

Effective Practices for Making Your Course Site Accessible

This resource can serve as a guide for how to implement effective course site accessibility practices. CELT encourages faculty to consult with an instructional development specialist versed in accessibility to ensure that regulations are met. For assistance contact a staff member from your college via the College-based instructional support website (<http://bit.ly/college-support>), or make an appointment with our CELT staff members via email celt@iastate.edu or call 515-294-5357.

Setting Up the Learning Management System (LMS) Course Site

- Use Quality Matters (QM) to set-up your course. QM course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. When aligned, each of these components is directly tied to and supports the course learning objectives. To become a part of the QM professional development cohort, visit CELT's Quality Matters at Iowa State University website (<http://bit.ly/isu-qm>). For more information about QM or to access the full rubric visit the Quality Matters website (<https://www.qualitymatters.org/>).
- Faculty are encouraged to create a "Learner Support" content area within the LMS course site. You can copy/paste or link directly to ISU's Online Learner Support website (<http://bit.ly/isuonlinesupport>).
- View the How-to Guide for Student Accommodations in Canvas web guide (<http://bit.ly/212SqiI>) found on the MyCanvas Teacher at ISU website (<https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/75>).
- Provide a foundation for civility in the online learning environment using the Netiquette at ISU (PDF) (<http://bit.ly/ISUnetiquette>).
- Individual documents linked to the site are accessible. Cheatsheets for Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF are available on the National Center on Disability Access to Education (NCDAAE)'s Cheatsheets website (<http://bit.ly/2Z8VbIA>).
- Hyperlinks are discrete and descriptive. View the Link Text – Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/2m3pgoW>).
- Color is not used alone to identify important information. View the Color – Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/21ERg6b>).
- All text manually entered into the LMS course site (in quiz questions, Content Areas, Lesson Plans, Modules, Label, etc.) are structured using HTML. View the Section Headings/Structure – Do it Yourself Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/2na5Yz6>).
- Heading rows in tables are identified, and tables are only used to display data rather than as a means of page layout. View the Table Headers – Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/2niAjdZ>).
- Images have descriptive text, preferably as part of a caption that all users can view, or as alternative text (alt-text). Visit the Alternative (alt) Text – Do it Yourself Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/2niNSdy>).
- Videos are captioned and transcripts are available. Visit the Captioning – Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/2mKkReg>).
- Other third-party integrations (i.e. Top Hat), may have additional accessibility issues. For these scenarios, consider developing an assignment alternative following the principles of universal design for learning. For a list of resources visit CELT's Universal Design for Learning Overview site (<http://bit.ly/CELTUDL>).

Accessibility of Course Materials Checklist

The following checklist describes a basic level of accessibility for online course materials. Links to National Center on Disability Access to Education (NCDAAE) cheatsheets are included as additional resources. The goal is to be able to answer yes to all of the following questions:

Syllabus

- Does the syllabus have a statement of support for students with requesting accommodations? (<http://bit.ly/isuaccessibility>)
- Does the syllabus have a clear outline for course content and expectations? (<http://bit.ly/coursealignment>)
- Does the syllabus include a contact for technical assistance? Consider linking the syllabus directly to ISU's Online Learner Support website (<http://bit.ly/isuonlinesupport>).
- Does the syllabus include a turnaround time for online communication (i.e. instructor will respond within 24 hours)?
- Does the syllabus state standards of appropriate communication online? Link directly to the Netiquette at ISU (PDF) (<http://bit.ly/ISUnetiquette>).

- Does the syllabus have hyperlinks? Use descriptive hyperlinks as well as the full web address or use a URL shortener (e.g. Bitly URL shortener website <http://bit.ly>).

Documents

- Can text be highlighted, copied, and pasted?
- Were headings used and used properly so that a heading level was not skipped?
 - Good: H1, H2, H2, H3, H3, H3
 - Bad: H1, H3, H3, H2, H5, H4. (for example, H2 was skipped)
- Is there sufficient color contrast between text and background colors?
- Do images (which offer important information not contained in the text) include text descriptions?
- Was the built-in MS Office Accessibility Checker used?
- For more information on creating accessible MS Word documents view NCDAAE's Microsoft Word cheatsheets website (<http://bit.ly/2Z9YVx9>).
- Do you use a Portable Document Format (PDF)? For the best approach on using accessible PDF files view NCDAAE's Adobe cheatsheets website (<http://bit.ly/2Z8Tcny>).

PowerPoint Presentation Slides

- Was the PowerPoint created with a template?
- Can the order of the text in the presentation be verified in the "Outline" panel?
- When tabbing, does the cursor move in a logical order if it were read aloud?
- Is there sufficient color contrast between text and background colors?
- Do images (which offer important information not contained in the text) include text descriptions?
- Was the built-in MS Office Accessibility Checker used?
- For more information on creating accessible PowerPoint presentations view NCDAAE's PowerPoint cheatsheets website (<http://bit.ly/2Z8TcUA>).

Excel Workbooks

- Do images (which offer important information not contained in the text) include text descriptions?
- Were header rows and column headings specified?
- Were merged cells avoided?
- Was the built-in MS Office Accessibility Checker used?
- For more information on creating accessible excel workbooks view NCDAAE's Excel cheatsheets website (<http://bit.ly/2ZhrVzs>).

Video and Audio

- Is all video content (web, DVD and VHS) captioned? Visit the Captioning – Digital Access website (<http://bit.ly/2mKkReg>).
- Are transcripts available for video-based materials that were not captioned?
- Are transcripts available for audio-based materials?

For additional information, tips and guidance view the following:


- ISU Digital Access website (<http://digitalaccess.iastate.edu>)
- CELT's Accessify Your Course website (<http://bit.ly/celt-accessify>)
- National Center on Disability and Access to Education Cheatsheets website (<http://bit.ly/2Z8VbIA>)
- Student Accessibility Services, a unit in the Dean of Students Office, is located in room 1076, Student Services Building or online via the Student Accessibility Services website (<http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu>). Contact SAS by email at accessibility@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-7220 for additional information.

Adapted from:

Accessify Your Course. (n/d). University of Minnesota. Retrieved on February 1, 2017 from <http://accessibility.umn.edu/accessify-your-course>

Online Course Accessibility Checklist. (n/d). University of Washington. Retrieved on March 1, 2017 from <https://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/faculty/online-course-accessibility-checklist/>

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