

Accessibility Considerations for Quality Online Courses

This page contains ways for you to implement Universal Design in your online course to proactively prepare for all learners. For specific questions or more information about accessibility, please contact DACC's Student Accessibility Services at (575) 527-7548 or visit their webpage at <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/sas/>

Use the Accessibility Checker in Microsoft

- PC: Find the Accessibility Checker at (1) File -> Info, (2) Select the "Check for Issues" button, (3) In the Check for Issues drop-down menu, select "Check Accessibility".
- Mac: Find the Accessibility Checker at Review > Check Accessibility

Post Transcripts with Audio

Learners engage with content in different ways. Providing content in different forms benefits all students. It can also assist students having technology problems. When creating presentations, always include a transcript. Videos may be captioned with built-in speech-to-text features.

Use Markup for Documents

The markup or styles used in word processors such as Headings, Titles, and Subtitles, provide a visual different to the reader and metadata used by screen readers. Using the Styles section of MS Word instead of changing font size or styles (bold, italics) will make your documents much easier to navigate for those using screen readers.

Provide the Accessibility Policies in Your Course

Sites and technologies used in your course should have the accessibility policy stated. This include the accessibility policy for Canvas. Ensure that any software you used or additional platforms and materials from publisher are accessible. Provide the accessibility webpages in your syllabus or Getting Started information. These webpages can be found within the platform's website.

Use Videos with Captions

Video content needs to be captioned. Many videos in your course content may already have captioning. If you create your own video, use speech-to-text tools found in Zoom or Screen-Cast-O-Matic. You can also upload your videos to YouTube for its speech-to-text capabilities. It is also an option to type your own transcript.

Use Alt Tag Descriptions on Images

Alt tags are descriptions of images that describe the image to those who are using a screen reader. When adding images to Canvas, include a thorough description to non-decorative images to allow students with screen readers to receive the same information as those without screen readers. More information can be found in these [Canvas Instructions](#) .

Avoid Using Color to Convey Meaning

Color can affect how your students see (or don't see) course materials, especially if they are color-blind or low vision. Avoid using color to demonstrate importance of meaning or page layout. Avoid colors that are distracting or patterned.

Use Informative Link Names

Label your hyperlinks to assist screen readers in navigating your course. Write your hyperlink names to describe the content rather than "Click Here". The screen reader will read the hyperlink aloud to provide accurate information to the student.

Accessible PDFs

Avoid using PDFs that are scanned images. PDFs should be searchable and selectable.

Tables

Tables can be difficult for screen readers to navigate. Save the use of tables for areas where it is necessary and then format the information properly with markup. Consider other areas of content organization for displaying your information such as using headings. If a table is required, format it correctly using headings, avoiding excessive length, merged cells, or blank cells.