

University of Florida Information Technology Domain Name Policy

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Domain Name Definition

A domain name is a series of characters that provides a label for a given Web location other than the actual IP address of that location. Each domain name provides a direct link to the address of a particular Web site. In practice, domain names are a series of characters with periods or dots (.) separating levels. Each domain name level must be between 1 and 63 characters long inclusive. Levels within a domain name may contain only specific characters. Valid characters include letters (A–Z and a–z), digits (1–9) and dashes or hyphens. Capitalization is not used to differentiate between two labels (aaa and AAA are the same).

An individual domain name is generally categorized by the number of levels. For example, `ufl.edu` is a second-level domain because it has two levels and `news.ufl.edu` is a third-level domain because it has three levels. Levels are counted from the far right of the domain name to the left. Any domain names with the same first and second level labels are considered to be within the same namespace. So, `news.ufl.edu` and `calendar.ufl.edu` are both in the `ufl.edu` namespace and both are third-level domain names.

Domain Name Policy

All web sites and other internet sites used to conduct University of Florida activities must contribute to the overall mission of the university. They must be consistent with the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. In addition, all sites must clearly identify the UF connection and must be officially recorded with UF.

Domain Name Request Process

1. Review project with local IT, Web and Communications professionals
 - Consider adding new content to existing pages
 - Consider adding new pages to existing domains
 - Consider adding new directories or levels to existing domains
2. Review project in context of third level domain
 - Review current domain name policy
 - Schedule brief meeting with Web Administration and local unit staff to discuss options
 - Following steps will be decided at that meeting.

Domain Name Standards

The University of Florida uses the second level domain of `ufl.edu`. All official university Web sites, including those of colleges, departments, divisions or other fiscal or operating units of the university, as well as faculty or staff performing university functions, should use appropriate names within the `ufl.edu`

namespace for Web sites or other use of the Internet. Generally, this means that all UF Web sites will end with `ufl.edu` and will be differentiated by additional levels as well.

Student organizations that choose to reside within the `ufl.edu` domain namespace should be hosted under specific third level domain names, such as `grove.ufl.edu`, that have been reserved for student use.

Naming Convention Guidelines for Subdomains

Since colleges, departments and other units are a subset of the University, domain names are expected to reflect an association with the university, a unit or a service to the university. Domain names are a reflection on the University and good taste should be used in name selection. Administrators responsible for approving sub-domains may refuse a name if it is deemed inappropriate or if it may cause confusion about the true nature or purpose of a system, service, program or Web site.

Examples of third level-domain names would be of the form `unitname.ufl.edu`. Examples of fourth-level domain names would be of the form `officename.unitname.ufl.edu`.

Third-level domains

[View the list of approved third-level domains](#) (GatorLink login required).

[Request a third-level domain](#) (GatorLink login required).

Third-level domains are an important means of communication and marketing for UF. As such, approval of any third-level domain involves consideration of technical, marketing and Web related issues. Web Administration will oversee the initial review of domain requests. Input and advice may be provided by appropriate committees and community members. The Web Administration group is designated to make decisions on domain requests that clearly fit this policy. When needed, requests that are not clearly within the standard approval pattern will be brought to the Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President of University Relations or their designees. Requests are considered on a first-come-first-served basis. Based on the importance of third-level domains, submitters should plan on an extended review cycle. Review will be conducted within 45 days from request submission. The Web Administration group will notify requestors of the results of the review within the same 45 day window.

Generally, third-level domain requests that are approved and registered meet the following criteria:

1. The requesting unit is a college level, UF-wide center or similar organization at UF or
2. The unit provides services to all of the UF community or
3. The requested name represents a service or application used by the full UF community and
4. The unit expects to provide these services on an ongoing basis and
5. The requested third-level name is unique within the UF namespace and
6. The requested third-level name is generally
 - a. Recognized as a word (e.g. `news`) or
 - b. Recognized as an abbreviation (e.g. `aa` for Academic Affairs) and
 - c. Reasonably unique to the services offered or otherwise not likely to represent services offered by other UF units and
 - d. Unlikely to conflict with other current or future third-level domain name requests, services, programs or systems.
 - e.

A third-level domain name request will usually be denied if:

1. The requesting unit is a department, center, or program associated with a unit that already has a third-level domain (e.g. `design.ufl.edu` would be denied in favor of `design.dcp.ufl.edu` or `design.ce.ufl.edu` or similar)
2. The requesting unit provides services or information that is likely of interest to only a subset of the UF community (e.g. `judo.ufl.edu` for the judo club)
3. The services are expected to be provided for a limited time (e.g. `roundtable.ufl.edu` for Web site for 2003 Sustainability Roundtable Conference)
4. The requested name is

- a. Not unique within current or reasonably expected future services (e.g. `accounting` is an area of interest to different UF units)
- b. Conflicts with other current or future uses for that name (e.g. `policies.ufl.edu` is appropriate for a policy clearing house for all UF policies, while `policies.uaa.ufl.edu` would be specific to the UF Athletic Association)
- c. Has a substantial potential for confusion with existing third-level names (e.g. `ed.ufl.edu` might be confused with the College of Education)
- d.

Some third-level domain names were approved and registered prior to the institution of this policy. Occasionally, exceptions to the criteria listed above are approved. In general, domains approved under previous policies may remain in use. Occasionally, review of an approved third-level domain may be initiated.

Please note that in general, the word `gator` in a domain name will not be approved. If you need to use this term, you will need specific approval for that from the Associate Vice President of University Relations or his designee.

Once a web page exists at that third-level domain address, please register that page at www.ufl.edu/websites.

Fourth-level or higher domains

Any member of the UF community may request a fourth-level or higher domain from the managers of the existing third-level domains. Please refer to <http://net-services.ufl.edu/ns/cgi-bin/domain-info.cgi?status=Registered> to identify the managing group and related contact information. Each managing group has its own request procedures and approval criteria.

Centers, Institutes and Multi-disciplinary grants

Officially recognized centers and institutes may request a fourth-level domain under one of the following third-level domains: `centers.ufl.edu` or `institutes.ufl.edu`. The listing of approved centers and institutes can be found at: www.ir.ufl.edu/centers.htm.

Fourth-level domains within the `centers.ufl.edu` or `institutes.ufl.edu` name spaces can be requested by using the form available at <http://net-services.ufl.edu/domains/>

For these specific fourth-level domains, the address will be registered in DNS as a CNAME to an existing server. The center or institute should use their Web server's redirection facilities [1,2] to point this to the desired server location. Permanent redirects should be used (301 Moved Permanently), not temporary redirects (302 Found). Other means of aliasing the fourth-level domain to the preferred location are not recommended as they violate the "one URL per resource" rule and can reduce search engine rankings.

Currently, centers and institutes can not request a domain prefixed with "www." In the future, if this type of domain is needed and the policy changed to support it, the domain name with `www.` must follow the same guidelines as the domain without the "www." prefix.

For example, the Center for World Arts could request `worldarts.centers.ufl.edu`. This address can then be forwarded to the actual location of `www.arts.ufl.edu/cwa/` or similar. As another example, the UF Genetics Institute could request `genetics.institutes.ufl.edu`.

When a multi-year, multi-disciplinary research grant exists, the principal investigator may also request a fourth-level domain with the `centers.ufl.edu` name space. The request will be reviewed according to the standards for third-level domain requests with input from the office of the Vice President for Research. When appropriate, third-level domains names are also available to centers, institutes, and grants with UF, state or national application. Such requests for third-level domains can be submitted through the process above.

[1] http://httpd.apache.org/docs/2.0/mod/mod_alias.html#redirectmatch

[2] <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/WindowsServer2003/Library/IIS/41c238b2-1188-488f-bf2d-464383b1bb08.mspx>

Domain Namespace other than ufl.edu

Maintaining a consistent Web presence at `ufl.edu` allows the highest possible search ranking results. UF domains must involve legitimate university related business. Listed below are some reasons that domain names outside the UF namespace (`ufl.edu`) may be purchased and hosted at UF. All non-`ufl.edu` domains used by UF must involve legitimate university related activities.

For example, one reason for a non-`ufl.edu` domain may be to protect intellectual property. Another may be to facilitate collaboration between UF and non-UF groups. A third reason may be to minimize confusion, for example, having a series of the `.com`, `.net` and `.edu` domains registered for a given second-level namespace (e.g. `ufl.edu`, `ufl.com`, `ufl.net`).

In general, UF organizations are encouraged to use the `ufl.edu` namespace and avoid publicizing or publishing addresses in other namespaces. When appropriate, the non-`ufl.edu` domain may be pointed at the appropriate UF domain. When links point to the non-`ufl.edu` domain, the linking entity should be contacted and asked to change the link to the `ufl.edu` domain. Exceptions to this may be granted when appropriate.

For example, the Digital Worlds Institute (`digitalworlds.ufl.edu`) may purchase `digitalworlds.com`, but should not promote that domain. The `digitalworlds.com` domain can then be pointed at `digitalworlds.ufl.edu`. Digital Worlds Institute should monitor its Web logs to ensure links are pointing to `digitalworlds.ufl.edu`. Each organization with a non-`ufl.edu` domain should monitor the relevant Web logs and work to make sure that all links reference the related `ufl.edu` domain.

Another example might be a center or proposal that is a collaborative effort between UF and another organization. In order to show the collaborative nature of the activity, a namespace that is independent of all of the organizations might be required.

All non-`ufl.edu` domains must be listed with Network Services using the form available at <http://net-services.ufl.edu/domains/>. This listing includes information about the `ufl.edu` domain related to this non-`ufl.edu` address. If the domain name service for the non-`ufl.edu` domain is purchased from a commercial vendor, the registration must list a UF central networking location as one of the contacts. Please use the name "domain administrator for UF" and set the e-mail address to `domain@ufl.edu` for this contact information. The `domain@ufl.edu` address is monitored by central UF staff. Using this information in the registration will allow the most consistent response and allow UF central staff to assist with the account as needed.

We encourage application of the third-level review process listed above to non-`ufl.edu` domains. Web Administration as well as University Relations staff members are available to assist with the review of non-`ufl.edu` domains. Once a Web site exists at that non-`ufl.edu` address, please register that page at www.ufl.edu/websites.

Policy approved by Dr. Chuck Frazier, Interim CIO, November 13, 2009.