Accessibility Guidelines for Summer Session 2020

**The Office of University Counsel provides the following priorities for meeting ADA compliance for online courses.**

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, require that all individuals have equal access to online instructional opportunities. The ADA requires that online courses be fully compliant from the start of the course. The definition of "accessible" used by the Office of Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Education regarding inaccessible IT is as follows:

*"Accessible" means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability.* Exceptions to meeting this standard cannot be granted.

If your course is already in Canvas, you can begin by **checking the current accessibility of your Canvas content** using the [Accessibility Checker tool in Canvas](https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1848/pages/checking-accessibility).

The basic requirements for meeting ADA compliance for online courses include the following:

**Hyperlinks:** Ensure all hyperlinks have descriptive text. This can be easily completed by instructors by including a short description of where the hyperlink will take a reader. [Here’s how to add this text.](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/create-or-edit-a-hyperlink-5d8c0804-f998-4143-86b1-1199735e07bf)

**Text Design:** Content that you build within Canvas is accessible. However, you will need to ensure the accessibility of any files created outside of Canvas that you upload into your Canvas course.

* Follow these guidelines about font, color, and formatting:
  + Use simple fonts that are easiest to read.
  + Use high contrast; it is best to have a dark-colored font on a light-colored background; avoid red-green or yellow-blue combinations as contrasting colors because individuals with color blindness are unable to differentiate the text from the background.
  + Text formatting should be simple. The only text that should be underlined is text that is hyperlinked.
  + Tables and charts need to include identifying headers and labels. See “How to create Accessible tables in [Canvas](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-7118).
* You also need to ensure that all text is readable by screen readers. When using Microsoft products (this includes Word, PowerPoint), use the Accessibility Checker for the following issues:
  + Incorrect use of headings, alt text for images, color and font use; tables and charts. Check the accessibility of your documents ([Windows](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&amp%3Brs=en-US&amp%3Bad=US&rs=en-US&ad=US) or [Mac](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?redirectSourcePath=%252fen-us%252farticle%252fUse-the-Accessibility-Checker-on-your-Mac-to-find-and-resolve-accessibility-issues-3b84295e-d55b-49f1-b443-523ec45a5232&ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US))

**Images/Graphics**

* Add Alternative Text to describe the image or graphic. Cornell’s Canvas has an alt tag option when adding the image or graphic. Here’s how to [Edit Image Attributes in Canvas](https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1848/pages/managing-images-in-the-rich-content-editor#Attributes)
* View [“Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, SmartArt graphic, or other object”](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/add-alternative-text-to-a-shape-picture-chart-smartart-graphic-or-other-object-44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669)
* Complex figures and diagrams may be challenging to describe. We recommend searching the following sources for versions that may already be accessible:
  + Digital course materials available through publishers, please contact [textbooks@cornell.edu](mailto:textbooks@cornell.edu) which will direct you to the Cornell Store.
  + Remember that instructors around the world are facing the same challenges and may have already created solutions that you can use. Reach out to colleagues at peer institutions and search online or through your academic associations/societies.
  + Contact [“Library Support for Remote Teaching”](https://guides.library.cornell.edu/remoteteaching/) landing page or reach out to a library liaison at <https://www.library.cornell.edu/services/liaisons> to discuss options for your content.
  + If none of the strategies above yield solutions, <mailto:elearningsupport@cornell.edu>.

**Audio/Video Items**

* Audio files require written transcription and video files require closed-captioning.
  + Pre-recorded lectures can prove helpful in terms of accessibility. They also can be accessed at any hour of the day from any place which provides a great deal of flexibility to students. They are also more amenable to use in future courses.
    - There are several options available for recording your lectures for remote teaching. This [table compares the main features](https://teaching.cornell.edu/resource/compare-recording-tools) of tools to help you decide which one is most appropriate for your teaching needs.
    - [Tips for Pre-recorded Lectures](https://teaching.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/2020-03/Tips%20for%20pre-recorded%20lectures_2.pdf)
    - We encourage you to use Automatic Captioning and editing for [Kaltura](https://teaching.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/2020-03/Editing%20Automatic%20Captions%20in%20Kaltura.pdf) and [Panopto](https://teaching.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/2020-03/Editing%20Automatic%20Captions%20in%20Panopto.pdf).
  + Captioning is not required for synchronous lectures or discussion sections. If you are interested in providing captioning:
    - Contact the [CIT Service Desk](mailto:itservicedesk@cornell.edu) to request access to Ava (a live captioning tool)
    - Real-time captioning through PPT, where you talk over slides that you share via Zoom and PPT provides auto-captioning. [Present with real-time, automatic captions or subtitles in PowerPoint.](https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/present-with-real-time-automatic-captions-or-subtitles-in-powerpoint-68d20e49-aec3-456a-939d-34a79e8ddd5f)

**Documents**

* All text in a course should be searchable, which allows learners to search for words or phrases within a document.
  + This should not be a problem in Microsoft Word, PPT, or Excel documents.
  + PDFs that have been created in newer versions are usually searchable. Adobe offers instructions to create accessible PDF documents and [check the accessibility](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html) of PDF documents. The [SensusAccess tool](http://accessibility.cornell.edu/information-technology/sensus-access/) converts PDF documents into different formats.
* [Tables and charts](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d#bkmk_wintableheaders) need to have identifying headers and labels.

**Course Syllabus:** An accommodation statement in your syllabus informs students about SDS and conveys your approachability <https://sds.cornell.edu/resources/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>.

Go [here](https://teaching.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/2020-04/Accessibility%20Quick%20Guide.pdf) for more information about how to meet ADA accessibility requirements.