

## Improve an Information Architecture

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The Northeastern University College of Professional Studies Policies & Procedures page (<http://www.cps.neu.edu/about-cps/policies-and-procedures> ) has 25 pages of content for 19 policies, and no contextual navigation assistance. The user is left having to scroll through the entire text to see if what they're looking for *might* be there. In this paper, I propose modifications to the page's information architecture that will drastically improve its usefulness.

The 19 policies on the page are in no apparent order. The page should have a list of links to the policies to help users decide, before scrolling through all 25 pages, which policy might address their particular concern or to conclude that none of them is likely to. The policies also need to be alphabetized to help the users know where they are in the list at all times. Alphabetizing will provide directional guideposts for users to navigate within the page without using the links given.

To implement these changes, I recommend the following specifics:

- Merge the Undergraduate and Graduate Transfer Credit sections into one "Transfer Credit" policy and use sub-sections to distinguish between the two. This makes the number of policies 18.
- Provide a 3-column list of the 18 policies in a small font so it doesn't take too much real estate at the top of the page. Two policy names have to be shortened so they can fit in this list:
  - Replace "Lap-Top Computers, Cell Phones, or Other Transcribers or Recorders" with "Electronic Devices"
  - Eliminate the word policy in "Academic Honesty And Integrity Policy." It's redundant given that it's a policy page.
  - Use "&" in place of "and"
- Provide a link back to the top of the page at the bottom of each policy section.
- The page has 2 headers on it: "Policies & Procedures" and "POLICY STATEMENTS." Besides wasting real estate, they're redundant. I recommend keeping the first one since it's the label used in the local navigation list.
- The introductory paragraphs are a little confusing and should be clarified.
  - It mentions "primary statements about courses, programs, and certificate requirements," but there are no secondary statements.

- “For information about *other academic policies and procedures*, ... refer to the following” is confusing since this is the page for policies & procedures. Some better delineation of what policies are where has to be provided.

The resulting list of links would look like this:

Academic Honesty & Integrity Academic Progress Changing Majors Course Withdrawals Diversity Requirement Electronic Devices	Grading Graduation In Absentia Status Name/Address Change Prior Learning Assessment Refunds	Senior Status Smoking Special Studies Transcripts & Records & FERPA Transfer Credit USA Patriot Act
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The addition of these navigation aids will drastically increase the usability of this page.