# Design Standards Example

These examples show how standards build on your principles and guidelines by defining the specific rules your team agrees to follow. Unlike principles or guidelines, standards should be consistent enough that anyone reviewing the design would reach the same conclusion. Ideally, these are included as part of the design system documentation.

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## Modal Dialog Standard

### Purpose

Modal dialogs interrupt the user's workflow and should be reserved for focused, high-attention tasks.

### Requirements

- Modal dialogs must contain a single primary task.
- Maximum width: **720 px**.
- Only one primary action is permitted.
- Closing the dialog with **Esc**, the Close button, or clicking outside the dialog must produce the same result unless the action is destructive.
- Modal dialogs may not open additional modal dialogs.
- Internal scrolling should be avoided whenever possible.

### Exceptions

- Multi-step confirmation flows
- Authentication
- System-level blocking alerts

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## Primary Action Standard

### Purpose

Primary actions should be immediately recognizable and consistent throughout the product.

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### Requirements

- Each page, panel, or dialog may contain only one primary action.
- Primary actions must use the Primary Button component.
- Primary actions appear:
    - Top-right on application pages
    - Bottom-right in dialogs
    - Bottom-right in forms
- Destructive actions must never use the primary button style.
- Disabled primary actions must explain why completion is unavailable.

### Exceptions

Wizard-style workflows may temporarily expose Next and Back actions together.

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## Empty State Standard

### Purpose

Every empty state should help users understand what happened and what to do next.

### Requirements

Every empty state must include:

- a title
- a brief explanation
- one recommended next action
- an optional illustration
- no more than 75 words of body copy

Empty states must distinguish between:

- first-time use
- zero search results
- unavailable data
- loading failures

### Exceptions

Tiny embedded widgets may use icon-only empty states.

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# Loading Feedback Standard

## Purpose

Loading indicators should communicate progress without disrupting unrelated work.

## Requirements

- Loading feedback should appear only on the object being updated.
- Full-page loading states are prohibited unless the entire page is unavailable.
- Operations lasting longer than one second must display a loading indicator.
- Operations longer than five seconds should provide progress or explanatory messaging.
- User input should remain available whenever technically possible.

## Exceptions

Authentication and initial application loading.

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# Color Usage Standard

## Purpose

Color communicates meaning and should remain predictable throughout the product.

## Requirements

- Red is reserved for destructive actions, warnings, and errors.
- Green communicates successful completion.
- Yellow communicates caution.
- Blue indicates interactive elements.
- Color must never be the only way information is communicated.
- Every semantic color must meet accessibility contrast requirements.

## Exceptions

Brand marketing experiences outside the core application.

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# Validation Standard

## Purpose

Validation should help users recover from mistakes instead of preventing progress.

## Requirements

- Validation messages appear adjacent to the affected field.
- Errors remain visible until resolved.
- Validation copy must explain both:
  - what is wrong
  - how to fix it
- Required fields should not display errors before user interaction.
- Successfully corrected fields remove the error immediately.

## Exceptions

Server-side validation requiring asynchronous confirmation.

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# Navigation Standard

## Purpose

Users should always know where they are and where they can go next.

## Requirements

- Global navigation remains fixed throughout the application.
- Primary navigation may not appear in more than one location.
- Navigation labels must remain consistent across all views.
- Breadcrumbs appear only when users can navigate multiple hierarchical levels.
- Navigation should never be hidden behind hover interactions.

## Exceptions

Small-screen responsive layouts.

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# Motion Standard

## Purpose

Motion reinforces spatial relationships instead of drawing attention to itself.

## Requirements

- Motion originates from the interacted element.
- Animation duration should be between 150–300 ms.
- Objects entering use ease-out.
- Objects leaving use ease-in.
- Motion should never compete with notifications for attention.
- Layout shifts should be minimized during interaction.

## Exceptions

Marketing pages and intentional brand moments.

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# Settings Architecture Standard

## Purpose

Settings should be easy to find while remaining logically organized based on who owns the configuration.

## Requirements

- User preferences belong within the part of the product where they are used.
- Administrative or organization-wide settings belong in a centralized Administration area.
- User-level settings should never require administrator navigation.
- When a feature has both user and administrator settings, each screen must provide a link to the corresponding configuration.
- Administrative pages should identify which settings affect all users versus the current user.
- Changes that require administrator permissions should clearly communicate who can modify them.

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### Exceptions

Global account settings (profile, password, notifications) may remain centralized regardless of feature ownership.

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## Windowing & Navigation Standard

### Purpose

Users should always understand where they are, what they are viewing, and how to navigate between related content.

### Requirements

- Every primary workspace must exist within a window.
- Tabs represent parallel views of the same object.
- Breadcrumbs represent hierarchy and navigation, not workflow.
- Breadcrumbs must always identify the current location within the product hierarchy.
- Opening a file or asset should preserve the surrounding navigation context.
- Closing a tab should return users to the previous context without changing navigation state.
- The same object should never appear as separate windows unless explicitly duplicated.

### Exceptions

Temporary inspectors, previews, and dialogs.

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## Onboarding Standard

### Purpose

Guidance should help users learn the product without becoming a distraction.

### Requirements

- Show onboarding only when it provides immediate value.
- Each onboarding experience should introduce a single concept or workflow.

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- Users must be able to dismiss or skip onboarding at any time.
- Dismissed onboarding should not automatically reappear.
- Product announcements and onboarding should never appear simultaneously.
- Feature education should appear as close as possible to the feature being introduced.
- Prefer inline guidance before using modal overlays.

### Exceptions

Required legal acknowledgements and major workflow changes.

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## Search Standard

### Purpose

Search should help users find information quickly while maintaining context.

### Requirements

- Search must preserve the user's current filters unless explicitly cleared.
- Search results should highlight matching terms.
- Zero results should explain why nothing was found and suggest a next step.
- Recent searches should be remembered per user.
- Search should tolerate minor spelling errors whenever technically feasible.
- Clearing search should restore the previous view rather than resetting the page.

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## Selection Standard

### Purpose

Selection should behave consistently throughout the product.

### Requirements

- Clicking selects.
- Double-clicking opens.
- Shift-click extends contiguous selection.
- Cmd/Ctrl-click toggles individual selection.

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- Selection must remain visible during scrolling.
- Selection should survive filtering and pagination whenever technically possible.
- Selection state should never be ambiguous.

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# Notification Standard

## Purpose

Notifications should inform users without interrupting their work.

## Requirements

- Success messages should dismiss automatically.
- Errors requiring action remain visible until acknowledged.
- Toast notifications should never obscure primary actions.
- Only one high-priority notification may appear at a time.
- Notifications should link directly to the affected object whenever possible.
- Repeated notifications for the same event should be consolidated.

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# Autosave Standard

## Purpose

Users should never lose work unexpectedly.

## Requirements

- Changes should autosave whenever technically feasible.
- Saving must never interrupt user interaction.
- Unsaved changes must always be visibly communicated.
- Failed saves should preserve all user input.
- Users should always understand whether changes have been saved.
- Conflicting edits should present clear resolution options rather than silently overwriting data.

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