Web and Course Content Accessibility Guidelines

Policy Name: Web and Course Content Accessibility Guidelines
Approval Authority: Provost
Interpreting and Implementing Authority: Dean of Teaching, Learning, and Student Success and Assistant Dean of Student Support, Health, & Wellness
Effective: 11/26/2018
Last Revised: 7/10/2023
Next Review Date: 2028

Policy Statement

The Department of Education considers accessibility to information a priority for all employees and external customers, including students with disabilities. Requirements for accessibility are found in various laws, e.g., Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act of 1973, American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and 21stCentury Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010.

We are currently working to provide digital communications and content in a format that meets the needs of our campus community members with documented disabilities. This includes maintaining an assistive technology-friendly website, student information system, and learning management system course sites as well as providing electronic copies of textbooks, documents in an accessible format, captioned videos, etc. We are committed to providing an equal experience for our students with disabilities by becoming compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. WCAG 2.0 Level AA is the international accessibility standard designed to ensure baseline content accessibility for people with disabilities.

Wesleyan College strives to be in compliance with the letter of the law as well as the spirit of the law. Our goal is to prioritize Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices and create an inclusive learning and working environment that supports people of all abilities and learning needs. To achieve these goals, the College has developed Wesleyan College Course Accessibility Guidelines. The following guidelines are designed to ensure accessibility for all digital content created, referenced, or published on Wesleyan's websites, including the College's learning management system and student information system where students, faculty, and staff share documents, images, videos, audio files, examinations, surveys, questionnaires, and other digital content.

Entities Affected by the Policy
Faculty, staff and students

Policy Details

Syllabus Accessibility Statement

A mandatory statement is included in our Campus-Wide Academic Policies handout, which is posted alongside each syllabus:

> *Wesleyan College is committed to equal education, full participation, and access to facilities for all students. Any student who requires reasonable academic accommodations, use of auxiliary aids, or facility access for a class must first register with Disability Resources by contacting Jill Amos, Assistant Dean, at jamos@wesleyancollege.edu or (478) 757-3800. If reasonable accommodations are established, students should request Accommodation Letters from Disability Resources then schedule an appointment to meet with the professor to determine how the accommodations will be implemented for each class as early in the semester as possible. Accommodations require advance notice to implement and will not be retroactively administered for the semester. Accommodations that decrease the integrity of a course will not be approved.*

Digital Content You Create

When creating original digital content for a course or other distributions, follow these guidelines:

1. **Document, Spreadsheet, or Presentation Files:** Use formats that allow screen readers to translate them easily into an audio format. Web files (HTML documents) are the most accessible file type. Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and Google Products (Docs, Sheets, Slides) can be made accessible. PDF documents are not accessible. If you must use a PDF document, provide the same information in some other accessible format. Tools that allow you to insert Flash content typically result in inaccessible content. Do <u>not</u> use Flash content.
2. **MS Office and Google products.** Both suites include built-in or optional add-on accessibility checking tools. Using Google Products: https://support.google.com/docs/answer/6199477?hl=en and https://oit.colorado.edu/services/messaging-collaboration/gsuite/accessibility/slides. Using MS Office Products: https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Office-Accessibility-Center-Resources-for-people-with- disabilities-ecab0fcf-d143-4fe8-a2ff-6cd596bddc6d
3. **Document Section Headings:** When incorporating section headings and/or subheadings into your documents, you must tag the headings using the software program's built-in style tools. Provide descriptive, meaningful heading text to enhance page navigation and readability. These steps enable screen readers and other assistive technology tools to help students move through your text more efficiently.
4. **Images:** Identify your photos, diagrams, ALT text, or other images with descriptive, concise captions and file names so screen readers can easily identify them. Include a descriptive reference to the image within the surrounding text as well. If you are creating Web pages, depending on the authoring software you use, you can also add a description of the image using an Alt-Text HTML tag.
5. **Audio or Video:** Audio files should be transcribed, and videos should provide captions or a synchronized text transcript. Our Canvas learning management system has a feature that will transcribe audio and video content for you. However, visual demonstrations or any image content not described in the audio may need additional text or audio description. Media files should not

play automatically when a user opens a document or accesses a Web page. This causes delayed access to other content on the page until the initial media file finishes playing.

6. **Color Contrast for Legibility:** Ensure clear color contrast for text, graphics, charts, and backgrounds. Using different textures with each color will help make the content more distinguishable. Use the following website to test your color contrast settings: https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

7. **Linked Items:** When creating hyperlinks to other Web content, avoid vague or repetitive link text such as "click here" or "read more." Instead, (1) succinctly and specifically name the resource the hyperlink will redirect users to when clicked upon, (2) highlight the named resource in your text, and (3) embed the hyperlink. Be sure to contextualize your hyperlink so users know how to use the linked resource.

8. **Math Equations:** Equations should be created with a technology such as LaTeX or an equation editor (e.g., MathType) that allows rapid conversion to MathML. Our learning management system Canvas also provides an accessible equation-building tool in the text editor menu. Using other software products or tools may require a text description of the equation.

9. **Table Captions and Column Headings:** Tables are challenging for screen readers and other assistive technology tools to interpret correctly. For this reason, avoid tables for aesthetic Web page layout and design purposes. Restrict tables to presentation of data. Use the simplest table possible. It is better to use several simple tables rather than a complex table with merged cells. Use table headers to identify rows and columns. Do not use merged cells. Use a caption to display the table title. Consider alternatives to tables such as lists for complex tables.

10. **Testing Your Content:** When creating content in our learning management system Canvas, use the built-in accessibility checker in page building mode to identify aspects of your content that are not accessible. To test digital content you have created elsewhere, you can use a free tool found at https://wave.webaim.org. The ChromeVox add-on or extension for Chrome will test the reading of your content. Another tool called "Accessibility Developer Tool" can be used for testing and finding answers to ADA compliance questions.

External Content You Use

Refer to the "Digital Content You Create" Guidelines to ensure the overall accessibility of any external resources you would like to use. In addition, follow these guidelines:

1. **Audio/Video Produced Externally:** Transcripts or captioned videos must be provided to students requiring an accommodation. All purchase agreements for audio or video content should state that the content be transcribed or closed captioned. The distribution or group viewing of this content may be restricted because of copyright.

2. **Other Resources Produced Externally:** The content of any non-Wesleyan resource (such as a website, PDF article, slide presentation, document, image, etc.) must be provided in an accessible format for students requiring an accommodation. In some cases, it is permissible to copy and reformat content just for students with a documented need, but first check with the external provider to see if they have an alternate format for accessibility requirements. For translating PDF

documents into readable text, use the computers in the Willet Library's DLab that have the Adobe Acrobat Pro software.

Questions and Answers

There are different areas of support to help you make your digital content accessible. You may contact the following people for assistance:

- For general questions about accessibility requirements: Assistant Dean of Student Support, Health, and Wellness at extension 3800.
- For questions about online course content: Dean for Teaching, Learning, and Student Success at extension 5232.
- For questions about WesPortal content: Systems Administrator at extension 3956.
- For questions about Wesleyan's main website: Director of Communications at extension 5137.

Violations of the Policy

The Provost will determine any actions to take in the event of a violation to this policy.

Interpreting and Implementing Authority

Dean of Teaching, Learning, and Student Success and Assistant Dean of Student Support, Health, and Wellness will implement this policy.