

Accessibility Policy for Digital Materials and Environments

Policy Name: Accessibility Policy for Digital Materials and Environments

Approval Authority: Cabinet

Interpreting and Implementing Authority: Chief Information Officer

Effective: December 5, 2020

Last Revised: November 18, 2020

Next Review Date: 2 years from last revised date

Policy Statement

Wesleyan College is committed to the fundamental principles of equity and accessibility and providing all students and staff with equitable access to the College's coursework, programs, services, events, and staff development activities. The aim of this policy is to support an inclusive environment by incorporating design concepts to reduce or remove barriers and provide equally effective alternative access both inside and outside the classroom.

This policy establishes minimum standards for the accessibility of digital materials and web-based information and services considered necessary to meet the College's goals and ensure compliance with applicable law. Wesleyan College has assigned content accessibility guidelines to its ADA Compliance Leader (who is the Director of Disability and Advocacy Services) and CIO and their designees.

This policy applies to all digital materials and web-based content and functionality, whether developed by Wesleyan and housed on WesPortal (the College's intranet), the College's main webpage, or the College's learning management system (LMS) as well as materials maintained or offered by Wesleyan College through a third party vendor or open source on the College's behalf. This includes College department, program, and faculty websites that reside on a College server or reside on a server/platform maintained on the College's behalf. It also includes digital materials and web content and functionality offered to students as part of a College program, service, or activity, such as an online video students are instructed to watch as part of a course at the College.

Wesleyan will ensure new digital materials and online content and functionality developed, procured, or used will be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. This action will include any staff or faculty training that may be necessary to ensure full implementation. All new web pages or LMS course sites published by any department, program, or unit on or after the effective date of this policy must conform to this policy.

For existing digital materials and online content, Wesleyan has developed (1) a strategy for identifying inaccessible digital items and online content and functionality for individuals with disabilities; (2) a procedure regarding how to request that the College provide access to digital items and online information or functionality; and (3) a process to ensure that, upon request, inaccessible content and functionality will be made accessible in an expedient manner. The request must be made through the Director of Disability and Advocacy Services and forwarded to the appropriate office for the changes to be made. This is a new policy and will be revised as needed and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Entities Affected by the Policy

- **Faculty & Staff:** Accessibility training will be offered as needed for faculty and staff who are responsible for creating or managing any digital materials or online content. This training will help produce accessible materials and content as well as assess and correct items or content that may be inaccessible. In addition, numerous resources will be provided to assist in making technology, online content, and digital materials more accessible including, but not limited to:

- The *Wesleyan Content Accessibility Checklist*, which provides guidance on how to make documents produced by desktop or web-based software accessible (e.x., Microsoft Office, Adobe, video files, Google Workspace, etc.), will be posted and maintained on the Office of Disability and Advocacy Services WesPortal page.
 - The CIO and his designees will provide support to faculty and staff on more technical matters (closed captioning, IT Q&A, etc.).
 - Wesleyan College’s Office of Communications will work with the Computer and Information Resources Department to maintain accessibility on the “externally facing” and “internally facing” webpages of WesPortal.
- **Web-Based Content & Systems:** All web-based content and systems, whether developed internally or obtained from third-parties, are expected to conform to the accessibility standards set forth in this policy. When evaluating third-party products, it is advisable to choose the most accessible product. The CIO will review products in consultation with the Director of Disability and Advocacy Services for their accessibility. In cases where a product with limited accessibility has been purchased, interim, equivalent accommodations should be in place until the product can be made accessible.

Policy Details - Importance of Documents, Videos, & Images

- All documents, spreadsheets, and slide presentations should be evaluated for accessibility errors and corrected before they are uploaded to the College website, WesPortal, or an LMS course site. Accessibility errors can be detected and corrected via the Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker tool (accessed from the “File” menu within the Microsoft program; select “Info”; then select “Check for Issues”; and then select “Check for Accessibility”) or the Grackle Docs tool in Google Workspace (accessed from the “Add-ons” menu). These tools will generate a report of possible accessibility issues found within the digital item, explain why each issue may pose a problem for a user with a disability, and provide instructions on how to fix the issue.
- All videos and audio files uploaded to (or linked from) the College website, WesPortal, or an LMS course site should either contain closed captioning or be posted with an accompanying description and transcript. Auto-captioning and speech recognition tools, such as those made available by YouTube, can assist with the creation of captions, but the captions should be checked and edited for accuracy before posting the video. Importing a video into a caption editing tool and manually transcribing or composing the captions is a good option for short videos.
- When a document, email, webpage, or LMS course site page contains an image or graphic, an ALT tag should be added. Screen readers used by individuals with impairments cannot read images. The words in an ALT tag should either (a) provide a text equivalent of the image or graphic content/information or (b) designate the image or graphic as decorative.

For more information on any of the above, see the Wesleyan Content Accessibility Checklist located on the Office of Disability and Advocacy Services Faculty/Staff Resource Page on WesPortal.

Responsibilities

Creators/authors/content curators are responsible for the accessibility of any digital materials, technologies, or content to be (1) uploaded to a College webpage, WesPortal, or an LMS course site or (2) used to deliver College programs, services, or activities. The following individuals will serve as campus advisors regarding the review of new or existing digital materials, technologies, and content:

- Content on College’s main website - Director of Communications
- Content on the WesPortal website - Director of Computer and Information Resources
- Content on Canvas LMS – Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning

Each campus advisor is responsible for promoting a culture of adherence to the College's content accessibility guidelines. Department workflows should be created and updated to include accessibility to ensure compliance. Content creators, authors, curators, and advisors should be trained and periodically updated on digital accessibility issues and compliance to maintain consistency in following the College's content accessibility guidelines.

The College's Website Accessibility Notice is published on the College's website and informs persons with disabilities how to report and request access to content that is not accessible. Reference and a link to the Notice must be included on official and faculty pages. Suggested language is as follows:

Wesleyan College is committed to ensuring accessibility of its website for students, faculty, staff and other members of the College community, as well as the general public, including individuals with disabilities. For more information, please refer to the College's Website Accessibility Notice.

Violations of the Policy

At the discretion of the Director of Disability and Advocacy Services, CIO, and College administrators, all non-compliant portions of the College's web pages and resources may be taken offline or brought into compliance by designated staff. Additional consequences may be issued as determined by the ADA Compliance Leader.

Interpreting and Implementing Authority

Chief Information Officer.