How to Choose a Good Domain Name

The information below is intended to help you choose good domain names that will align with institutional goals, be consistent with the campus's identity and branding, and be meaningful and sustainable over time. All registered domain names must comply with UCLA Policy 411.

Consider if an option within a Campus Entity is appropriate

For example, if a name will be subject to frequent changes, clear and meaningful only within a department or with a department qualifier, or is clearly associated with the Campus Entity:

- researchgroup.dept.ucla.edu
- dept.ucla.edu/programname

Such options are subject to local policy set by the Campus Entity.

Take into account relative size, scope and persistence of the entity

A fund-raising event, an institute and a regular academic department may share a common focus. But the key word to describe that focus – "French" or "bioengineering" – would typically be reserved for the academic department. Similarly, www.bunche.ucla.edu is appropriately used by the Bunche Center for African American Studies, not the building Bunche Hall or the library exhibit on Ralph Bunche. Priority should be given to:

- Academic programs
- Major institution-wide initiatives (for example, Alumni Day or the True Bruin Welcome)
- Campus-wide programs or services used by many people from many different organizations either within or outside the university (for example: the Campus Maps or the Campus Virtual Tour)
- Inter-departmental, inter-disciplinary and/or multi-institution collaborations

Names should reflect the nature or purpose of the Web site (e.g., biology.ucla.edu)

If the proposed name is not the name of a Campus Entity, it should not be easily confused with one.

Avoid using acronyms or abbreviations and use a single word

Remember that many users will "guess" a URL. So while brevity is important, so are clarity and memorability. For example, is it "law school" or "school of law"? Doesn't really matter: the key word in that instance is simply "law" (law.ucla.edu). Other examples:

- nursing.ucla.edu (instead of son.ucla.edu)
- engineering.ucla.edu (instead of hsseas.ucla.edu)
- anderson.ucla.edu (instead of agsm.ucla.edu)

Also consider the use of compound words

In most cases, two words can be run together without obscuring their meaning. Examples:

- healthcare.ucla.edu
- studentaffairs.ucla.edu
- studentgroups.ucla.edu

Sometimes an abbreviation is the best choice

An abbreviation (or an acronym) may be harder for outsiders to "guess," but it's the best choice under the circumstances listed below.

- The abbreviation or acronym is more commonly used than the full name: www.bol.ucla.edu for Bruin OnLine or www.mednet.ucla.edu for Medical Network
- The abbreviation avoids a word that's difficult to spell: www.npi.ucla.edu for Neuropsychiatric Institute (even well-known medical terms can be difficult to type from memory)
- The abbreviation takes the place of three or more key words: www.idre.ucla.edu for the Institute for Digital Research and Education – leaving out any of the three words would result in an ambiguous name.

Don't clutter Internal UCLA Domain Names

For example, by requesting a Web address to work around typographical errors made in URLs that appear in print materials (e.g., briunday.ucla.edu instead of bruinday.ucla.edu). Such domain name requests will be denied.