



University
of Windsor

Drupal URL Redirect Policy

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Information Technology Services

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Understanding URL Redirect Codes

HTTP redirect codes are a way to forward visitors and search engines from one URL to another. Redirects are used when moving content to a new URL, when deleting pages or when changing domain names.

Whenever possible, avoid using redirects. The following guidelines should be adhered to if redirects are required:

- Avoid changing redirects together: one redirect should not forward to another redirect.
- Redirect using a 301 code for pages which have moved permanently.
- Redirect using a 302 code for pages which have moved temporarily.

Redirects heavily impact search engine optimisations and should be a consideration when determining whether a redirect is necessary.

Site Level Redirects

Redirecting pages within Drupal may be necessary when a page is moved from one location to another, within the same site. All Drupal sites are capable of creating redirects within their respective paths.

For example, consider the scenario where registrars have an important page that was re-created in another location. The registrars Drupal site has the ability to register a local redirect such as:

`https://www.uwindsor.ca/registrars/{redirect}`

Since this redirect is scoped (it belongs within the sub-site domain, rather than the global domain) it will result in very few possible domain collisions.

Scoped redirects are **highly** preferred and are not subject to approval by Web Services Group.

Global Redirects within Drupal

Global redirects are those which are present on the Drupal homesite (in this case, www.uwindsor.ca). These redirects are extremely dangerous as they have implications across the entire platform and are globally scoped (they effect every sub-site). The use of these redirects should be very limited as it exposes a major design flaw in content flow.

Global redirects should only be considered in situations where:

- An entire website is being moved: the top-level URL can be redirected to the new URL. An attempt should be made to remove all instances of the shortened URL and migrate to the new URL. There is no guarantee the short URL will be used long-term and this type of redirect is primarily used for legacy traffic purposes.
- An external service redirect: applications which are deemed important to the University services can receive a redirect to their homepage.

It is important to understand URL redirects are not a means to mask URLs. Site URLs should be meaningful and easy to remember to help facilitate end-user experience.

All global redirects are subject to approval by Web Services Group as the integrity of the URL scopes must be maintained. Global redirects have implications which effect the entire Drupal platform, such as registering new sites with existing URL redirects, and pose numerous complications in the event of collisions. Thus, it is recommended to use a scoped redirect where possible and limit the number of global redirects to only those deemed absolutely necessary following the above guidelines.