



# Purdue University - College of Agriculture

SEO - Title Tag Best Practices

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## WHAT ARE TITLE TAGS AND WHERE DO THEY APPEAR?

Title tags define the title of a webpage and are used on search engine results pages (SERPs) to display a preview snippet of a page. The title tag of a webpage is meant to be an accurate and concise description of that page's content. This element is critical to both user experience and search engine optimization because it works to give both users and search engines contextual clues as to what the page is about.

aa.purdue.edu > foodsci > Pages > grad\_overview ▾

**Food Science Graduate Program Overview - Purdue Agriculture**

The **Food Science Graduate** Program at **Purdue** University is an interdepartmental program, including all 20 of the faculty in the Department of **Food Science** and ...

*Please note that the above image has been marked with colored highlights for the purposes of this document. The blue is the title tag, and the red is the meta description.*

## HOW DO YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR TITLE TAGS?

Format and length are the two biggest components. Here are critical recommendations for optimizing title tags for search engine and usability goals:

### + OPTIMAL FORMAT

Primary Keyword - Secondary Keyword | Brand Name

According to industry testing and experience, the closer to the start of the title tag a keyword is, the more helpful it will be for ranking—and the more likely a user will be to click through from search results. Title tags should include the primary keyword for that page at the beginning, followed by the secondary keyword. Sometimes, there will only be room for the primary keyword, especially if it's a page that has a long program name, which is often the case in higher ed. That being said, you always want to include the school name at the end of the title tag, for brand recognition.

Example:

Food Science Grad Program - M.S. and Ph.D. | Purdue University

#### + OPTIMAL LENGTH

Google typically displays the first 40-50 characters of a title tag or as many characters as will fit into a 545-pixel display. Titles that extend past the 545-pixel display will be truncated and unable to be fully read. If the title is too long, engines will show an ellipsis to indicate that a title tag has been cut off.

Example:

catalog.purdue.edu › preview\_entity ▾

**Department of Food Science - Purdue University - Acalog ...**

The Department of **Food Science** at **Purdue** University is committed to ... For **Graduate** Information please see **Food Sciences Graduate** Program Information .

When writing title tags, you can use the tool below, which will show you an example of how the title tag, in conjunction with the meta description, will appear in a SERP. This is helpful for gauging length.

<https://www.portent.com/serp-preview-tool>

## **A FEW FINAL NOTES**

### **+ CONSIDER READABILITY**

It's vital to think about the entire user experience when you're creating your title tags, in addition to optimization and keyword usage. The title tag is a new visitor's first interaction with your brand when they find it in a search result; it should reflect the page's topic in an easy-to-consume manner.

### **+ DO NOT KEYWORD STUFF**

While naturally working one or two keywords into your title is important, you don't want to sacrifice readability for keyword stuffing. You want to compel searchers to click on your page, not be scared away by what appears to be spam. Keep it simple.