On-Page SEO Checklist

CARNEGIE

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT STRATEGY

Step #1

Identify your target keyword.

- Use natural language and typical terms that your audience would know.
- Research your keywords:
  - Review search log records
  - Analyze competition
  - Check search volume

- Avoid jargon, abbreviations, or labels that only your institution or industry insiders might understand.
- Spell out acronyms on first reference.

Pro Tip: Use data from your institution's Google Search Console and Google Analytics to identify the exact keywords your audience uses.

Step #2

Add your target keyword to the your page's URL.

Use this template to optimize your URL: instituionname.edu/primary-keyword/secondary-keyword

Why It's Important: Google uses the terms in your URL to understand what your page is about.

Pro Tip: Your URL name should reflect the folder structure for easy crawling. Be sure to set up a 301 redirect when you change any URLs.

Step #3

Use the keyword once at the top of your page.

Why It's Important: Search engines put more weight on erms that appear in prominent places on your page (like at the top). Ideally, you should use your keyword in the first 50-100 words.

Step #4

Use your keyword in the your page's title tag.

Why It's Important: Your title tag tells Google what your page is about. From a Google SEO point of view, your title tag is the most important place to include your keyword.

Pro Tip: Include your institution's name at the end of the title tag, after a divider.

Step #5

Optimize your title tag for clicks.

The best way to do this is to think of what you want to click on it you were searching for your keyword.

Why It's Important: See item #10 from this list. A high click-through rate (CTR) can boost your rankings. And your title tag is a big factor in what people use to decide what to click on.

Pro Tip: Your title tag should not be more than 575 pixels wide, or about 60 characters long. Anything longer gets cut off in the Search preview.

Step #6

Use your keywords in H1 + H2 subheaders.

Why It's Important: This emphasizes to Google that your page is focused on that keyword and topic. Every little bit helps.

Step #7

Use keyword-rich file names and alt text.

Why It's Important: Google uses images to understand the content of your page. And descriptive file names and alt text helps Google understand what your page is all about.

Step #8

Add internal links to other pages on your site.

We recommend including at least five internal links per page. Try to use contextual links when possible (Ie: link the text "psychology department" to the psychology webpage).

Why It's Important: Internal links can help Google find, crawl, and in index more pages on your site (and help them rank higher in the search results).

Step #9

Add external links to helpful websites and resources.

Always make sure external links open in a new tab or window. We recommend at least three external links per page to strengthen and build link equity.

Why It's Important: External linking to related pages helps Google figure out your page's topic. We commend adding strategic external links to pages that will help your students learn more about something that you cover on your page.

Pro Tip: Only link to highly reputable websites (those that are at least as reputable as a .edu). Links to any local sites, such as a pizza parlor in town, don't really help you and might even hurt you.

Step #10

Use synonyms and related terms.

In other words: include variations of your target keyword on your page. For example, if your main keyword is "admissions events," use variations like "admissions tour" and "admissions open house."

Step #11

Write an enticing meta description.

Make sure your meta description does not exceed 160 characters and includes a clear call-to-action such as "Learn more."

Why It's Important: Although using keywords in your meta description isn't a ranking factor anymore, organic click through rate is. And when Google searchers see a compelling meta description in the organic search results, they're more likely to click on your site

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Step #12

Make sure your site passes Google's Core Web Vitals test.

Make sure your site passes Google's Core Web Vitals test—this includes three ranking factors that center on page load, interacting, and visual stability.

Why It's Important: These factors not only affect your ability to show up in organic search results, but also impact user experience on your website.

Pro Tip: Google Search Console flags pages of your site that are not meeting CWV standards.

Step #13

Use structured data.

Why It's Important: Structured data (Schema) can help your site appear for special SERP features, allowing you to take up a larger position of the organic search real estate. Common types include: rich snippets, sitelinks, and events.

www.upb.pitt.edu ▾

Homepage | University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

We're a regional campus of the **University of Pittsburgh**. That means our students are part of a welcoming, friendly and diverse campus community and have ...

Majors & Minors
Skip to main content. Operating Safely. Learn what changes are ...

Faculty & Staff
Faculty and Staff Organizations. Faculty Senate Staff ...

Admissions & Aid
Financial Aid - Admissions Requirements - Scholarships - **...**

Life at Pitt-Bradford
Girls at river Students study life in and around the Tunungwant ...

Academics
Resources. College is hard. It's supposed to be. Sometimes you ...

About Us
About Us. Students at Pitt-Bradford live and learn on a friendly ...

Step #14

Match search intent.

Double check that your page is 1:1 match for search intent. The best way to do that? Check out Google's first page for that keyword. If they're all a specific type of page (such as a list post or how-to), you want your page to in-line with what's already ranking.

Why It's Important: If your page doesn't satisfy search intent, your page most likely will not rank for that keyword (even if you have a lot of backlinks). It's that important.

Pro Tip: There are four common types of search intent:
  1. *Informational: Searcher is looking for information that provides specific results.*
  2. *Navigational: Searcher is looking for a specific website.*
  3. *Commercial: Searcher is looking for a specific product.*
  4. *Transactional: Search er has made the decision to move forward/take action.*

Step #15

Decrease bounce rate.

Make your content "sticky" so that Google users stay on your page...and don't bounce back to the search results. Content should be at least 500 words and well organized, utilizes internal links, and match the keywords it appears for.

Why It's Important: When users click through to your website from search results and leave right away it signals to Google that your website is not providing a positive user experience, which in turn can lead to your site not appearing in search results as much or for certain keywords.