



Curtin University

# *University Marketing - Digital Experience Guidelines*

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT UX TEAM

DATE

A global university

Western Australia | Dubai | Malaysia | Mauritius | Singapore





## PREMISE AND OBJECTIVE

These guidelines are focused on providing:

1. Consistency and standards for digital experiences and human-centred design
2. University Marketing's Creative Council and other forums with a reference guide for evaluating and approving new work to be published through the Curtin websites and wider digital products.

The format adopted seeks to provide a background to subjects, before showcasing typical examples of practical applications. It is the aim of this guide to, at first, give context to thoroughly researched patterns and standards, then subsequently, to provide pointers for questioning newly proposed designs that are presented at Creative Council forum. To this end, most topics throughout this pack include a question to be asked at the CC session: “Questions to ask when evaluating”.

# *Outline of this pack*

## **Digital Experience Guidelines:**

- What is digital experience
- User discovery
  - Data-driven experiences
  - Personalisation
  - Personas
  - User stories
  - User journeys
- Information Architecture (IA)
- Technical Performance
  - Performance considerations
  - Page speed performance
  - Duplicate content
  - Orphan pages
  - Internal linking
  - Backlinking
  - Alignment with other digital channels
  - Performance metrics

- Content design
  - Information Architecture (IA)
  - Content design
- Interactivity & usability
  - Interactivity
  - Usability
  - Usability testing

## **Summary**

## **Support and Resources**

## **Appendix**

# ***Digital Experience Guidelines***



# *Digital experience guidelines*

## **What is digital experience**

Digital experience standards go beyond the look and feel and encompass guidelines that enhance the overall user experience in digital interactions (emphasizing usability, accessibility, and interactivity).

## **Page layout**

Different types of pages require different treatments when configuring their inner content. It is important to consider the role these types of pages take and how they function very differently across all Curtin digital products.

## **Mobile considerations**

Special thought needs to be considered for the layout of page content on small devices. Almost every element on the page needs to be adapted so that the journey through the page is easy to digest.

## **Content integrity**

Content accuracy and compliance sits with the area the content originates from, with the digital team responsible for surfacing this information on the website in the most effective way possible.

## **Digital consistency**

To provide brand coherence, a digital consistency across all digital platforms is necessary to ensure the look and feel is maintained throughout.

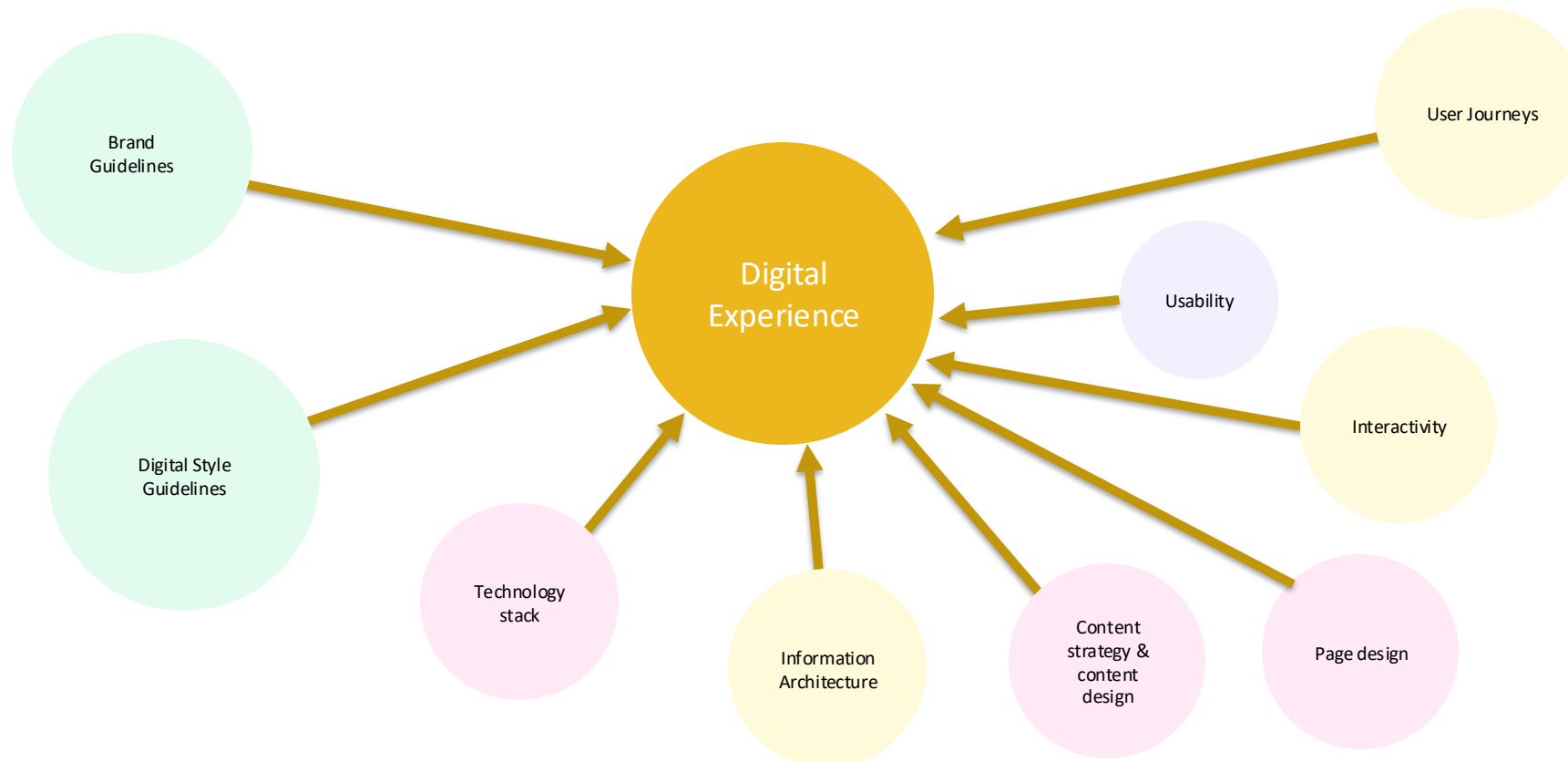
## **Email guidelines**

Designing emails also needs to follow digital style guidelines to ensure they also maintain digital consistency.

***What is a digital  
experience?***

# *What is a digital experience*

Digital Experience Guidelines go beyond the look and feel of the Brand Guidelines and Style Guidelines. They encompass principles that enhance the overall user experience when interacting with digital products, where topics of information architecture, content design, page design and usability are important. User Journeys are required to define the flow of the digital experience through the design process and are key to understanding how the user can accomplish their goals.



# *User Discovery*



# Data-driven experiences

It is preferable that all work presented to Creative Council be considerate of collected data to ensure it truly aligns with the needs of our users. Ideally, it is suggested that work show informed decision-making based on facts, metrics and amalgamated data. Sometimes this is not possible, and in these instances A/B testing can be recommended to provide validation.

At UM, we use Google Analytics (GA4) and Microsoft Clarity to gather real-time data to collect and analyse. These tools inform our decision-making process and guide our designs.

It may also be necessary to collect research from other sources, such as user testing or student interviews to support new work. Referring to this kind of documentation when planning out work can help focus intension.

There are five steps towards implementing data-driven decision making:



**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there research or analytics that we can refer to in validating the design? Is there any content that stands out as possibly not being centric to the prospective student and needs supporting documentation for review?



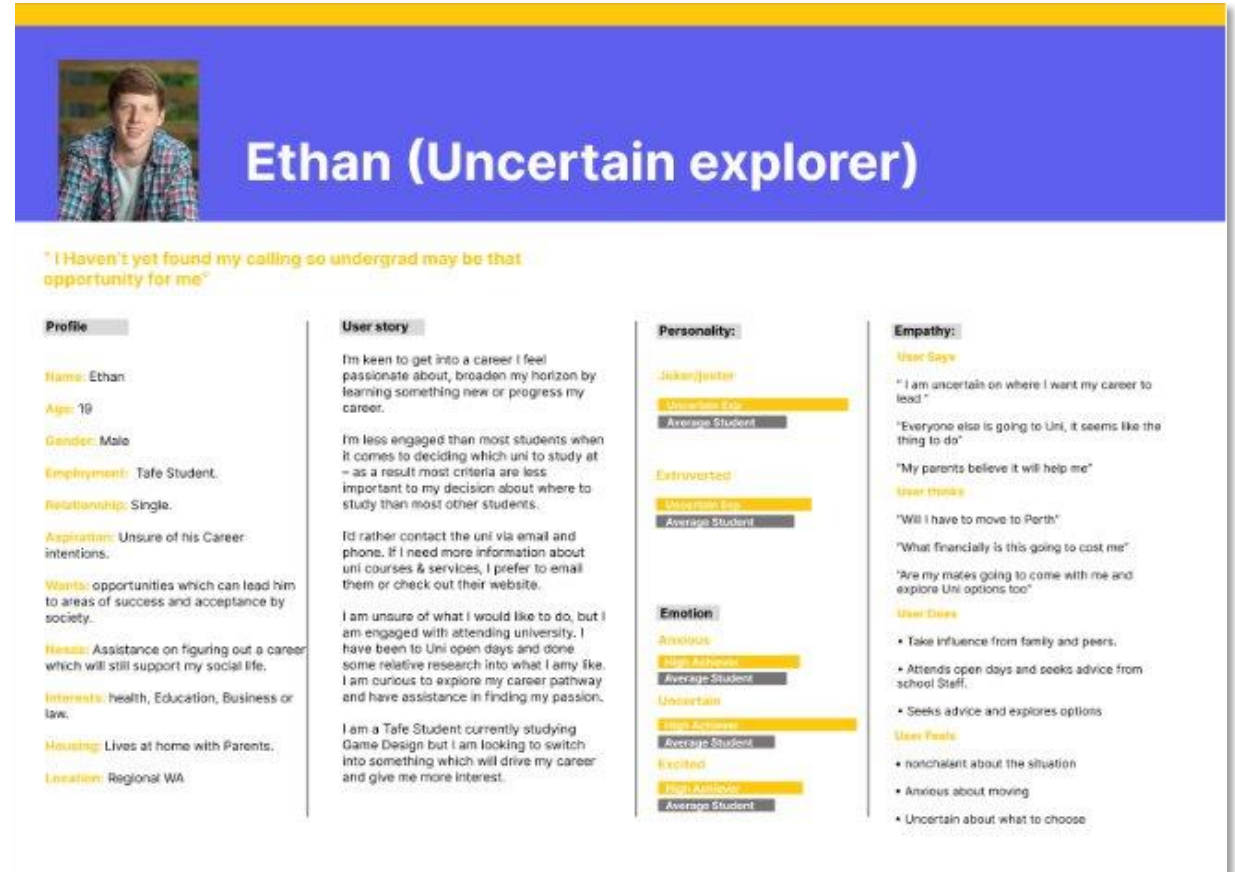
# UX Personas

A Persona summarises the characteristics of a user type using a digital product. Captured in the Persona are personal qualities and traits, motivations and feelings. Personas are created based on gathered user data and provide a background for interacting with the digital product.

Personas validate choices made for content and page design. A page or series of pages will fail if the specific persona is not clearly targeted. A Persona can uncover facts about our users that weren't thought of before. Personas are also useful for the basis of defining usability testing.

For presenting to Creative Council, sometimes it is useful to show the Persona alongside the design, as a means of clarifying it.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** When evaluating the design, can I see a person that will find this journey useful? Sometimes it is OK to focus a design on more than one person, but is there a risk of overcomplication by focusing on too many people? Does the Persona need to be presented to Creative Council along with the design, to allow for true evaluation?



# User stories

User stories are based on Personas of relevant users and can help us arrange information into pertinent and useful experiences.

A User Story frames a context for an activity a user will carry out, to achieve something specific. This context can then be used to inform a Persona and a User Journey.

The formula for a User Story is:

**[As a user], I want to (functionality/goal), so that (motivation/reasoning/benefit).**

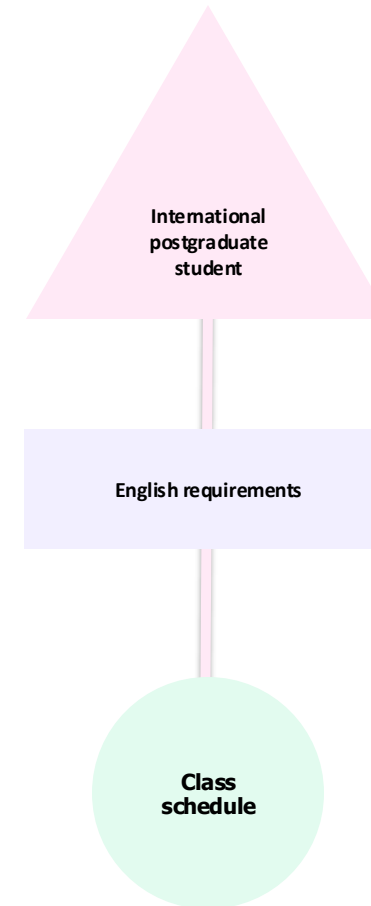
So, a Curtin example:

**As a current international postgraduate student, I want to find out about English requirements, so that I can work out my class schedule.**

For presenting to Creative Council, sometimes it is useful to show the User Story alongside the design, as a means of clarifying it.

It is also important to mention that user stories should try and refer to the Brand Guidelines, in addition to being based on user research data.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there a clear user story in the design? Is there more than one user story in the design and if so, does the information need to be broken up so the separate stories are clearly delineated?



# User journeys

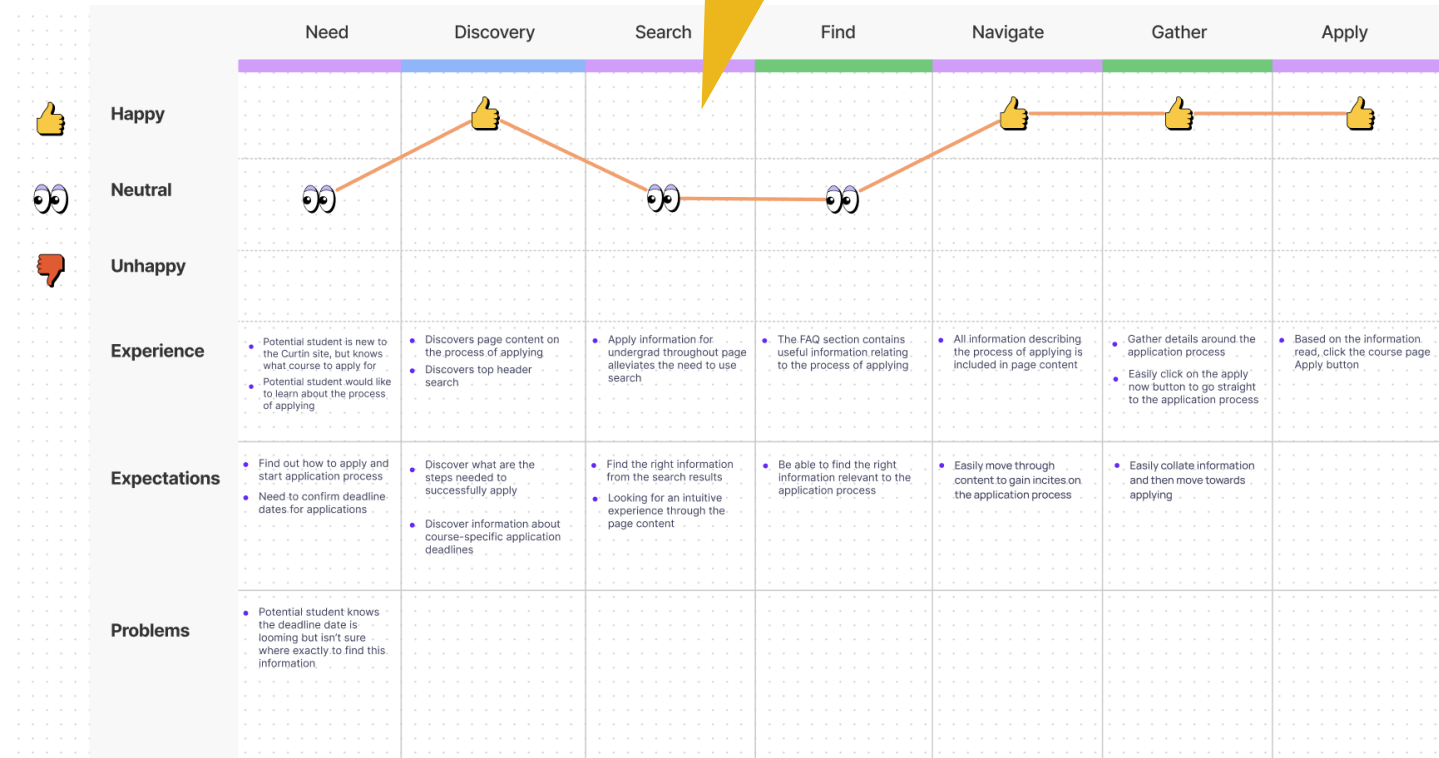
At Curtin, we have many different types of visitors utilising our products. User research beyond data metrics is necessary to truly understand them and their use of our digital tools. This information can be organised into easy-to-digest maps to influence new work. User journeys describe the processes users travel through to accomplish their goals. They are time-based and express the user's emotional state, their experience, expectations and problems. User journeys are also based on Personas and User Stories.

A User Journey Map is a diagram summarising the user journey and is used for planning out a design, where scope, purpose and format can be mapped out.

Though User Journey Maps are great for initial design ideation, they are also powerful tools for evaluating complex pathways through a digital product.

For presenting to Creative Council, sometimes it is useful to show the User Journey Map alongside the design, as a means of uncovering lost or missed opportunities. Presenting the map can also be an easy way to explain the design in the context of the overarching digital experience.

User Journey Map example of a prospective student wanting to apply to Curtin



**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Are the pain points of the user journey resolved in the design? Looking at the user journey, can the path towards the end be simplified through the design? Are there opportunities to improve the design by looking more deeply at the user's experience, expectations and problems as outlined in the Journey Map?



# Personalisation

Personalisation doesn't just look AT the audience, but rather, looks AS the audience. It aims to deliver the right content to the right user at the right time by allowing content to be swapped out on the page depending on the user's characteristics.

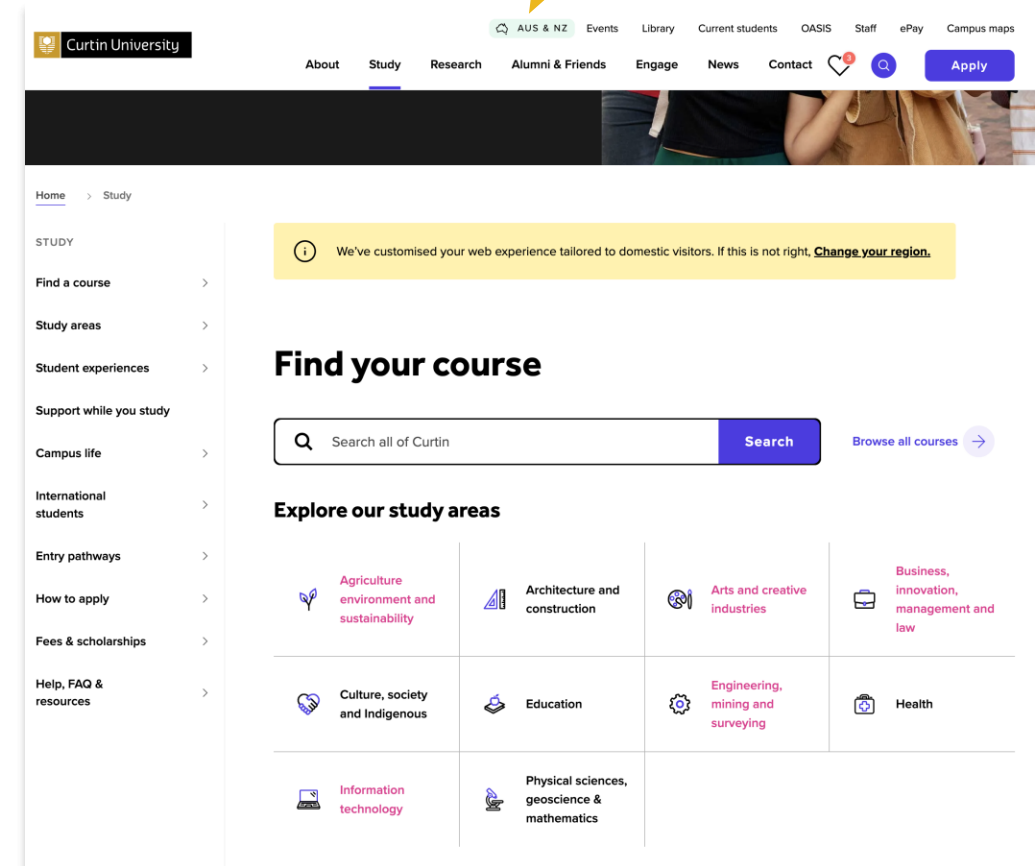
It takes collected user behaviour data and dynamically automates the delivery of content and interface functionality so that it matches specific user needs and interests. True personalisation is set up by the system and is implicitly controlled without the need for user input.

At Curtin, we have implemented a personalisation toggle at the top of each page on the Study site that targets two journeys; the domestic prospective student, and the international prospective student.

There are plans to expand on personalisation through the Study site in the future. But for now, we can imitate personalisation by designing duplicate pages with different block configurations, that the user can choose through page navigation. These versions will tailor the information flow to very specific user interests.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Does there need to be different versions of the page(s), based on different user journeys? Can the idea of personalisation influence the design and focus it more than it currently does? Is a design too personalised and does it need to include more content for other user groups?

The future of the journey lies within personalisation.



# ***Information Architecture***

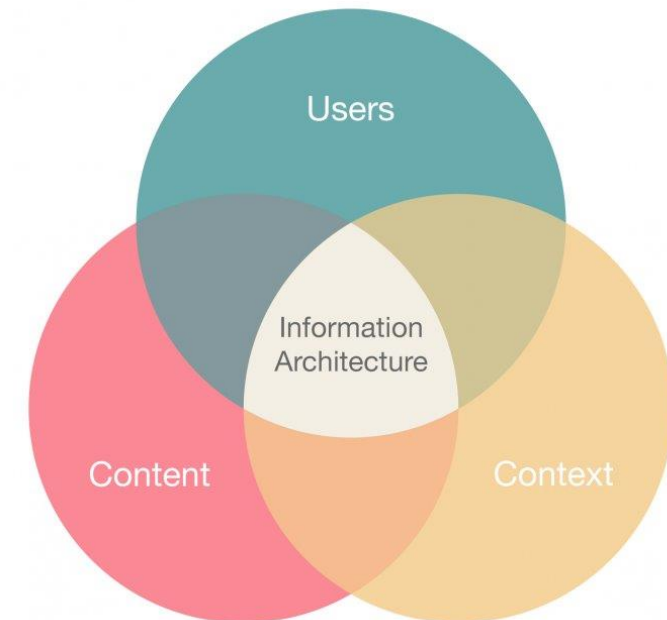
# *Information Architecture (IA)*

Information architecture (IA) structures content by organising and labelling it effectively so that the user moving through the information can understand it faster. IA is the backbone of design and concerns itself with the hierarchy of, and navigation through, all content.

IA does not just relate to the organisation of topics in the menu structure, or the sorting of pages into unified groups. It also relates to the flow of information from page to page. This is where the user experience comes into play, where the content is placed into a context surrounding the user's wants and needs. The organisation of content into this context needs to be easy to understand and access.

For both page updates and adding new pages, it is important that duplicate information isn't accidentally included. It is also important to see updates and new pages in the context of the current IA, so that the structure in place does not become more complicated. An example of this is the duplication of navigation items in the top menu appearing also in a page's side menu. This clutters the page and is confusing.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there new navigation and is it clearly organised in a way that is intuitive for the user? Is content organised into a logical hierarchy? Are there too many competing menus across the page? Adding new content to an existing page, does it still all make sense to the information hierarchy?



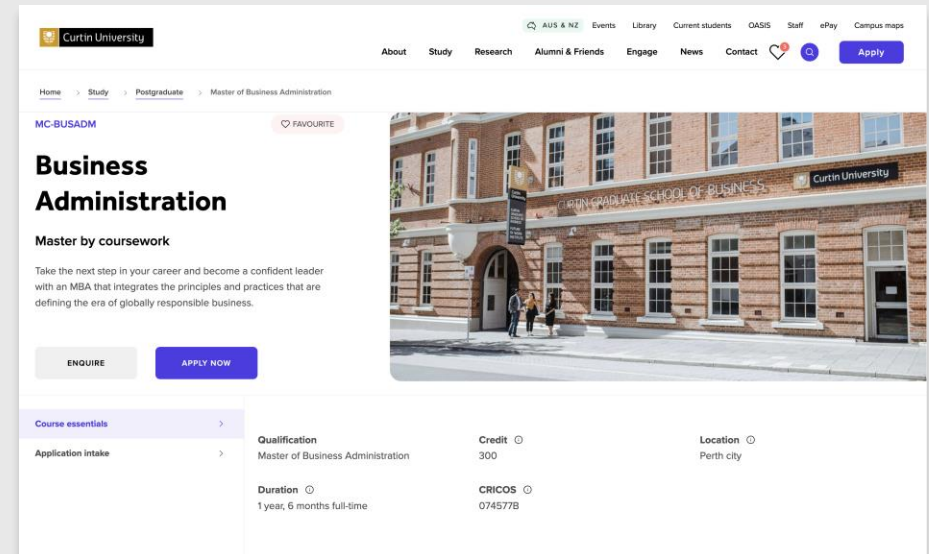
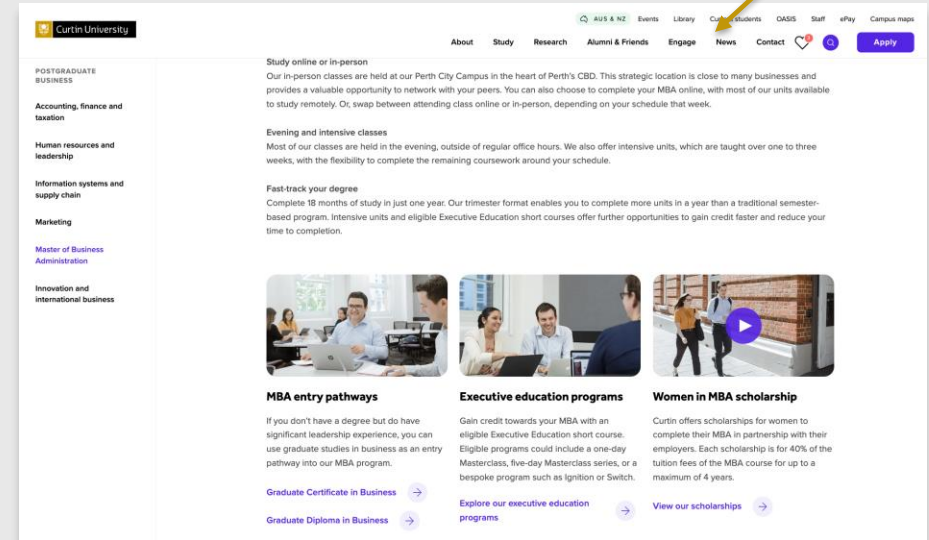
# Information Architecture (IA) cont.

The organisation of any on-page navigation also needs attention. Links that jump to sections on the same page should always have a smooth animation scrolling to the relevant area and should arrive aligned to the section's heading and not above or below. Without this animation, the user can become disorientated when clicking on the link, as the pages jumps instantly to the new area.

It is also important not to include extra navigation if the flow of information does not require it - this will over complicate the experience. Instead, consider page design elements to organise and separate content, such as accordions or tabs.

The left-hand side nav on the Curtin Study site should only be used if necessary. It is recommended that if further navigation beyond the top menus is required, it is placed within the page structure itself.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is the side navigation being used in the design? Can it be removed? Are there any inline links that jump to sections of the page, and if so, do they animate smoothly to the new sections?





# ***Content Design***

# Content - the page's purpose

Digital Experience begins by defining the page's purpose. Every page must have a distinct purpose and reason for its layout, form, behaviour and content.

To test this, a user should be able to make their way smoothly through the page, from top to bottom, and get a clear idea of subject flow. CTA's can be included between main subject areas, but their content should relate to the page's purpose.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is purpose of the page clear? Are there too many subjects?

FAQ's support the subject and provide more context.

CTA still supports the subject and expands upon it.

The screenshot shows the Curtin University website with a dark header and a main content area. The page is titled "Applications are closing soon" and includes a sub-header "Here's what happens next". The main content area is divided into sections: "Application deadlines", "Course-specific deadlines", and "Commonly asked questions". The page also features a "Pathways into Curtin" section at the bottom. Annotations with arrows point to various elements: "The page's subject, clearly announced." points to the main heading; "Supports the subject with next steps." points to the "Here's what happens next" section; "Validates the subject by defining its scope." points to the "Application deadlines" section; "FAQ's support the subject and provide more context." points to the "Commonly asked questions" section; and "CTA still supports the subject and expands upon it." points to the "Pathways into Curtin" section.

**Applications are closing soon**

If you haven't applied for a Curtin course yet, there's still time.

If you have already applied, you may be wondering what happens next, or you might be looking for your pathway into Curtin. You're in the right place.

Second round applications are open until 14 January.

[Apply direct to Curtin](#) [Apply via TISC](#)

**Here's what happens next**

[I didn't get the offer I wanted](#) [I got the offer I wanted](#) [I need to apply](#)

Don't panic! If you applied via TISC you'll automatically be considered for the second round. Second round offers will be released Friday 19 January.

If you do nothing, you'll automatically be considered for the second round.

This is a good option if you left your main round application too late or you didn't meet the English requirements for the main round but have since met the criteria.

If you applied directly, and didn't get the offer you wanted, get into contact with Curtin Connect to chat about your options.

**Application deadlines**

[Applications via TISC](#) [Direct applications to Curtin](#)

TISC applications for second round offers close 11:59pm, 14 January.

You will be considered for second round offers for all courses on your preference list, unless you have already accepted an offer, or allowed a first-preference offer to lapse.

This is also the final closing date to re-arrange or add preferences for the second round of offers, and the final date for you to upload documents/transcripts of results to TISC and/or update your postal and email address for notification for the second round of offers.

**TISC application guide**

**Key dates for applying**

**Course-specific deadlines**

Some courses have specific [application deadlines](#).

Please be advised that some courses are subject to quota and/or clinical placements and application deadlines are subject to change.

**Commonly asked questions**

What happens if I didn't get the ATAR results I expected?	+	How do I apply directly to Curtin?	+
What if exceptional circumstances out of my control impacted my ATAR?	+	I didn't meet the English requirements for my course, can I still start at Curtin in 2024?	+
How do I change my TISC preference?	+	If I got a 95+ ATAR, do I need to apply for an Excellence Scholarship?	+

**There's a pathway for you to Curtin**

Think you might not have the marks or qualifications to study at Curtin? We have several pathways to help you meet admission. See our pathway resources to find your best route in.

[Pathways into Curtin](#)

The page's subject, clearly announced.

Supports the subject with next steps.

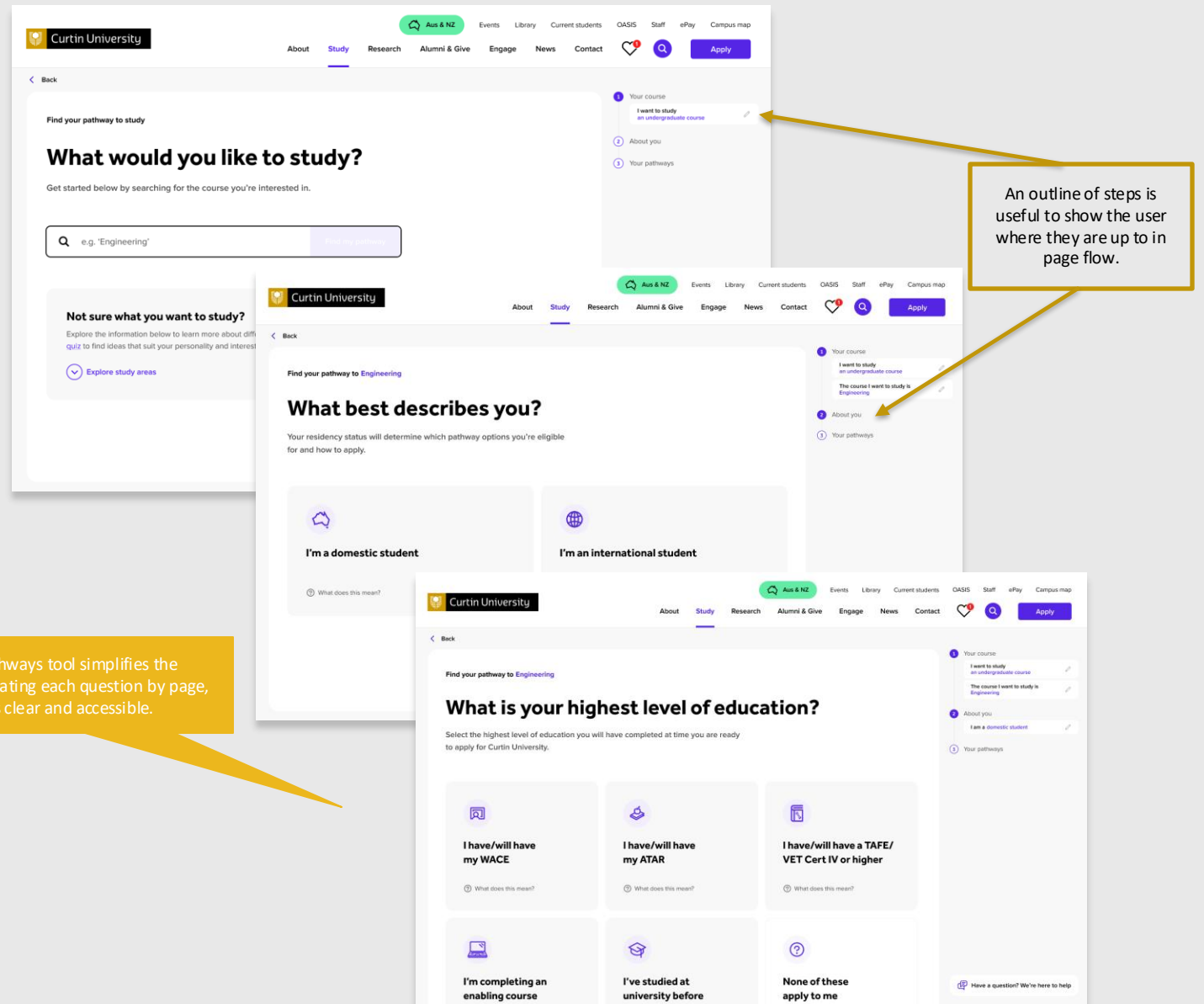
Validates the subject by defining its scope.

# Content - page flow

Page flow refers to the sequence of elements on a page, or series of pages, that follow a logical order towards the user accomplishing a task. Another way to see page flow is to describe it as the “story”. The story acts as a binding force through all content, where each piece of information logically moves on to the next.

When there are more than one pages to page flow, each page in the story also requires an objective and taxonomy, in relation to the accompanying pages in the journey. Taxonomy refers to the classification of pages and content on the page. It is a method of tagging items so that a user can easily search through the site on specific terms to find relevant content.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there a “happy path” through the pages? Does the flow of content from one page to the next make sense? Is there an “entry” and “exit” for the page flow? This does not necessarily need to be the top and bottom of the page...



# Content - page flow

Try to void pages that are too long. We have heatmaps and scroll depth data that show us that users often abandon a page that is too long. This is even more pertinent on mobile devices. Pages need to be short, concise and focused on the page's main subject.

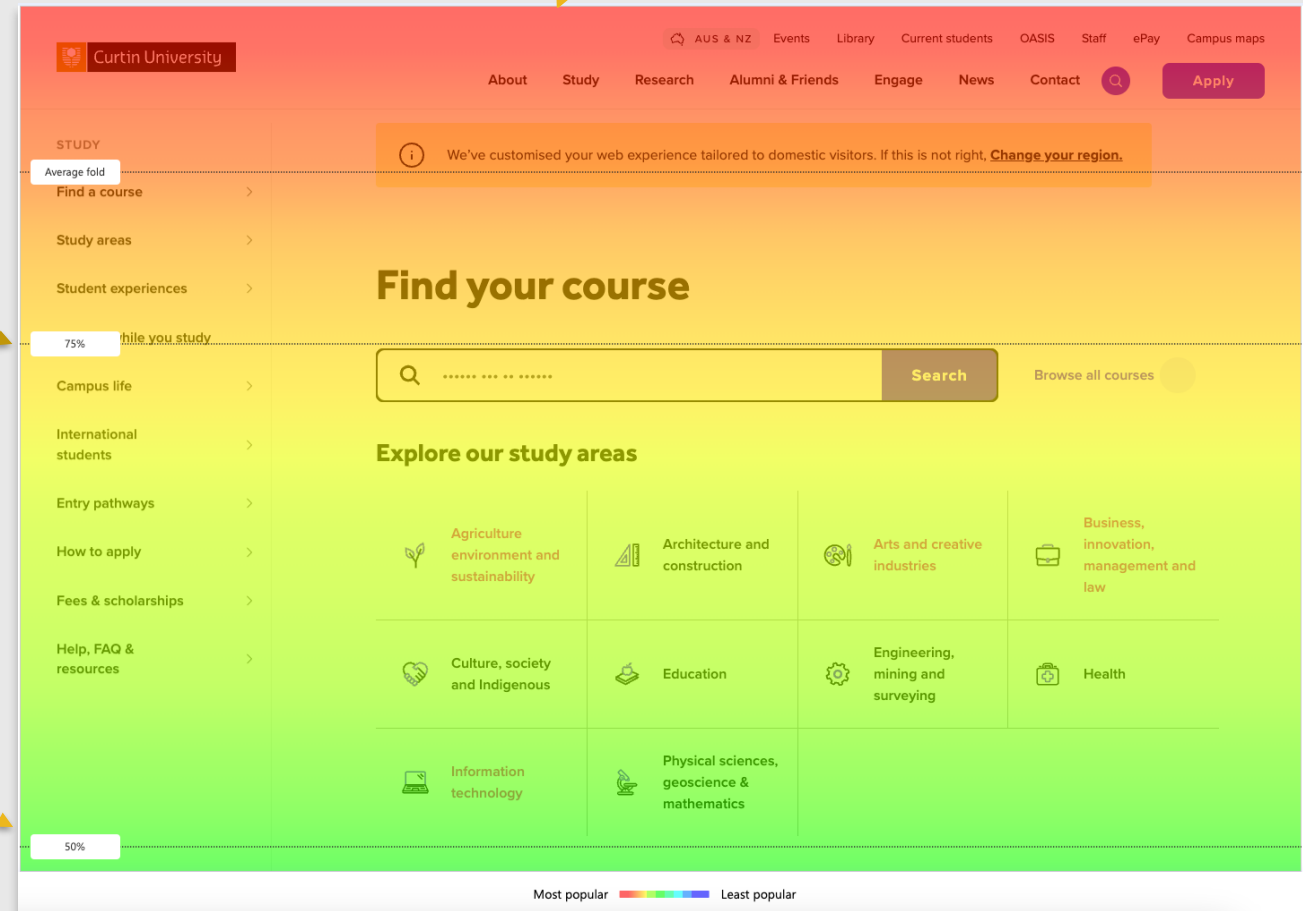
Furthermore, it is important to have no duplicated content in a page, or across more than one page. Even if the same idea is rephrased, repetition in messaging clutters the page and causes cognitive fatigue.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there too much text throughout the page? Is there more than one main subject? Should the sum of all content be split into multiple pages?

75% of users reach this point in the page.

50% of users reach this point in the page.

Heatmap example from Microsoft Clarity exemplifying user scroll depth



Colour coded view of average user scroll depth.



***Technical Performance***

# *Performance Considerations*

The purpose and placement of webpages, content, features and functionality across digital experiences must be considered with long-term performance in mind.

Updates or enhancements to pages or sections of the website may satisfy a short-term initiative but could have negative effects to performance in the long-term.

A holistic perspective to performance is crucial to ensure user satisfaction and to avoid penalties from Google and other third parties. Considerations must be made to the impact on user engagement, satisfaction and overall performance.

Performance encompasses various aspects, including page loading speed, SEO rankings, user interaction and technical performance.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Will the short-term business need conflict with the more impactful long-term effects on performance?



# Page speed performance

Page speed refers to the time it takes for a webpage to load completely in a user's web browser. Slow page speed can result from various factors, both technical and non-technical:

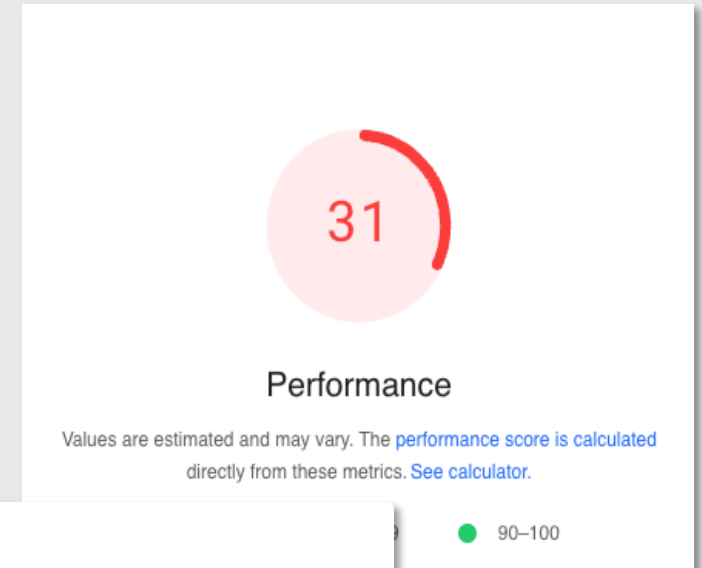
**Large media sizes:** Large file sizes of images, videos, scripts, embedded content and other media files contribute to slow page loading times. These files increase the amount of data that needs to be transferred from the server to the user's browser, leading to longer loading times.

**Third-Party Scripts:** External scripts and plugins, such as advertising scripts, social media widgets, and analytics trackers, can delay page loading.

**Poor code optimisation:** Unsemantic HTML, unsemantic long CSS classes, and bloated non-object-orientated JavaScript or PHP code can slow down page rendering and execution. At Curtin, we try to use object-orientated JavaScript as much as possible. Bloated code and redundant script calls contribute to increased page size and longer loading times. Also, asynchronous calls to scripts greatly speeds up page load times and should be used whenever possible. Minification of all final CSS and JavaScript files will also speed up load times considerably. If large assets must be used (for example, a long video file, consider lazy-loading so that the asset does not hold up the loading of other elements and assets.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** What are the implications of adding large media or scripts to page load speed?

Google penalises websites that take longer than 3 seconds to load all key elements



## METRICS

- ▲ First Contentful Paint  
3.3 s
- ▲ Total Blocking Time  
4,240 ms
- ▲ Speed Index  
8.0 s

# Page speed performance

Page speed plays a crucial role in the evaluation of user experience and website performance, and as such it is now considered a key ranking factor for search engines. There are several implications of poor page speed:

**Negative SEO Impact:** Search engines consider page speed as a ranking factor in search results. Slow-loading pages are often penalised with lower rankings, reducing organic visibility and traffic to the website.

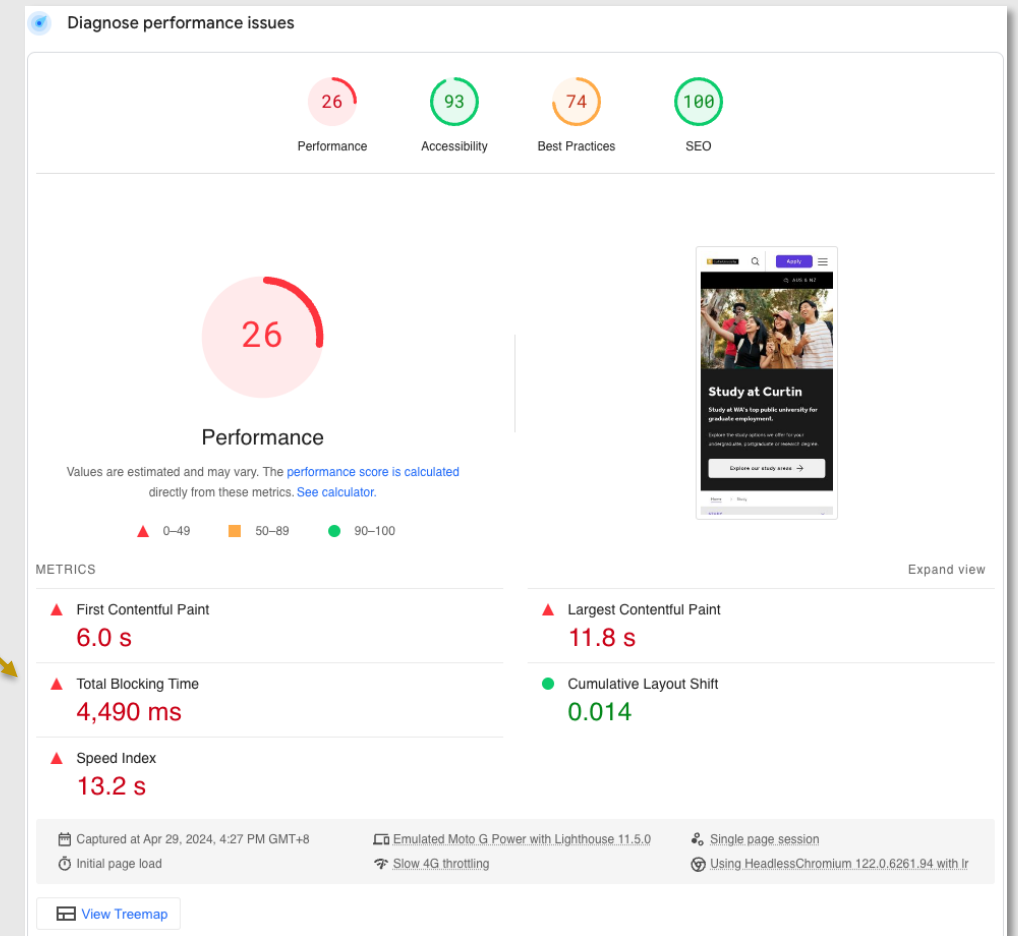
**Mobile Accessibility Issues:** Slow page speed disproportionately affects mobile users, who often have slower internet connections and less powerful devices, making them more likely to abandon slow-loading pages.

**Increased Bounce Rate:** Slow-loading pages have higher bounce rates, as users are more likely to leave the site without interacting with any content. A high bounce rate negatively impacts SEO and indicates a poor user experience.

**Adverse Business Impact:** Page speed issues can have direct financial implications for businesses, including lost revenue from reduced conversions, decreased advertising revenue, and damage to brand reputation and customer loyalty.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** What are the implications of adding large media or scripts to page load speed?

The slower the performance on mobile, the worse the experience may be for mobile users who have slower phone data connections.



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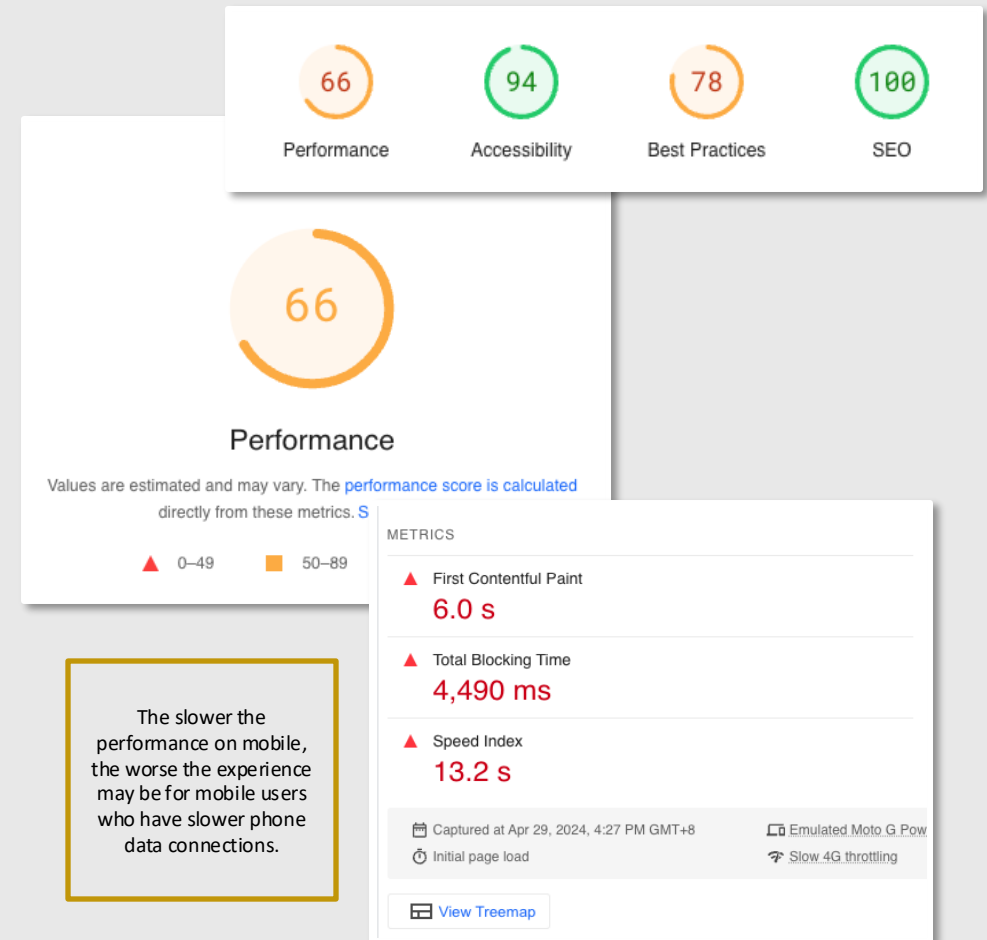
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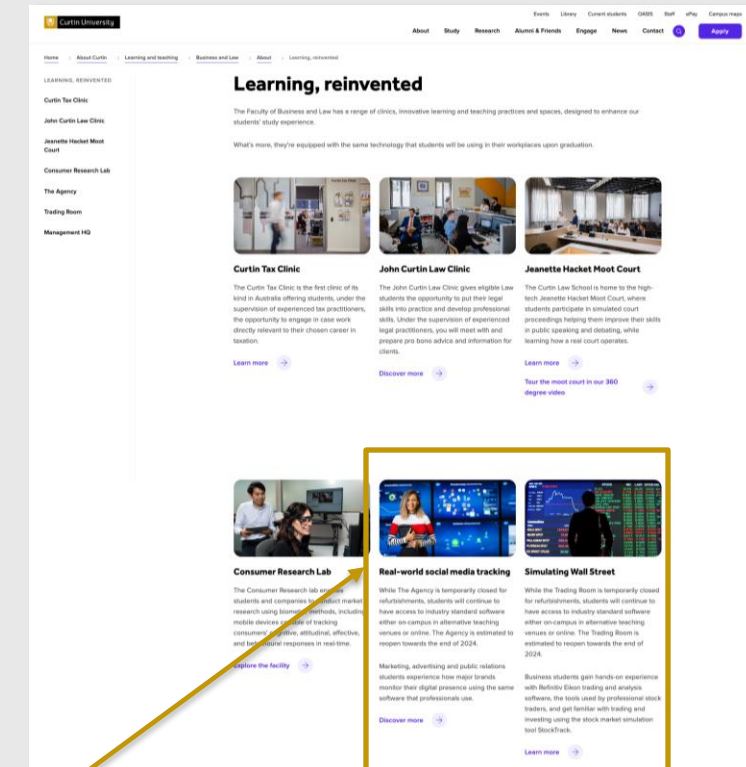
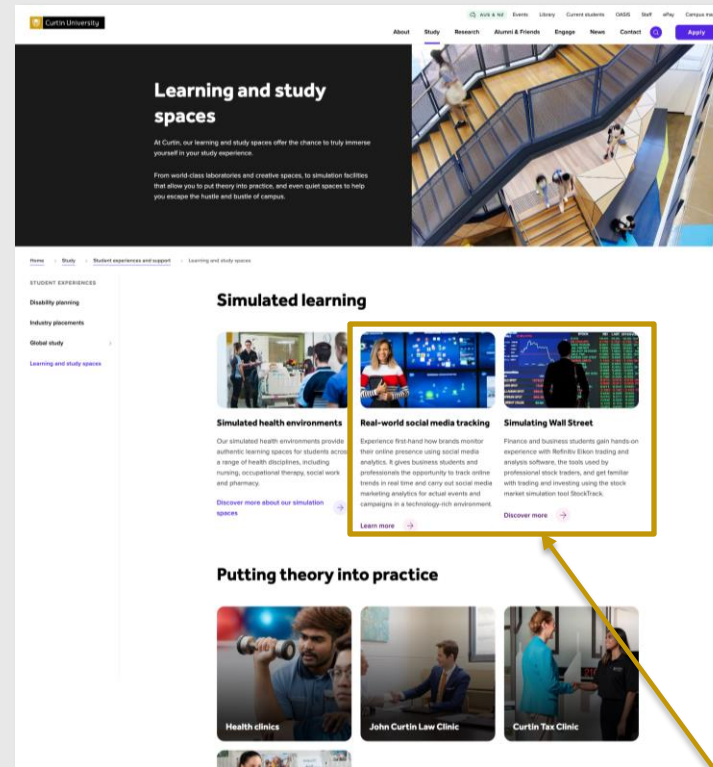


# Duplicate content

Duplicate content refers to identical or very similar content that appears on multiple pages within a website. While duplicate content may seem harmless at first glance, it can have significant performance implications that affect user experience, SEO and overall website performance. Understanding these implications is crucial for maintaining a high-performing digital presence.

**SEO penalties:** Search engines like Google penalise websites with duplicate content by reducing their visibility in search results. This can negatively impact organic traffic and diminish the overall effectiveness of SEO efforts.

**Navigational challenges:** Duplicate content can make it challenging for users to navigate the website efficiently. They may struggle to progress in their journey or be directed to other areas of the website without realising. They may also encounter inconsistencies in information that disrupt their understanding and trust of the subject matter.



Some pieces of content are duplicated across both pages. Although relevant on both, they should be consolidated into one location.



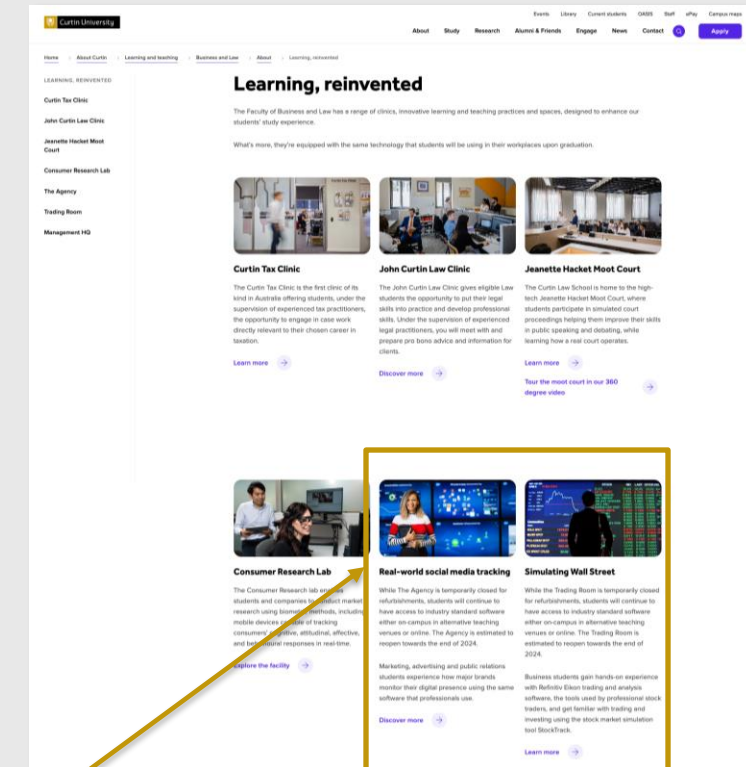
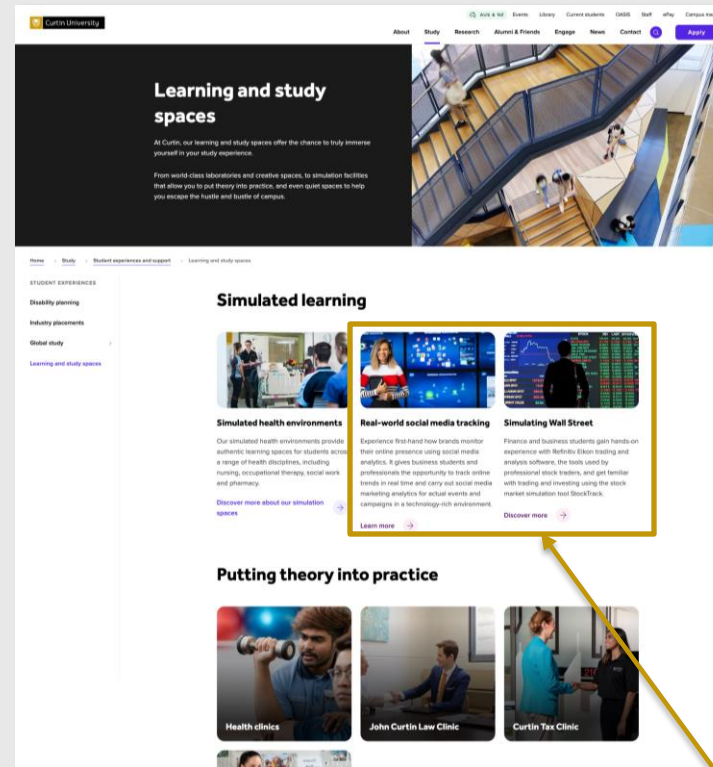
# Duplicate content

**Keyword dilution:** Search engines prioritise unique and relevant content when determining search rankings. Having duplicate content across multiple pages can dilute the visibility of targeted keywords, making it harder for search engines to understand the relevance of each page.

**Server load time:** Hosting duplicate content increases the server load and consumes additional bandwidth, which can impact website performance and loading times. This can result in slower page load speeds and decreased user satisfaction.

**Version control:** Without clear guidelines and processes for managing duplicate content, version control issues may arise, leading to confusion about which version of the content is authoritative or up-to-date.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** What are the implications of adding large media or scripts to page load speed?



Some pieces of content are duplicated across both pages. Although relevant on both, they should be consolidated into one location.

# Orphan pages

Orphan pages are webpages that are not linked to from any other pages within a website. These pages exist in isolation, making them difficult for users and search engines to discover and navigate. While orphan pages may seem innocuous, they can have significant performance implications that impact user experience, search engine optimization (SEO), and overall website performance. Understanding these implications is crucial for maintaining a high-performing digital presence.

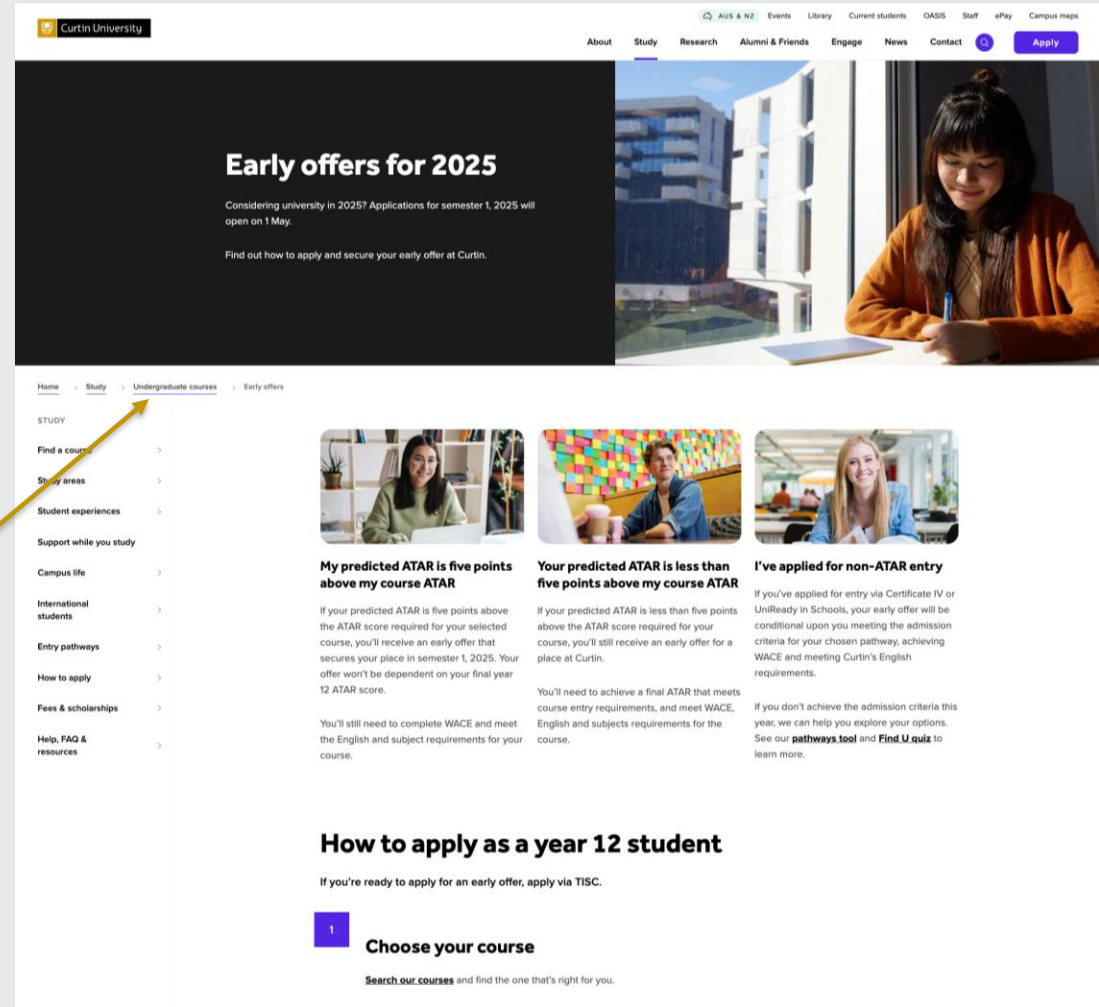
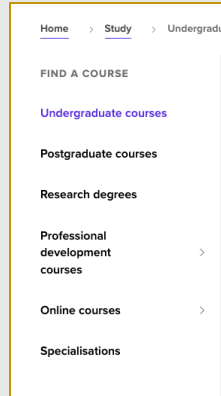
**Crawl Efficiency:** Search engine crawlers rely on internal links to discover and index webpages. Orphan pages, lacking internal links, may go unnoticed by crawlers, leading to inefficient crawling and incomplete indexing of the website.

**Indexing Issues:** Orphan pages may not be discovered or indexed by search engines because they lack internal links. This prevents these pages from appearing in search engine results pages (SERPs) and diminishes their visibility to users.

**Lost Opportunity for Ranking:** Orphan pages represent lost opportunities for ranking in search results for relevant keywords or topics. Without internal linking and visibility to search engines, these pages are unlikely to attract organic traffic.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Where should this page live in the website experience? If people can't find it organically, what implications does this have?

Although the breadcrumbs state the 'Early offers' page is under the 'Undergraduate courses' page there is no link to it in any navigation under that parent page.



# Internal linking

Internal linking plays a crucial role in website structure, user navigation, and SEO. However, certain practices related to internal linking can negatively affect user experience and SEO rankings if not executed properly. Here are some potential issues to be aware of:

**Excessive internal links:** Overloading pages with excessive internal links can create a poor user experience by overwhelming visitors with too many options - This can lead to confusion and decrease the likelihood of users clicking on relevant links. An overuse of internal links can also dilute the page value to SEO.

**Non-relevant links:** Internal links should be contextually relevant to the content of the page and provide additional value to users. Including non-relevant internal links can confuse visitors and dilute the authority of the linked pages.

**Broken internal links:** Broken internal links, which point to pages that no longer exist or have been moved, negatively impact user experience and can harm SEO efforts. Visitors encountering broken links may become frustrated and abandon the website, leading to higher bounce rates.

**Poor navigation structure:** Including inconsistent linking patterns or unclear hierarchy, makes it difficult for users to navigate the website effectively. Poor navigation can result in frustration and abandonment, negatively impacting user engagement and conversions.

**Overuse of keywords in anchor links:** Using exact-match keywords excessively in anchor text for internal links can appear spammy and manipulative to search engines. Keyword stuffing in anchor text may lead to penalties or a decrease in search rankings.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** How many internal links are on this page? How relevant are they to this page experience? Am I providing progression for the user in their journey? Or am I leading them away from their main objective?



## How to apply

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur. Orci a morbi enim id enim gravida pharetra nibh. Nullam vitae aliquam ut feugiat adipiscing. Massa est ipsum mi diam. cursus amet nascetur orci in vari.

[Learn how to apply to Curtin](#) →



## How to apply

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur. Orci a morbi enim id enim gravida pharetra nibh. Nullam vitae aliquam ut feugiat adipiscing. Massa est ipsum mi diam. cursus amet nascetur orci in vari.

[Apply through TISC](#) →

[Apply by scholarship](#) →

[Apply as an international student](#) →

[Application deadlines](#) →

Avoid excessive use of links in content. In this case having too many options on how to apply can overwhelm a user by presenting too many options on how to apply

Broken links can create a negative impact on the user experience abruptly ending a user's journey.

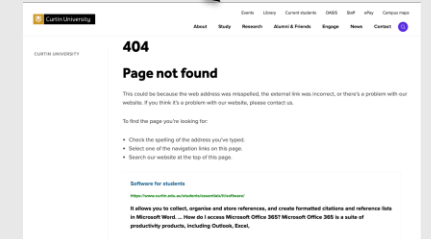
If you haven't completed a university degree before, discover our pathways to [undergraduate study](#) and explore our wide range of courses in the creative industries, STEM, commerce, law and health.



## Apply now to Curtin

Discovering the ideal educational opportunity begins with the simple click of a button [apply now](#). At our institution, we strive to provide seamless access to our diverse array of programs and courses, don't miss out and [apply now](#). Whether you're aspiring to delve into the depths of academia or seeking practical skills for the workforce, our [apply now](#) feature ensures that your journey starts effortlessly. Don't let hesitation hold you back; take the first step towards realising your aspirations today by clicking [apply now](#) and embarking on a transformative educational experience.

Overuse of exact match keywords in anchor and general links can be perceived as spammy and manipulative.



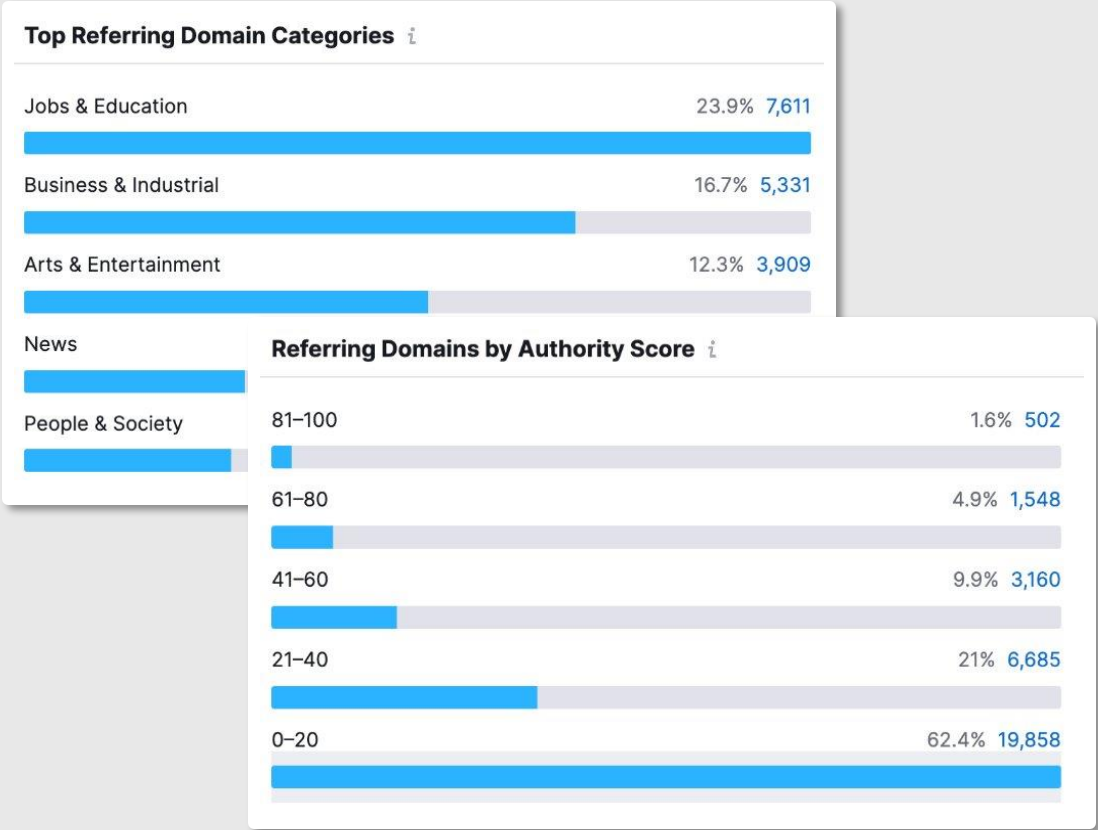
# Backlinking

Backlinks occur when the content of one website links to another – this is common practice to provide reference points to a wider subject context for the user. While backlinks are an essential component of a strong SEO strategy, certain factors related to backlinks can negatively affect website performance if not managed properly. Here are some potential issues to be aware of:

**Low-quality backlinks:** Backlinks from low-quality websites, or pages that are not relevant to the website's niche can harm a website's reputation and authority. Search engines may interpret such links as attempts to manipulate rankings, leading to penalties or a decrease in search visibility.

**Broken backlinks:** Backlinks pointing to pages that no longer exist or have been moved (resulting in broken links) provide little to no SEO value. Broken backlinks can negatively affect user experience and may signal to search engines that the website is not well-maintained or authoritative.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is the side navigation being used in the design? Can it be removed? Are there any inline links that jump to sections of the page, and if so, do they animate smoothly to the new sections?



# Alignment with other digital channels

Aligning web pages with wider digital marketing channels, such as organic search (SEM) and paid advertising (PPC), is essential for maintaining consistency in messaging, branding, and user experience across all touchpoints. However, misalignment between these channels can have significant negative impacts on website performance and overall digital marketing effectiveness.

**SEM campaigns:** Correctly optimising a page to match the users query is essential to ensure a relevant and expected user experience. In some cases, the content or optimisation of SEM pages can be misaligned with search queries.

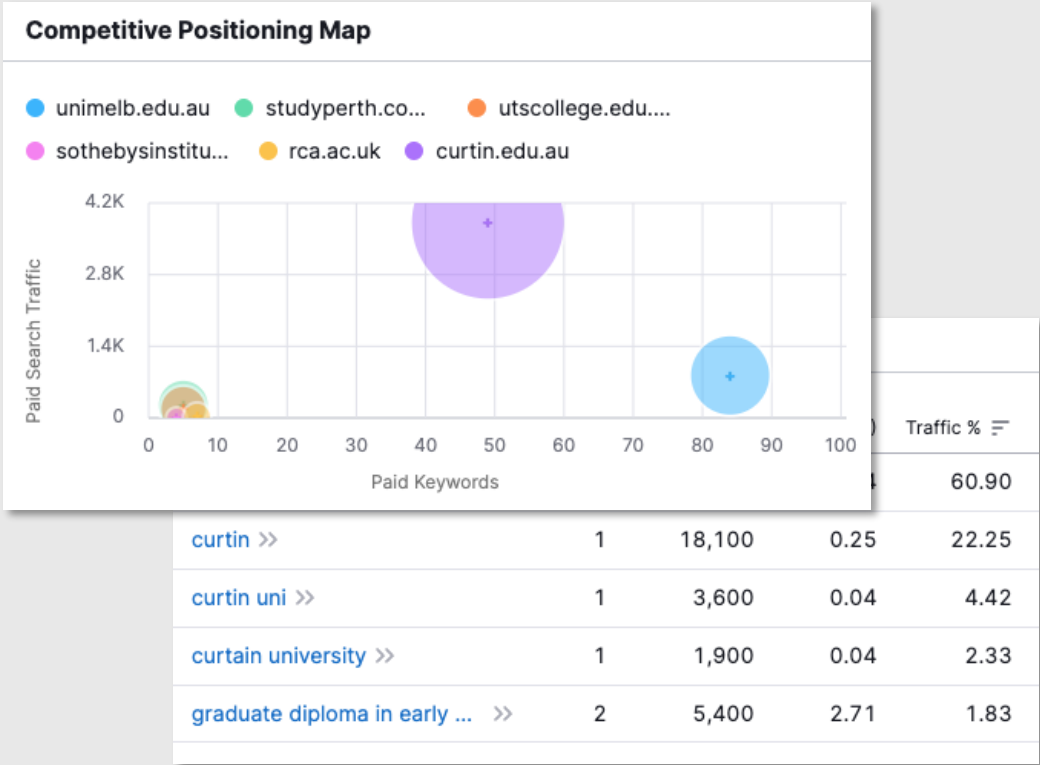
Ensuring the page titles, meta description and schema data matches the purpose of the page helps provide relevance to the user and to search engines.

**PPC campaigns:** PPC campaigns may attract visitors who are not genuinely interested in the website's offerings. This can occur if the audience targeting, ad creative or CTA is misaligned with the page destination experience.

Irrelevant traffic from SEM or PPC campaigns can lead to higher bounce rates, lower engagement, and reduced conversion rates, ultimately impacting the website's performance metrics.

**How to achieve alignment;** To ensure a clear, cohesive user experience that's also built to perform against key metrics, the purpose of the page must be considered paramount, as this will often determine how the page should be optimised and where it should live in the wider digital experience.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Does the website page objective and messaging align with the overall user journey (i.e. where the audience is coming from, is the journey consistent)? Are the measurement metrics for the campaign aligning with how the website performance will be measured? Will the website landing page have any potential negative experience to the user experience (remembering organic traffic if it's within our IA)?



# Performance metrics

User interactions on-page encompass all actions and engagements users perform while visiting a website or digital platform. These interactions can be influenced by various factors, including page layout, content relevance, functionality, and wider digital marketing activities. Understanding the factors that affect user interactions and their implications is crucial for optimising user experience, engagement, and ultimately, achieving digital marketing goals.

**Page traffic:** The total number of visits or sessions to the website over a specific period. Increases or decreases in this metric can indicate the overall popularity and reach of a page.

**Engagement rate:** Engagement rate is a GA4 metric that measures the percentage of visitors who interacted with a piece of content, like clicking on the link, filling out a form, or spending a significant amount of time on the site. Engagement rates increase when your visitors engage well with your content.

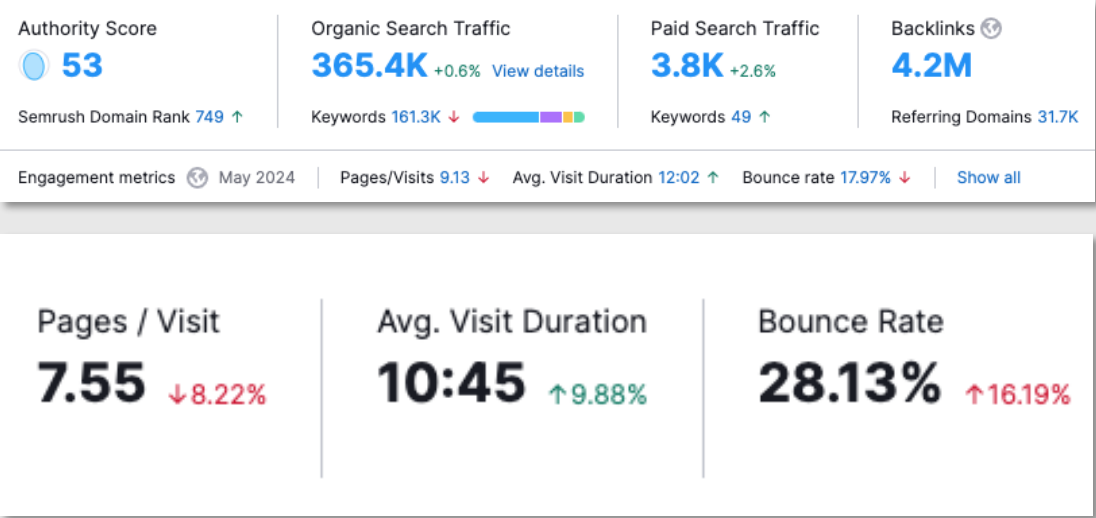
**Bounce Rate:** The percentage of single-page sessions where users leave the website without interacting with any other pages. A high bounce rate may indicate poor user experience or irrelevant content.

**Page speed score:** The time it takes for a webpage to fully load in a user's browser. Faster page load times lead to better user experience, lower bounce rates, and higher engagement.

**Keyword Rankings:** The positions of the website's pages in search engine results pages (SERPs) for specific keywords. Improvements in keyword rankings indicate effective SEO strategies and increased visibility.

**Heatmaps:** A visual report of your page, indicating if people interact with key content, features, links and CTA's.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** How is the page (or pages) performing over time? Do certain metrics change as a result of the updates I've made and what could this indicate? Do the updates to the pages impact other pages along the user journey?





# *Interactivity & Usability*

# Interactivity

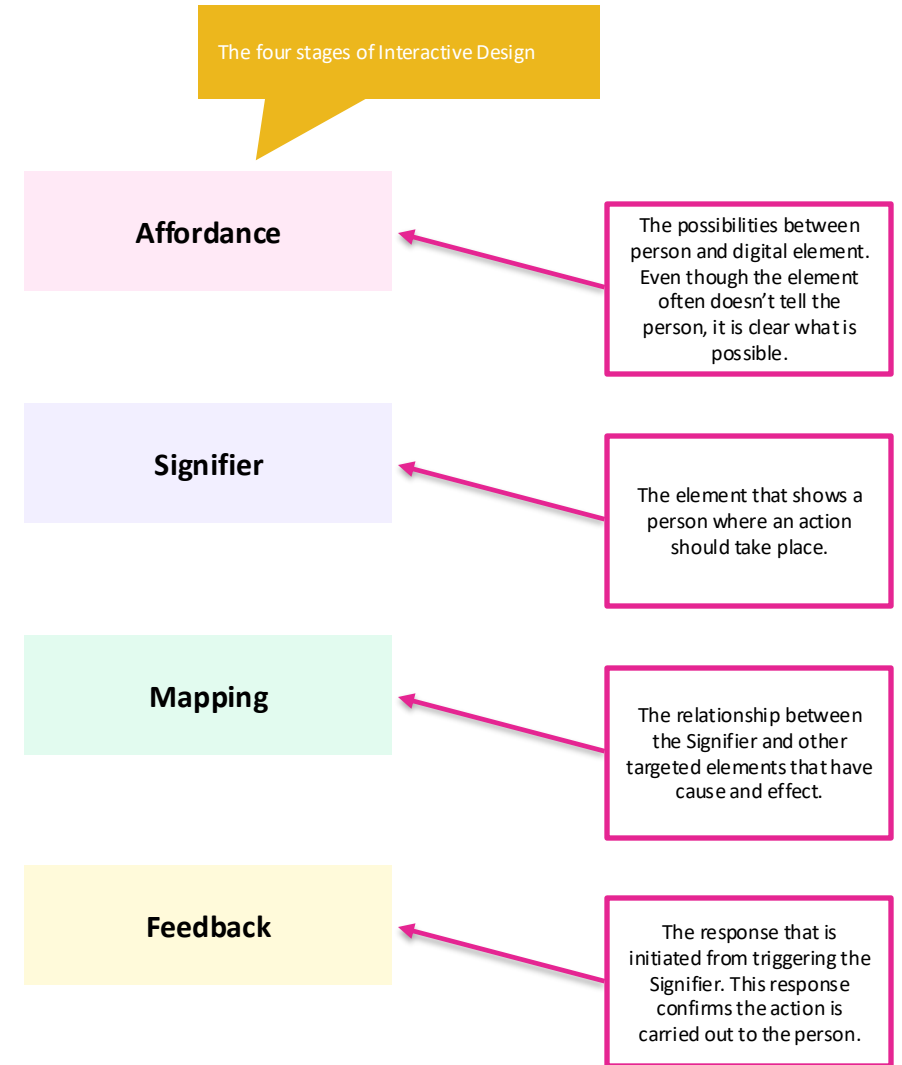
At Curtin, sometimes it is necessary that an interactive prototype be presented instead of a static mock design, to demonstrate how the user will travel through the design. Interactive prototypes are often called “click-throughs”.

Interactivity refers to the interplay between user and digital product. It is the layer of functionality that dictates how the digital product responds to a user engaging with interactive elements.

Interactivity should be transparent so that it is clear what interactive elements do before the user triggers them. It should always be purpose-driven and never be used just to delight.

There are four fundamental concepts to interactive design. Understanding them can help evaluate whether an interaction on the page is purpose-driven, or not.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there unique interactivity in the proposed design, and is it demonstrated? Does it make the journey through the page(s) easier for the user? Does it provide clarity to the information flow? Does it get in the way, or the animation of state too complex? Is there too much interactivity so that the changes of state cloud the flow of content?



# Usability

A design's usability depends on how well its features accommodate user needs. It needs to be robust enough not to break throughout the whole user experience on any device. It is also extremely useful in validating and reproofing more complex designs.

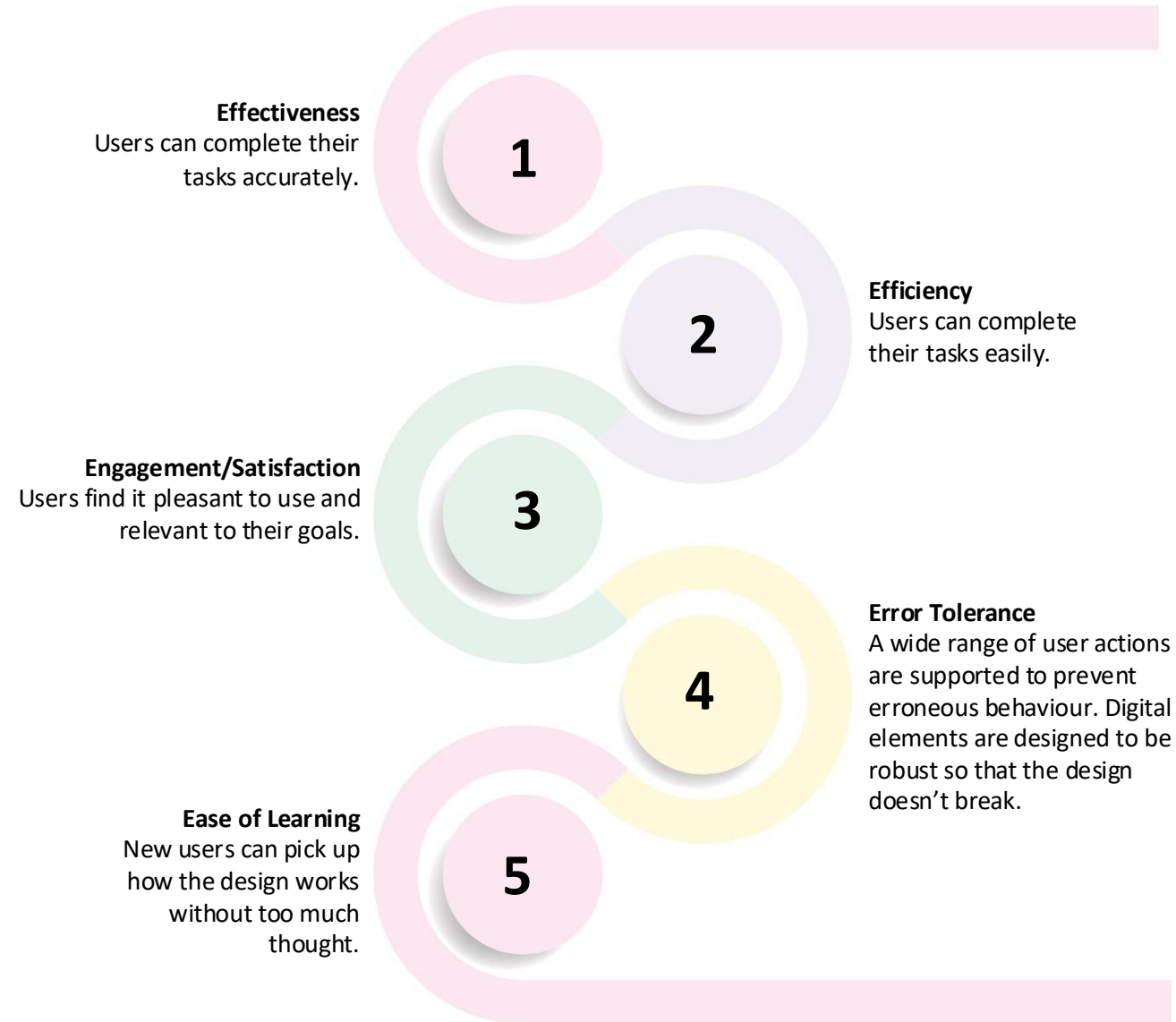
A design with high usability guides users through the easiest and least labour-intensive route. High usability also protects from distractions and considers cognitive load. This promotes consistency and simplicity throughout the design.

Usability also insists on a visual clarity and readability throughout the whole experience. For example, if a form needs to be completed, do the fields read easily without disrupting the rest of the design? Is the form concise, without asking too many questions? If there is animation in the form, is it fluid and undisruptive?

If there are multiple stages, or steps, through a one-subject design, is there a way to save a user's position, or return to previous steps?

There are five stages to great usability: **Effectiveness, Efficiency, Engagement & Satisfaction, Error Tolerance and Ease of Learning.**

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is the design usable? Can usability help me make objective decisions on the design? Is further consideration needed to test the usability of it, outside the evaluation session?



# *Usability Testing*

During a Creative Council session, there may be debate on the effectiveness of a design's usability. At these times it may be necessary to test the design against real use-case people.

Usability testing is a method of testing the functionality of a design by observing real people completing tasks. This can happen in person or remotely. The true worth of usability testing is hearing the tester verbalise their experience as they travel through it. This way, it is possible to find unforeseen pain points in the user journey.

At Curtin, many design initiatives require complex logic to achieve its strategic goals. This logic, and its execution through designed functionality, needs to be built out as interactive prototypes. As opposed to static mockup designs, interactive prototypes need further stages of review to ensure they behave as expected.

Through the Digital Engagement (DE) and Marketing Engagement (ME) teams in UM, it is possible to arrange usability testing, if more research is needed to pass a design in a Creative Council session.

When planning a usability testing session, it is imperative that the testing happens on the right kind of sample group, which is usually based on the relevant **Persona**, **User Story** or **User Journey Map**.

**Questions to ask when evaluating:** Is there enough information delivered to properly evaluate the project, or is more required? For example, does the design need to be tested for usability before continuing? This can be particularly important when critiquing interactive prototypes.

# *Summary*

# *Summary*

The Brand, Digital Style and Digital Experience Guidelines provide an overview of key considerations to support Curtin stakeholders when creating digital assets in line with the Curtin brand.

The aim of this pack is to provide direction and tips in the planning and approach digital experience assets, taking into account important contemporary standards of best practice, as well as best practices defined here at Curtin University. This pack also provides a reference for evaluating committees such as University Marketing's Creative Council when required to review and approve new work to be published through Curtin website.

It is suggested that the consideration of new work follow;

1. Brand Guidelines
2. Digital Style Guidelines
3. The order of information in this pack

Particularly when looking at the Digital Experience Guidelines, not all steps, or subjects, in this pack may be relevant - the scope of presented work will dictate what information should be used to assess. But it is the pack's objective to cover all scenarios to ensure stakeholders are equipped with all options and the Creative Council committee is fully prepared for the evaluation process.

Please also note, this pack will be continually updated as the scope of work and types of submissions increases.



# *Support and Resources*

## Key contacts

Should you have queries regarding the contents of this guide, please reach out to the appropriate contacts.

For queries relating to Brand Guidelines:

- [kate.jennings@curtin.edu.au](mailto:kate.jennings@curtin.edu.au)
- [caroline.howard@curtin.edu.au](mailto:caroline.howard@curtin.edu.au)

For queries relating to UX and Digital Style Guidelines:

- [dee.franjicevic@curtin.edu.au](mailto:dee.franjicevic@curtin.edu.au)
- [jack.kellett@curtin.edu.au](mailto:jack.kellett@curtin.edu.au)

For queries relating to Technical Performance Guidelines:

- [ashton.wills@curtin.edu.au](mailto:ashton.wills@curtin.edu.au)

## Resources

Access the following links to find out more information regarding Brand and Digital Guidelines:

### Brand guidelines

To see Curtin's full brand guidelines, please visit:

- <https://brand.curtin.edu.au/>

### MIMAS Library

For more information on MIMAS blocks and example layouts, please visit:

- <https://mimas.curtin.edu.au/>