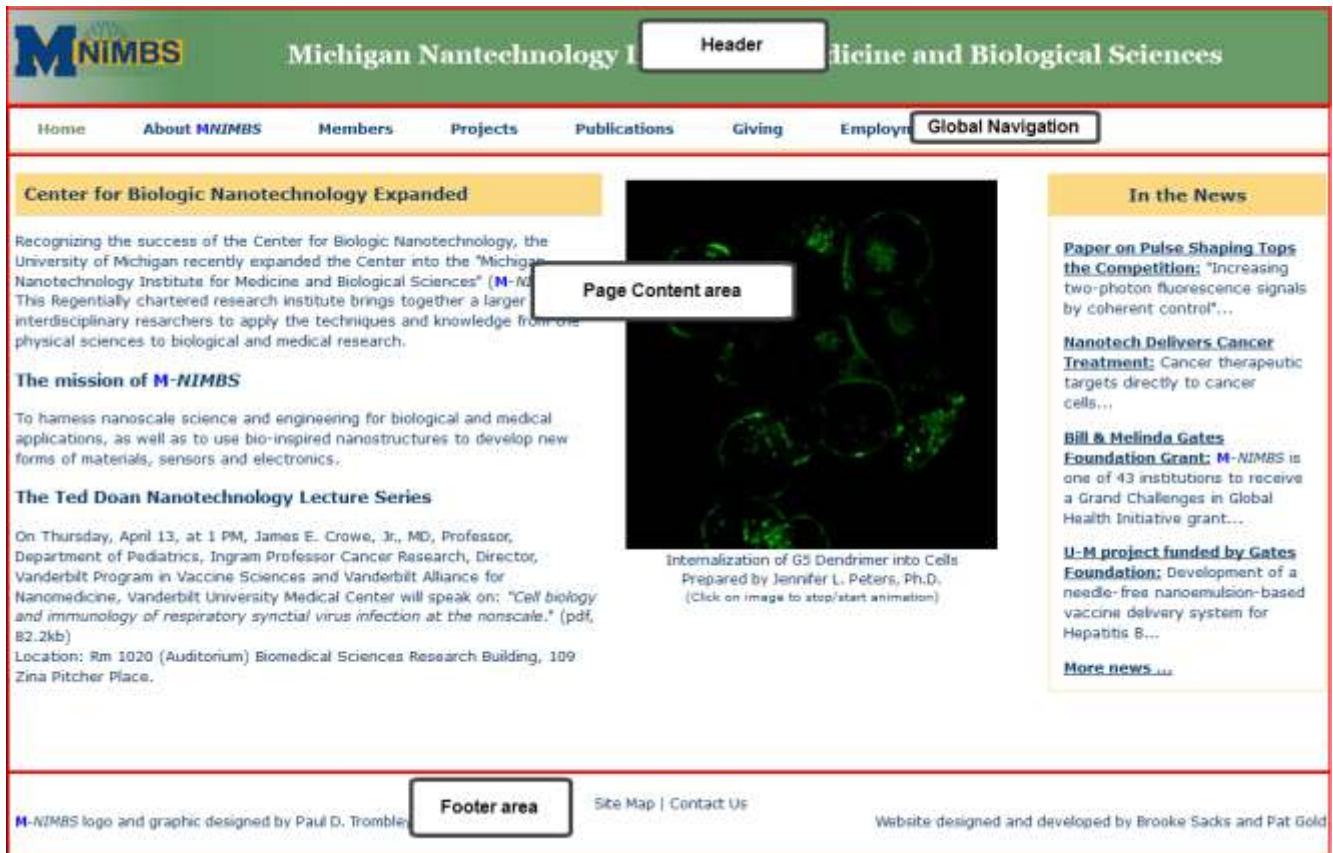
2.1 Header Area

The header area appears at the top of every page in the application and includes a site title and a logo.

Figure 2: Header area

- The institute title appears across the top of each page.
- The institute's logo is placed to the left of the title.
- The entire header has a gradient background of, from left to right, light gray (#B6C1BC) to dark green (#699B68).

2.2 Global Navigation Menu

The global navigation menu appears directly below the header area on all pages. Global navigation tabs may link to a single page, such as Home or Members, or may link to a group of sub-pages, such as About M-NIMBS.

Figure 3: Global Navigation menu – Members selected
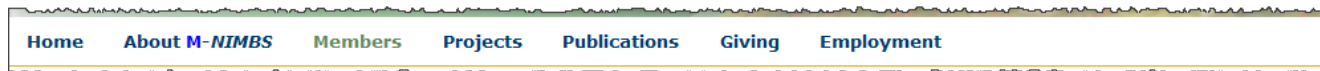
Menu items are styled so that linked items change their appearance when they are moused over (hover state). Style specifications include:

- The global navigation menu spans the width of the page.
- The menu items are spaced evenly across the width of the page, with at least 2em between them.
- Active menu items are dark blue (#003C70), sans-serif font.
- Upon mouse-over (hover state) the color of the menu item changes to maize (#e9ad0f).
- The menu item corresponding to the user's current selection is styled with a green (#65895D) color and is not an active link.
- There is a maize (#e9ad0f) border below the menu items.

2.3 Page Content Area

The page content area appears below the global navigation menu. Page elements included in the content area vary according to the type of page.

Basic style elements for the page content area may include:

- The page title; all pages except the Home page.
- A local navigation menu.
- A main content area that contains the main information for the page.
- An additional information menu; only on the Home page.

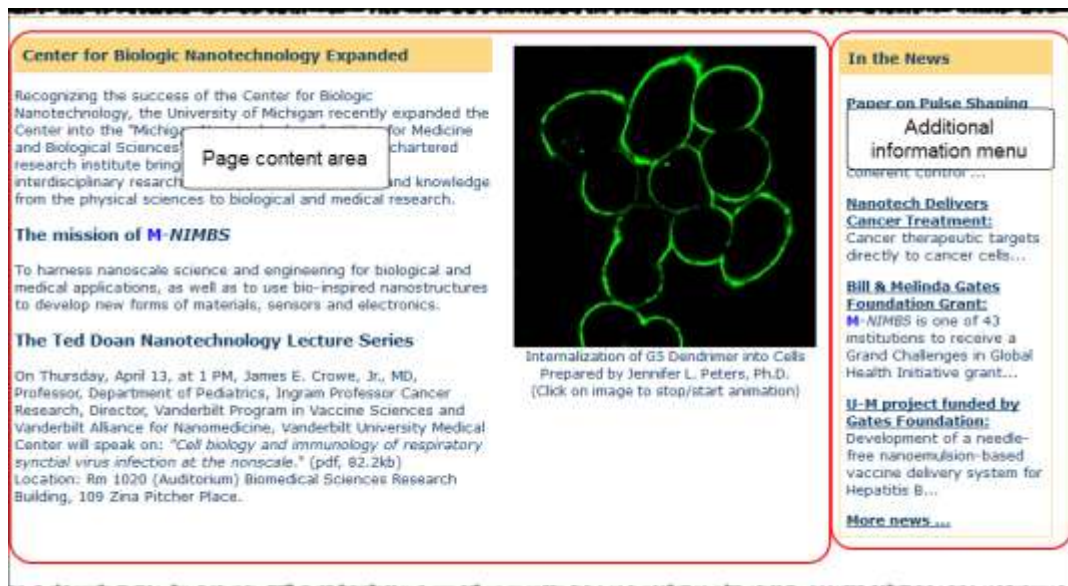**Figure 4: Page Content area – Home page**

Figure 5: Page content area – Sub-page

2.4 Footer Area

There is a footer area at the bottom of each page, below the page content and spanning the entire width of the page. Elements included in the footer are:

- Navigation links to the Site Map and Contact Us pages.
  - These links follow style guidelines similar to the left navigation menu items:
    - The links are styled with a dark blue (#02345F), normal-weight font, not italicized.
    - Upon mouse-over (hover state), these links are styled with a maize (#003C70), normal-weight font; not underlined.
- On the Home page of the site there are additional attributions to the individuals that created the site; graphic designer, content editor/creator, and interface designer/developer.

Figure 6

3   Page Content Area

The page content area consists of a combination of standardized html elements that are incorporated to display content specific to the page; local navigation menu, addition information menu, main content, images. This section will describe the overall layout and styling of the content area and detail the standardized page elements available to display the content.

3.1 Local Navigation Menu

The local navigation menu is contained within a left 'nav' element, top-aligned with the page title (approximately 25px below the global navigation border.

Figure 7: Local Navigation menus
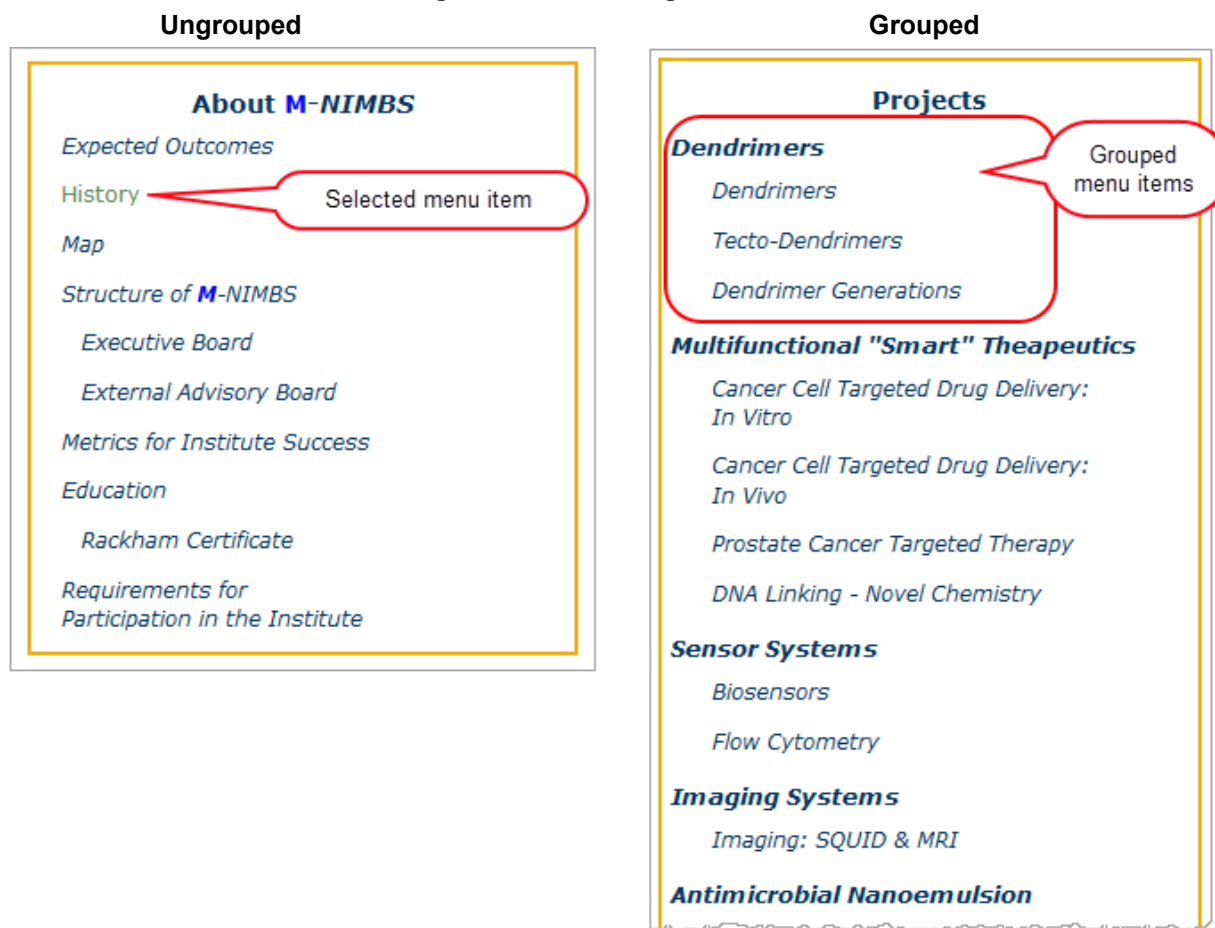
Style and content specifications for the local navigation menu include:

- The selected global navigation item determines which items are displayed in the local navigation menu.
- The entire menu has a 2px maize (#003C70) border.
- There is approximately 1em (14px) of space between the left edge of the menu container and the menu items.
- The section title, the text of the global navigation menu item for this section, is displayed at the top of the local navigation menu styled with a dark blue (#02345F), centered, bold-faced font.
- Local navigation menu item labels are styled with a dark blue (#02345F), normal-weight, italic font.

- Upon mouse-over (hover state), local navigation items are styled with a maize (#003C70), normal-weight font and are underlined.

- Some menu items may be indented under other items; this indicates that the indented pages contain further information about items mentioned on the main page.

- Menu items may be grouped. Each group has a group heading, styled with a dark blue (#02345F), bold-faced font. The group headings are not linked; they provide a context for the pages in the group.

    - Menu items within a group follow the styling for standard menu items and are indented approximately 14px from the left of the group heading.

- The menu item corresponding to the user's current location (page) is styled with a green (#65895D) font color and is not an active link.

3.2 Additional Information Menu

The Home page does not have a local navigation menu but does have an additional information or 'sidebar' menu, providing links to news about the ongoing research being done by members of the Institute.

The sidebar menu is contained within an 'aside' element, top-aligned with the page title (approximately 25px below the global navigation border and right-aligned in the content area.

Figure 8: Additional Info menu

Style and content specifications for the 'sidebar' menu include:

- The entire menu has a 1px maize (#003C70) border.

- There is a header for the menu, "In The News", with a dark blue (#02345F), bold-faced font and a maize (#003c70) background.

- Each menu item has a title and a short text description below the title.

- The title is styled with a dark blue (#02345F) bold-faced font and ends with a colon (**:**).
  - The short text description is styled in the base font and is followed by three ellipses (dots) (**…**).
- There are never more than four news items in the menu.
- Each menu item title is a link either to an internal page (on the M-NIMBS website) with more information or an external page with the designated article.
- The final menu item is always "More news …" and is styled as a menu item title. This item links to an internal page with more news items and links to more information for each.

3.3 Main Content

The main content area contains everything between the header and global navigation and the footer that is not a menu of some kind; either local navigation or additional information. This area may contain a page title, sections, paragraphs of text, lists of various kinds, or images with or without captions. The main content area may span the entire width of the browser window or only part of that space, depending on the other content on the page.
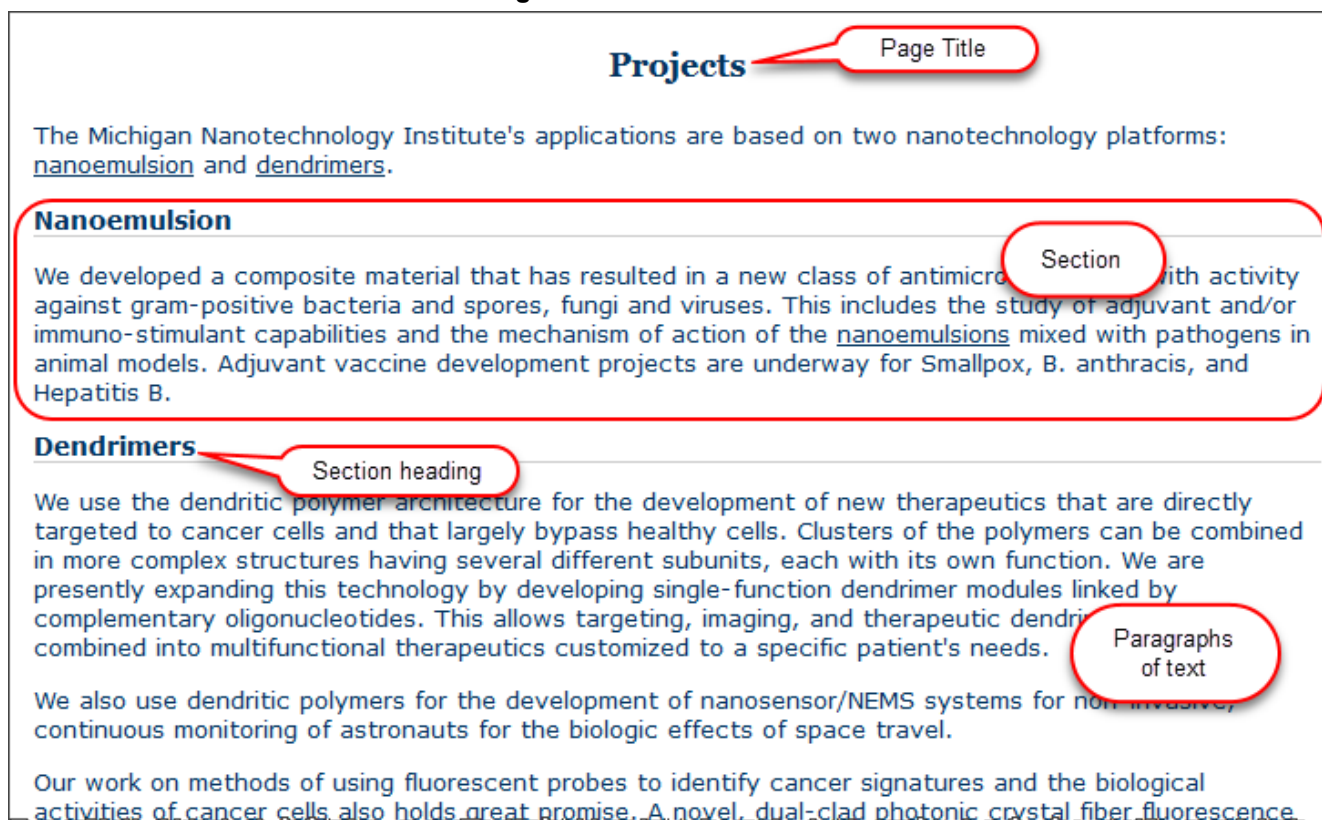
Figure 9: Main Content area

Figure 10: Main Content area – Home page

3.3.1 Page Title

All pages, except the Home page, contain a page title. The wording of the page title is usually the same, or very similar, to the menu item that links to the page.

The page title is styled with a dark blue (#02345F), bold-faced font that is 140% of the base font size. Unlike other text on the site, the page title is styled with a serif font; fonts with small lines attached to the end of a stroke.

Instead of a page title on the Home page, there is a heading that changes depending on the most current event occurring at the Institute. This heading is styled with a dark blue (#02345F), bold-faced font that is 110% of the base font size and has a maize (#003c70) background.

3.3.2 Sections

Sections within the main content area are a way to group information about a specific part of the topic of the main page.

Each section on the page is contained within a 'section' element and usually has a section heading, generated as a second-level heading (h2). On most pages, section headings are styled with a dark blue (#02345F), bold-faced font that is 110% of the base font size and have a gray (#ccc) bottom border.

Most section headings on the Home page are styled the same as other section headings but without the bottom border.

Section headings on the Publication page are styled the same as other section headings without the bottom border and with a maize (#003c70) background.

3.3.3 Paragraphs

Paragraphs are spaced approximately 28px apart vertically; there is 1em of space above and below each paragraph. The line height, the space between lines of text within a paragraph, is set to 1.2 (1.2 times the base font size of 90%; approximately 14px).

3.3.4 Lists

Lists are either unordered, using bullets to demark list items or, ordered, when numbering is required.

Unordered list items are bulleted with a solid circle (●). Ordered lists are numbered with Arabic numerals followed by a period (1. 2. 3.).

All lists are indented 1.5em (approximately 20px) from the left edge of the content area, or the content above them, and have a line height of 1.4.

Figure 11: Unordered, multi-level list
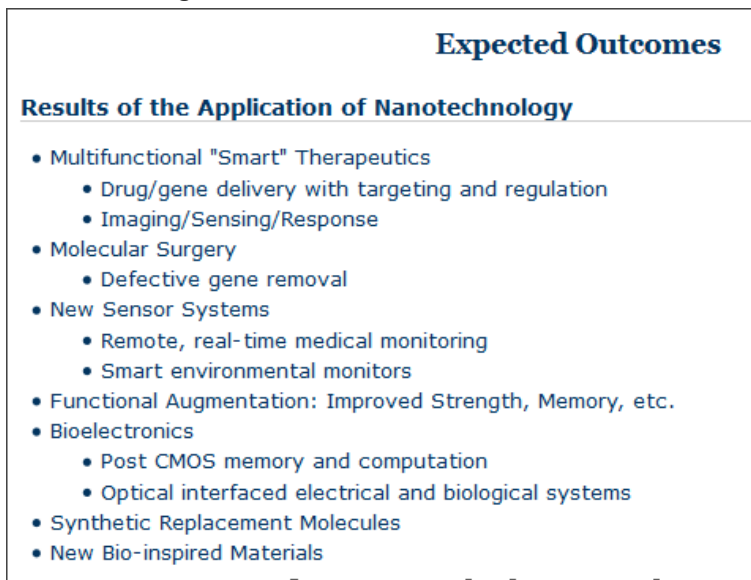
3.3.5 Images

Images are usually displayed with a caption, but may this may be omitted if the context of the page gives enough of a description. The caption is displayed directly below the image and may or may not contain a link to another page of information.

All image widths are set to a percentage of the width of the space available to them, allowing them to resize with the width of the browser window. The available space for images depends on the page on which they are being displayed.

Figure 12: Images

Image from Home page   **Image from Members page**

Internalization of G5 Dendrimer into Cells
Prepared by Jennifer L. Peters, Ph.D.
(Click on image to stop/start animation)

Dr. James R. Baker, Jr.
Director, **M**-*NIMBS*
Ruth Dow Doan Professor of
Biologic Nanotechnology,
Professor of Internal Medicine
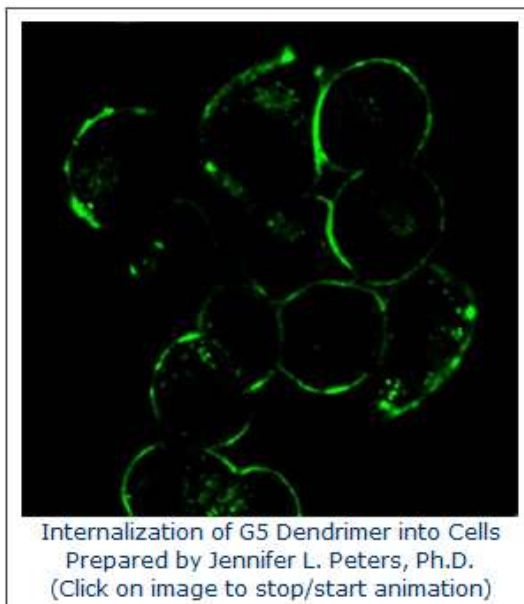
3.4 Alignment and Spacing Guidelines

In positioning content area elements, attention should be paid to the amount of white space surrounding them. There should be enough white space to make various elements distinct from each other, but not so much that they do not appear related. Groups of related items should be placed close enough together to indicate that they are related but not so close that they become difficult to read.

Specific alignment and spacing guidelines include:

- There should be 1.5em (approximately 20px) of space between the global navigation menu and the page title.

- Content elements are left-aligned except where otherwise noted. There should be 1.5em (approximately 20px) of horizontal space between the left navigation menu and left-aligned content elements.

- Vertical space between content elements is used where it serves to visually group related items or distinguish them from other elements.

3.5 Content Writing Conventions

The overall guidelines for writing content are:

- Refer to users as "the user" rather than making gender references such as "he" or "she."

- Use these conventions for capitalizing words:

  - Capitalize all words in page titles: "Expected Outcomes" instead of "Expected outcomes".

  - Capitalize only the main words in section headings: "Results of the Application…" instead of "Results Of The Application..."

- For page content text the following formatting rules should apply:

  - Text is formatted with a 90% (approximately 14px) dark blue (#02345F) normal weight font, unless otherwise specified in the following section specifications.

  - Hyperlinks appearing within page text should be italicized and underlined for easier readability. Do not include a period after a hyperlink in the link.

    - Example: …outlining the plan for a *Certificate program*.

4   Functionality

Page elements that provide user interactivity should behave consistently throughout the application. Guidelines for consistent functionality include:

- Browser buttons should behave as users expect them to and not be changed to do something different. For example, clicking refresh should reload the page, not go to a different page.

- Buttons should always be used to initiate actions, such as submitting form data.

- Page elements should have permanence. If they appear under some circumstances, they should not be missing under different ones. For example, if a given page includes a "Save" button, it should always appear on that page rather than being absent under certain conditions.

  - An exception is made to this rule when the user needs to be prevented from moving forward in a sequence of pages.

5   Appendix 1: Table of Figures