Accessibility Basics for Electronic Course Materials

All University of Mississippi programs, services, and activities should be accessible to all students, staff, faculty, and the public. This includes all technology products used to deliver academic programs and services, electronic and information resources, student services, information technology services, and auxiliary programs and services.

As the experts on the electronic course materials used in their course, faculty/instructors are responsible for ensuring that course content is accessible. Resources and support are available to assist you.

Accessibility is an institution-wide responsibility that requires commitment and involvement from all members of our campus community. It is the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do. It is the law.

- Captions or transcripts of video and audio content are required by law and must be provided in "a timely manner" as an accommodation for a student with a disability. "A timely manner" has been interpreted by the courts to be no more than 24-48 hours after receipt of the request. Faculty/instructors should contact SDS at sds@olemiss.edu for information regarding captioning for students with an accommodation. SDS will help you meet the requirements to ensure accessibility of your materials.
- If a student in your class has an accommodation related to hearing, video content must be captioned or it cannot be shown in class. This includes extra credit, optional video resources, third-party resources, or other supplemental resources, to provide individuals with an equitable educational experience.
- Most automatically generated captioning programs, such as YouTube, Echo360, or others, are not ADA compliant because of accuracy issues, misspellings, and a lack of proper punctuation. Therefore, automatically generated captions *must* be edited to 99% accuracy to meet the university's legal requirements for students with accommodations. Watch CAPTION FAIL: Jamaican Vacation Hoax (5 mins) for an example of how automated captioning can fail. Always ensure that the captions are reviewed before showing the video.
- Best practice calls for captions and transcripts to be provided for video and audio content shown in class or used as a supplemental resource. Captioning course content proactively ensures that you are prepared if you receive an accommodation request from a student with a disability. To learn more about captioning priorities, contact

Accessibility at accessibility@olemiss.edu. Individual schools/college/departments/units are responsible for the cost of preparing materials to be accessible.

- Accessibility benefits everyone, not just people with disabilities. The following are considered best practices for accessibility and are legally required when there is a student with an accommodation:
    - Provide concise, descriptive 'Alt Text' for all images, objects, and graphics used in documents, presentations, Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS), or other resources. Alt-text is the written copy that appears in the place of an image in a document, presentation, or other resource. Alt-text is important because it helps screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers. Microsoft provides helpful documentation on how to create alt-text for images, graphs, charts, shapes, etc. as part of their Accessibility Help series.
    - Ensure course documents (Word, PowerPoint, PDF, etc.) are shared in an accessible format with clear, consistent layouts and proper document structure. Utilize the style features built into the Blackboard LMS, Word, PDFs, etc., and use built-in designs and layouts for PowerPoint slides. Refer to Microsoft's documentation on accessible documents for further explanation.
    - Use Microsoft (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) and Adobe built-in Accessibility Checkers to identify and correct any accessibility issues. Microsoft's guide to using the Accessibility Checker and Adobe's Accessibility Checker guide (Acrobat only) offer helpful information on this feature.
    - Minimize the use of PDFs unless you saved the PDF from Word or another Microsoft program that is already accessible. Avoid PDFs that have been scanned or otherwise presented as an image because they will not be accessible to a screen reader. If you need assistance making a scanned PDF accessible, please contact accessibility@olemiss.edu.
- Ensure that all content linked from Blackboard to outside sources is accessible using the guidelines above.

Contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at sds@olemiss.edu for assistance or questions regarding accommodations for students with disabilities.

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