

## Digital Accessibility for Faculty

To ensure students with disabilities are “able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability<sup>1</sup>,” faculty have an important role in producing computer-based instructional materials (websites, Moodle pages, videos, slides and documents) that meet digital accessibility standards. Implementing these standards into the material faculty create could better engage students with impairments and open more educational opportunities.

### Accessibility in Instructional Material

| THE DOCUMENTS YOU WRITE   | THE PRESENTATIONS YOU BUILD   | THE WEB MEDIA YOU USE   |
|---|---|---|
| When creating Word docs or Google Docs, use the program’s built in formatting tools, non-decorative fonts, descriptive hyperlinks, and image descriptions (Alt Text). Run the Check Accessibility Tool to help identify potential barriers. | When creating PowerPoints or Google Slides, use pre-designed slides and large-point fonts, along with features used in documents. For videos, provide captions and transcripts. Make content available to students ahead of time. | When linking to external web content (articles, videos, websites), evaluate whether that content is accessible. For required course materials created by a publisher, discuss accessibility measures with a representative. |

### Common Features for Faculty

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| <b>Text appearance</b> - Use standard, non-decorative fonts, such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial and Helvetica. Use at least 12-point font. For spacing, using document features (tab stops, indents, page breaks) rather than manually entering multiple spaces or line breaks.   |
| <b>Sequence</b> - Use a word processor’s heading or paragraph styles to make section headings. This automatically creates a document outline used by screen-reading programs, and eases document navigation for all readers. Use these program features rather than manually bolding or enlarging fonts.                         |
| <b>Color</b> - People vary greatly in how they perceive color. Be sure to use high color contrast to ensure students can perceive all text or imagery. Additionally, avoid using color as a way of coding information (e.g. All red items are required.), as some students may not be able to distinguish by use of color alone. |
| <b>Image descriptions</b> - When using a graphic (e.g. picture, graph, table), add a title and description called Alt Text so that a student who cannot see or fully load the content can understand what is being displayed.  |
| <b>Hyperlinks</b> - When hyperlinking text, the text should describe the content being linked rather than providing the whole link or text like “Click here.”  |
| <b>Captions</b> - When making an instructional video, ensure captions accurately follow the speech expressed in the video, also noting changes such as sound effects, music, or changes in speaker.  |
| <b>Transcripts</b> - Have a text transcript of a video, which includes the spoken words and visual descriptions.   |

<sup>1</sup> Definition of “accessible” from the US Department of Education, as cited by [Oakland University’s Web and IT Accessibility Guidelines and Procedures](#).

## Steps for Faculty

- ❑ Use a robust online course space with built-in accessibility features and support, such as Moodle.
- ❑ Plan and implement a new process for creating digital material that increases accessibility.
- ❑ Evaluate accessibility of existing instructional material.
- ❑ Prioritize updates to existing material, starting with those most often used and easiest to update.
- ❑ Consider how inclusive course design can pre-empt accessibility issues, such as giving students a variety of options in how they engage with course material and demonstrate learning (as promoted with [Universal Design for Learning](#)).
- ❑ Use OU resources to assist in evaluating and updating content, such as CETL, e-LIS, DSS, and others. A list of resources can be found at CETL's [Digital Accessibility for Faculty](#) page.

## Context for Accessibility Guidelines

In discussions of web accessibility guidelines, these three items are often referred to: the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 508 of the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), and [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG). WCAG are essentially ways of meeting standards set within Section 508. They are currently in version 2.0, and have standards at three levels: A, AA, and AAA.

## Who Stands to Benefit from These Guidelines?

As the [World Wide Web \(W3\) Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative](#) claims, accessibility is “[essential for some, beneficial for all](#).” Digital accessibility guidelines are essential to students with impairments, specifically visual impairments but also students with impairments restricting their ability to interact with a computer screen. These guidelines also help students with learning disabilities and undisclosed disabilities, as they generally provide students with multiple ways of accessing and customizing course content. Beyond these groups, all students tend to benefit from accessible material, as it makes content more organized, concise, and customizable.

*For all web links in this CETL Quick Note, visit the [Digital Accessibility for Faculty](#) webpage.*

*(Link: [www.oakland.edu/cetl/ou-teaching-initiatives](http://www.oakland.edu/cetl/ou-teaching-initiatives) on the “Digital Accessibility for Faculty” tab)*