



# **VISUAL ASSET** **PLAYBOOK**

**NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**

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# PURPOSE

This playbook was developed by NAU's Academic Affairs Marketing (AAM) team for Academic Affairs staff and faculty. Its purpose is to provide guidance for the selection, use, and development of visual assets (photos and videos) that academic stakeholders might utilize to support marketing initiatives.

# HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

This playbook should be utilized to:

- Develop awareness of best practices and techniques related to visual media assets
- Assist departments in the creation of visual content for new programs and marketing materials
- Refresh website photography
- Support any other projects that require visual assets

We recommend reading through the playbook, reviewing referenced training and information links, trying out the step-by-step instructions, and then reaching out to the AAM team with any questions via email ([aamarketing@nau.edu](mailto:aamarketing@nau.edu)) or/and using our webform [\[URL\]](#) to request a 1:1 consultation, individual or team training, or other support.

# UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE OF VISUAL ASSETS

## Why visual assets are important

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Visual assets are an important part of our brand at NAU. They help to convey the experience that a potential or existing student might have while studying at NAU. Photos and videos inspire students to pursue specific opportunities while at NAU, and work to promote our university and the programs and fields of study that are available. Through visual assets we can tell the story of what's happening on our campuses and share those stories with audiences worldwide.

## Categories of assets and levels of engagement

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Visual assets may fall under three broad categories:

1. Visual assets that support institution-wide initiatives and campaigns
2. Visual assets that support recruitment and retention for specific departments and colleges
3. Visual assets that support recruitment and retention in individual programs

The chart on the following page outlines the AAM team's involvement based on the nature of the request and the type of initiative it supports.

Current Provost initiatives can be found on the Office of the Provost site: [nau.edu/provost/initiatives](http://nau.edu/provost/initiatives).

# Categories of assets and levels of engagement



Please contact [aamarketing@nau.edu](mailto:aamarketing@nau.edu) with questions regarding this engagement process.

## Guidance for independent vs. supported asset development

### When can I just take my own pictures/videos?

Please see the chart below to assist you in determining how to proceed with asset development needs.

Asset development need	How to proceed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photos/videos for externally facing web pages (nau.edu).</li><li>• Photos/videos for intended for external audiences.</li></ul>	Photos must be obtained from SEM Photo/Video team (either accessed from Mediagraph or via an approved photo shoot). Please see additional context below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photos for internal audiences</li><li>• Assets for social media</li><li>• Assets for use on internal facing web pages (in.nau.edu).</li></ul>	May be taken by faculty/staff/employees within department, using this playbook. AAM team is available to provide consulting and training.

## Photography usage on external facing web pages (nau.edu)

*Guidance provided by Josh Biggs, Assistant Director, Strategic Enrollment and Marketing*

NAU's Photo/Video team has created an extensive library of assets and regularly updates those assets. These assets have historically been stored in the Digital Asset Management (DAM) system called "Widen Collective." Widen was recently replaced with a new Digital Asset Management system called "Mediagraph."

Photographs and video footage taken by SEM's Photo/Video team uploaded to Mediagraph are copyright protected by the Arizona Board of Regents. Photos and video footage used on webpages on any nau.edu site must only come from Mediagraph for copyright purposes and for the following reasons:

1. **Ownership of the images.** All images stored in Mediagraph were photographed by SEM's Photo/Video staff and affiliated freelancers, so there are no risks of imagery being published that we do not own. Using outside images opens us up to liability.
2. **Images in Mediagraph are in-brand.** Our images generally follow visual branding guidelines that are consistent with our (visual) marketing voice. All our photographers are intimately familiar with these guidelines and shoot images that are compliant in terms of content and style.
3. SEM's Photo/Video team collects and maintains **photo releases** for our subjects. The team keeps at least five years of archived photo releases of marketing imagery and maintains very clear communication with all subjects on how and where their imagery can be used. With marketing photos, as opposed to images used for communication, we have legal responsibilities to some of our subjects.
4. Lastly, **quality control and exposure** are a concern with outside imagery.

# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

## Accessing and assessing existing visual assets

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When considering the usage of visual assets for a project, academic stakeholders should assess existing visual assets to determine if any are appropriate for the project.

All existing visual assets relevant to your department should be available on Mediagraph, NAU's new digital asset management (DAM) system. All employees affiliated with NAU have access to Mediagraph and can create an account using their NAU email.

### Viewing and searching existing assets

Log into Mediagraph ([mediagraph.io/nau/explore](https://mediagraph.io/nau/explore)) and initiate a search for images that are relevant to your project.

#### Search tips:

- Keywords should be subject oriented
- Keywords that connect context and concept of image can be helpful and allow the search engine to find the theme that's represented

### Downloading assets

Once you identify images that are most relevant to your project, you will need to download them to your shared or local drive.

### Mediagraph support

Mediagraph offers the following helpful resources for beginning users. AAM team members can also assist you.

- **Finding content:**  
[damsoftware.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/13713983702292-Find-content-with-the-Search-bar](https://damsoftware.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/13713983702292-Find-content-with-the-Search-bar)
- **Selecting and de-selecting assets:**  
[damsoftware.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/29868467100308-Select-and-de-select-assets](https://damsoftware.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/29868467100308-Select-and-de-select-assets)
- **Downloading assets:**  
[damsoftware.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/4410504115604-How-to-download-assets](https://damsoftware.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/4410504115604-How-to-download-assets)

## Securing new visual assets

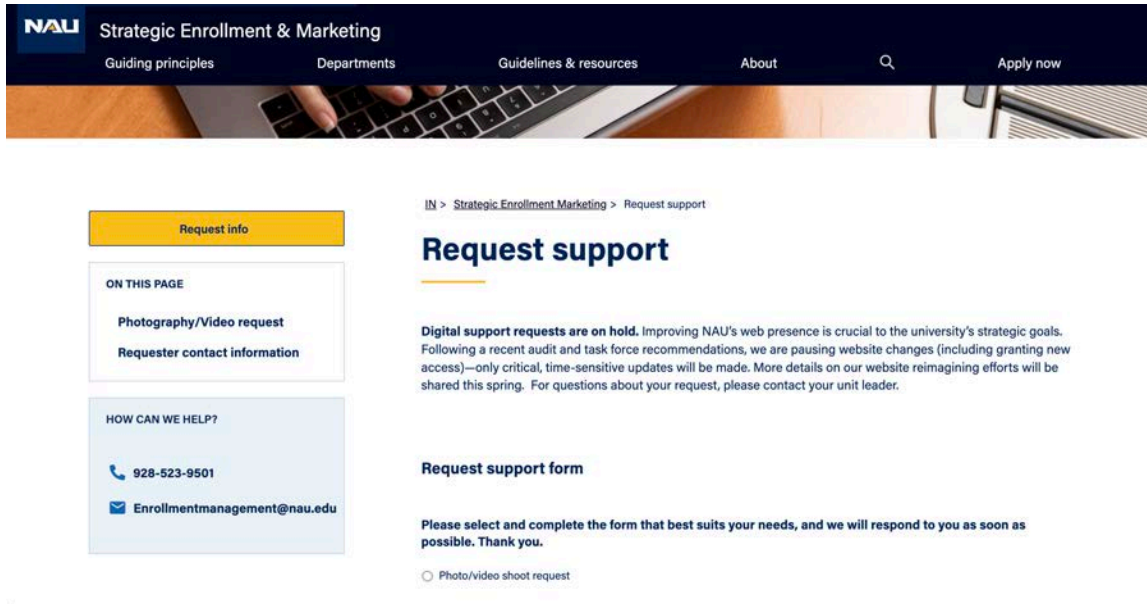
---

If relevant/appropriate visual assets are not available on Mediagraph, and if the assets meet criteria described above you will either need to request support from SEM's Photo/Video team or create new visual assets yourself. Regardless, the AAM team is available for consultation, instruction, and support. Instructions are provided in the following sections.

### Requesting a new photo shoot – step-by-step

To request support from the Strategic Enrollment and Marketing **Photography** team, please use the following form: [in.nau.edu/strategic-enrollment-marketing/request-support/](https://in.nau.edu/strategic-enrollment-marketing/request-support/).

The screen image below is what you will see when you access the form.



After clicking on the button labeled, “Photo/video shoot request,” additional text boxes will appear on screen. You will be required to respond to the following questions:

- What are you hoping to achieve with this photo/video shoot?
- Where do you intend to use this photo/video content?
- Photo/video subject
- Photo/video shoot location
- Keywords suggested
- Time and date of requested support
- Requested date of delivery of content
- Is this a hard deadline?

You also will be asked to provide contact information so the team can follow up with your request. **Please provide as much context and detail as you can to the team.**

#### Photography/Video request

Please use the form below to request the services of the Strategic Enrollment & Marketing photography team. All requests will be prioritized based on the scope and substance of the request and our team's capacity. For event requests, we ask for four weeks' notice prior to the event. We will respond to your request within two to three business days.

#### Photography/video purpose \*

What are you hoping to achieve with this photo/video shoot?

**Photo/video use \***

Where do you intent to use this photo/video content?

**Photo/video shoot subject \***

**Photo/video shoot location \***

**Keywords suggested for this photo/video shoot \***

**Photo/video shoot time \***

**Photo/video shoot date \***

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

**Photo/video delivery \***

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

**Is this a hard deadline? \***

- Yes
- No

## Requester contact information


Name \*

Email \*

Phone \*

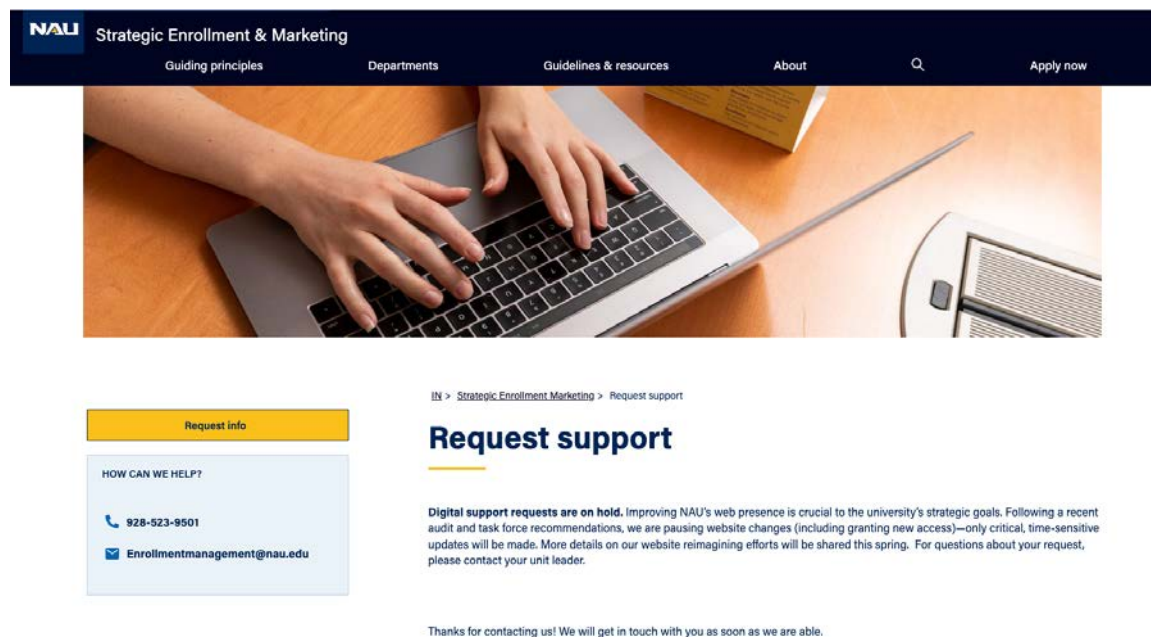
University department/division \*

CAPTCHA

 I'm not a robot   
reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Submit

After you submit the completed form, the page should refresh, and you will see the following message:  
Thanks for contacting us! We will get in touch with you as soon as we are able.



**NAU** Strategic Enrollment & Marketing

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**Request info**

HOW CAN WE HELP?

928-523-9501

Enrollmentmanagement@nau.edu

[IN](#) > [Strategic Enrollment Marketing](#) > [Request support](#)

## Request support

**Digital support requests are on hold.** Improving NAU's web presence is crucial to the university's strategic goals. Following a recent audit and task force recommendations, we are pausing website changes (including granting new access)—only critical, time-sensitive updates will be made. More details on our website reimagining efforts will be shared this spring. For questions about your request, please contact your unit leader.

Thanks for contacting us! We will get in touch with you as soon as we are able.

## Requesting new videos – step-by-step

To request support from the Strategic Enrollment and Marketing **Videography** team, please email [Yelena.Baykova@nau.edu](mailto:Yelena.Baykova@nau.edu).

Yelena will reply with a form containing the following:

“We will have you answer some questions about the new video you need us to create first. After you send us your responses, we will schedule a discovery meeting to brainstorm together what the plan of action for video production will look like.”

Here are the questions:

1. Short description of request.
2. Add links to videos similar to what you'd like to produce. (*optional*)
3. What is the goal of this video?
4. What do you want this video to encourage people to do (*call to action*)?
5. Video Purpose – **highlight all that apply**: All, Awareness/outreach, Fundraising, Recruitment, Retention, Other (please elaborate)
6. Who will be on camera?
7. Is there a specific place you would like the subjects to be filmed?
8. Are there any events connected to your program/college/etc. that would be relevant to film for this video? Please provide the dates, times, and locations. (*optional*)
9. Please provide your plan for socializing this video and how you will share it with your prospective audience?
10. Audience – highlight all that apply: All, ABOR/legislators, Alumni/donors, Local community, Current Parents, Prospective Parents, Current Students, Prospective Students, Other
11. Length of video.
12. Proposed due date.
13. Is this a hard deadline?
14. Please attach any relevant documents that add context to your request.

## Working successfully with SEM's Photo/Video teams

It is important to provide the Photo and Video teams with ample advance notice when requesting their support.

**Due to resourcing limitations, not all requests submitted for photography or video support will be approved.**

Providing sufficient context and justification with your request will allow the teams to make the appropriate determination regarding submitted requests.

The types of requests that are typically approved:

- Content that is visually exciting
- Content that relevant to the identity of: NAU or a specific college or program
- Content that is place-based
- Content that is enrollment-focused

**When requests are approved, and a photography shoot has been completed, photos are typically delivered within two weeks.**

## DIY photography and videography

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If it is determined that the Photo/Video teams will be unable to produce assets for a program-level initiative that requires new assets, then it's time to create your own content.

Please consider the following:

- Consult with AAM to develop a marketing strategy: where do these photos and videos fit into your broader strategy?
- Don't make content for the sake of making content: consider what the purpose of the content is and what action you want a person watching or viewing it to take.
- Blurry photos or shaky videos will likely be unusable for marketing purposes: some technical skills are required.
- Do your own research and practice, utilize this guide, and ask questions! The AAM team is happy to guide you in best practices for media creation. Reach out to us at any time at [aamarketing@nau.edu](mailto:aamarketing@nau.edu).

### Event photography 101

- **Let people at the event know beforehand that you will be taking some photos.** Make a general announcement or ask people one on one or in small groups if it's okay to take their photo. Use your intuition—if people are engaged in the event, they typically don't mind getting their photo taken, if a person doesn't like getting their photo taken, respect that and don't take their photo.
- **Plan:** consider and visualize what will be most visually interesting and think about how you can best capture that at the event. Consider whether there are parts of an event that may be happening at certain times that you don't want to miss, or people that will only be there for a certain time. Consider what equipment you will need (we can help with this!) and where it will be positioned: will it be in the way? Where will it be stored while you are taking photos/filming? Is your phone/camera battery fully charged going into the event? Do you have a charger or backup battery available?
- **Observe:** watch closely as the event takes place. What opportunities are there to create photos and videos? Are there activities or visual aids that help to tell the story of what is happening? Where might you be best positioned to capture those activities or visuals?
- **Make an effort to compose the photo properly:** subjects (people standing together in a group, one person) should "fill the frame" meaning the group should be visible top to bottom and side to side of bodies. This can be waist up as well; tops of heads should be close to the top of the frame. You can leave a little room on the sides, top and bottom, but if you're standing too far away then it will take away from the photo.
- **Utilize different perspectives and angles when capturing people and other subjects:** don't just put the subject (people, place) in the center of the frame, stand off to the side, look down/up, turn around 180 degrees, don't get stuck in the most straightforward composition. Don't be afraid to get right into the action to capture a photo or video. Of course, don't be rude and use your best judgement, but a photo of an activity taken from 30 feet away and a photo of an activity taken from 1 foot away will demonstrate very different things to a viewer.
- **Use flash:** but if it doesn't look good, (too many reflections, too bright) turn it off!
- **If you see a group of people talking, ask if you can take their photo. Pose them. Give them directions. Don't be shy!** Don't be afraid to tell them where to stand, and what to do. If a person looks awkward, give them specific directions about what they should do- for example, "Bend your right arm a little bit and put your hand half into your pocket."
- **Experiment with different settings:** capture "normal" images (not wide or zoomed in), capture "wide", zoom in! Try different things with your phone/camera to attempt to best capture what's in front of you.

## iPhone/Android phone video 101

- **Review the best practices above**, which are applicable to both photo and video.
- **Ensure phone/camera/device is stabilized (utilize tripods/techniques identified below.)** A tripod is not necessary for EVERY situation, but it's better to have than to have not.
- **Develop a script (either voiceover or live) and set yourself up for success. Rehearse, use cue cards, read off a screen.** The better prepared you are, the better product you can make. It is stressful to be on the spot thinking of what you want to say- don't do this. Be prepared, create a script beforehand, and create an effective video.
- **Make sure that through the video, you're communicating what you would like the audience to do: follow your channel, come to an event in the future, sign up for your program, etc. This should be expressed in your video.** Once you have the audience's attention, make sure there is an accompanying action for them to take!
- **Use participants at the event to make content (with their permission of course). Interview them.** "What's been your favorite part of the event?" "What are you excited about for the semester?" "What kind of research/projects are you involved in?" (Reference instructions for microphone below for an interview.)
- **Express joy, connection, and other authentic experiences through your video content:** not everything has to be rehearsed and scripted; capture authentic moments and experiences (but make sure that the footage is stable and the audio is good!)

**Stabilizing Devices:** Devices being used to record should be stable and not shaky. A simple tripod mount for a cell phone can solve this problem. This applies for both videos and photos.



Here is an Amazon link to the product featured above:

[amazon.com/Manfrotto-Universal-Smartphone-Version-MCLAMP/dp/B0169SORDW](https://www.amazon.com/Manfrotto-Universal-Smartphone-Version-MCLAMP/dp/B0169SORDW)

You can leave your phone in the mount (this specific mount is strong and secure) and collapse the legs of the tripod to move around the event.

This is what a tripod, tripod head, and smart phone mount look like fully assembled:



Use this basic equipment to:

- Take group portraits at events.
- Record a steady video of a student talking about a project they're excited about or work that they're doing.
- Record a timelapse of events.
- Take still photographs, or other related photo/video requirements.

If you elect to not use a tripod:

- Keep a firm grip on your phone/camera! Hold the outside firmly on multiple points.
- Make an impromptu tripod out of nearby available objects.

### Audio devices

Audio should be clear and easy to hear. If the audio is poor, the audience will lose interest in the video quickly.

A wireless or wired microphone should be as close to the speaker's voice as possible to pick up clear and usable audio. A simple microphone that plugs into a smartphone can solve this problem.

Here are some images of a small microphone that is very simple to use and comes with attachments for Android and iPhone, as well as a mount to attach it to the top of a camera:



Here is an Amazon link to the product featured above:

[amazon.com/DJI-Charging-Microphone-Cancellation-Interview/dp/B09GYD55JF](https://www.amazon.com/DJI-Charging-Microphone-Cancellation-Interview/dp/B09GYD55JF)

# Subject consent guidance

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## Guidance from SEM

*Provided by Josh Biggs, Assistant Director, Strategic Enrollment and Marketing*

### **Rule of thumb: it's always best to request consent in writing.**

*Technically* we have the legal ability to post pictures of anyone in public, as there is no expectation of privacy. But it gets a bit tricky when we are talking about intellectual content at conferences/events, and in turn marketing of intellectual property.

- If a person is photographed in a public setting or at a public event and is non-identifiable (ex. in a large group), it is generally acceptable to post on social media without consent. The post cannot be claiming intellectual property or someone's data/info as your own.
- If subjects are 18+ and photographed in a public space or at a public event, consent is usually not required. However, it is always recommended to obtain written consent when possible.
- If a single person is identifiable in a small group in your photo/video footage, it is preferable to obtain their written consent prior to posting that content online.

## Guidance from NAU's official social media policy

### **Social media in public spaces**

Universities are considered public spaces. Generally, footage of public spaces and events do not require a signed release by subjects. This is particularly so for spaces where individuals are not featured or readily identifiable.

### **Permission, releases, and opting out**

It is best to err on the side of caution regarding FERPA requirements and photography or videography. If students or faculty have an expectation of privacy at the time a picture or video is taken, or the content is identifiable and will be used for marketing or promotional purposes, a media release would be needed.

For special events on campus or for programs open to the public, hosts are encouraged to note in signage, registration and/or materials that photos may be taken for the university's news or promotional purposes.

- Prior to taking photos or video, announce to the group verbally that photos or videos will be taken, how they will be used and state clearly that participation is optional.
- Post large, legible signs at points of entry to the event or space indicating that photos or videos will be taken, how they will be used. The sign should clearly state that participation is optional.
- Create a 'no photo/film' seating area in the back or side of a room that will not be included in the shot or photos for those who wish to participate but do not want to appear on film or in photos.

## How to use visual assets after securing them

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After securing visual assets, rejoice! These images and videos will go a long way to promote and improve awareness of your program.

Visual assets may be utilized for print and digital media, such as brochures, posters, banners, for social media such as Instagram posts or YouTube videos, for departmental websites, and for many other applications.

## For more support from our team

- Please check out our videos at [youtube.com/@NAU\\_AAM](https://youtube.com/@NAU_AAM) for case studies and additional guidance on using visual assets for different types of marketing and communications projects.
- We also recommend reading the following Playbooks:
  - Marketing 101: contains helpful guidance on planning marketing projects
  - Digital Marketing: contains some very helpful guidance on social media marketing
- Schedule a consultation, request training, or request support from AAM: [in.nau.edu/academic-affairs-marketing/support-request](https://in.nau.edu/academic-affairs-marketing/support-request)

## GLOSSARY OF MARKETING TERMS

**Visual asset:** a visual asset refers to any still photography images or video that in this case represents people, places and things related to Northern Arizona University. Typically, this refers to still photography images. The terms, “photo,” “image,” or “still/s” may be used interchangeably.

**Digital Asset Manager:** a software tool that provides a library or catalog of still images and video files. DAMs are utilized by many companies and organizations needing to organize, display, and make available for download, a significant amount of visual content files. DAMs are searchable and organized by specific category. NAU’s main DAM is called Mediagraph ([mediagraph.io/nau/explore](https://mediagraph.io/nau/explore).) Please let the AAM team know if you are experiencing any challenges accessing Mediagraph and we will connect you with individuals that can provide support. [aamarketing@nau.edu](mailto:aamarketing@nau.edu)

**Subject:** an individual, group, activity, place, object, or any combination of the above captured in a photograph.