

Accessibility Compliance Guide



Best Practices
2025

Purpose



The purpose of this guide is to share best practices with faculty and staff to assist with creating documents and materials that are accessible and compliant with Tri-C's Online Accessibility Procedure. Accessible content benefits all learners and fosters a more inclusive classroom across all course modalities. Faculty may reference this guide, as well as best practices for accessibility in their own discipline, when creating or editing their course materials.

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
Table of Contents	3
Faculty Responsibilities	4
Online Accessibility's #1 Rule	5
Faculty Resources	8
Student Accessibility Services	8
Online Learning & Academic Technologies	8
Instructional Design & Learning Excellence	9
Faculty Development	9
Ally	10
Ally Course Reports	12
Ally Accessibility Scores	14
Icon Description	16
Icon Visuals	17
Principles of Accessibility	18
Official Accessibility Statement	20
Accessibility Statement	20
Accessibility Special Accommodations	21
Microsoft Word	22
Document File Types	22
Portable Document Files (PDFs)	22
Fonts	23
Text Accessibility	23
Graphs/ Complex images	24
Images	24
Link	25
Math and STEM	25
PowerPoint	26
Navigation	26
Tables	27
Publishers' Materials	27
Videos	28
Audio	28
Other Technologies	29

Faculty Responsibilities

Online Accessibility

- ✓ All active course material needs to be accessible so that students can stay current within the course.
- ✓ Faculty teaching online, blended, or using supplemental Bb sites are expected to apply best practices and integrate changes from the Ally Course Report for each course they teach each term.
- ✓ Every faculty member can refer to the Ally Course Report for assistance in addressing any accessibility flags that may arise per session/week/course.
- ✓ Should faculty need additional resources, please consult with the College's Digital Instructional Accessibility Specialist in (OLAT), Center for Learning Excellence (CLE), Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office, and Academic Professional Development/Faculty Development.
- ✓ Any tools (such as faculty created rubrics outside of the LMS or multimedia such as video) used in the delivery of the course (not content and materials) may be substituted with alternatives that are consistent with the individual student's approved accommodation.





Online Accessibility's **#1 Rule**

When a faculty member is presented a student accommodation letter issued by the SAS office, the faculty must provide the student with the listed accommodation. If the faculty member believes that the accommodation would present an undue administrative burden on the College or that the accommodation would be impossible or unfeasible to administer, they must contact the SAS office, not the student, to request an alternate accommodation. The faculty member, student and Student Accessibility Services office will then work through the interactive process to determine an alternative accommodation, if possible.



Best Practices



The College will use Ally to generate institutional and course reports on accessibility and student usage. Faculty can access their course reports anytime to address issues. Ally uses a color system, with light green (67–99% accessible) as the recommended goal. ([See pg.17](#))

Faculty are responsible for providing accessible materials in all courses, while maintaining academic freedom. The College does not dictate content or teaching methods but requires materials to be presented in ways all students can access.





01

All Faculty teaching in-person, online, blended, and web enhanced/supplemental courses must complete all applicable elements of the Best Practices for Accessibility Compliance Guide.

The Best Practices for Accessibility Compliance Guide is authored and revised by the Online Learning and Academic Technology (OLAT) department at a minimum every two years in consultation with the Distance Learning Steering Committee (DLSC).

02

03

The College will embed software in its learning management system (LMS) called “Ally” which provides faculty suggestions and methods to improve the accessibility of individual course sites.



Faculty Resources

The following college services and offices are available to assist faculty in their role to provide accessible course content, achieving accessibility compliance and in making accommodations. Accommodations are considered reasonable if they do not substantially change essential elements of the curriculum or course objectives, nor require a substantial alteration in the manner in which the educational opportunities are provided. When necessary, these services will work collaboratively.

> SAS



Student Accessibility Services

> OLAT



Online Learning & Academic Technologies





> *ID&LE*



Instructional Design & Learning Excellence

> *FDEV*



Faculty Development





Ally

Ally is an accessibility tool that is integrated within Brightspace Learning, the college's Learning Management System (LMS). Faculty are encouraged to use Ally and the Ally Course Report as a way of assessing how their course content aligns with WCAG guidelines. Federal law mandates that all course material be accessible to all students. As such, Ally can the college comply with federal law by converting an item or file into one of several alternative, more accessible formats for students. Ally can also assist faculty by helping to ensure their course, and all digital course materials, are as accessible as possible.

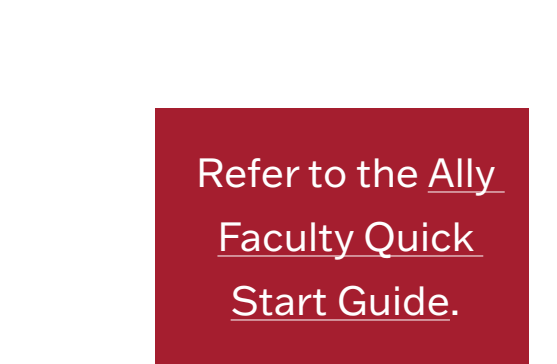
Ally can assist faculty with making content more accessible by:

- ✓ Delivering guidance to faculty on how to improve the accessibility of their course content.
- ✓ Checking course materials against WCAG standards.
- ✓ Providing accessible alternative formats such as braille, audio, and PDF versions.



Ally works best with documents created in Microsoft Word [for alternative formats]. Faculty can learn more about Ally as well as find an FAQ at this [Ally for Instructors webpage](#).

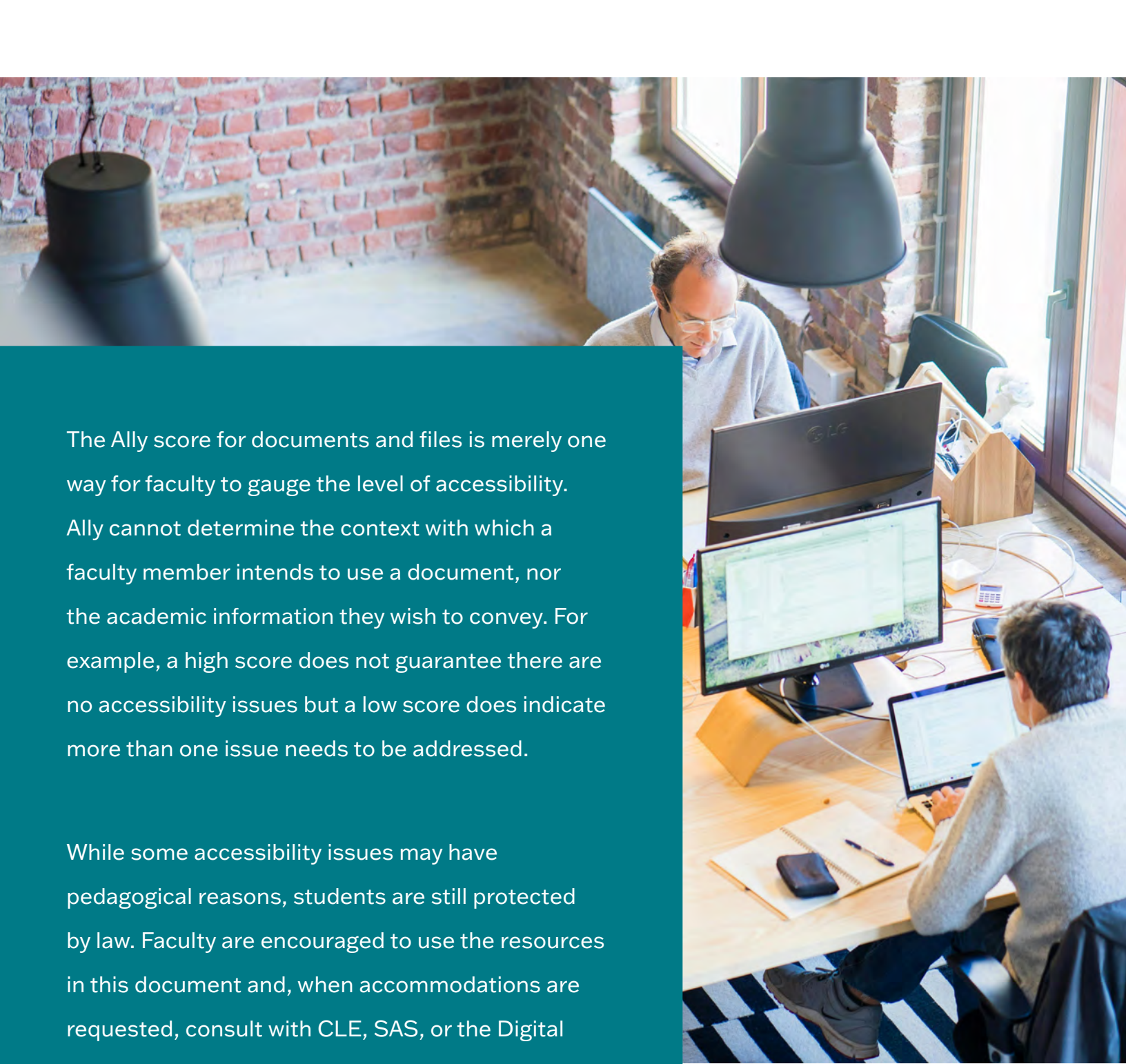




Ally Course Reports

The Ally Course Report shows the accessibility of each Brightspace course site and commonly used file types. It is available in the Course Tools area to instructors or those with instructor-level access. Students cannot view the report or file accessibility gauges. This report is not used in faculty evaluations, and no minimum score is required.

[illegible]



The Ally score for documents and files is merely one way for faculty to gauge the level of accessibility. Ally cannot determine the context with which a faculty member intends to use a document, nor the academic information they wish to convey. For example, a high score does not guarantee there are no accessibility issues but a low score does indicate more than one issue needs to be addressed.

While some accessibility issues may have pedagogical reasons, students are still protected by law. Faculty are encouraged to use the resources in this document and, when accommodations are requested, consult with CLE, SAS, or the Digital Instructional Accessibility Specialist.

Refer to the [Ally Course Accessibility Report](#).



Ally Accessibility Scores

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Ally checks the following:

- ✔ Microsoft Word files
- ✔ Microsoft PowerPoint file
- ✔ PDF files
- ✔ HTML files
- ✔ Image files (JPG, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, TIFF)
- ✔ WYSIWYG content files
(Brightspace specific items,
folder, links, etc.)



Ally Accessibility Scores

Icon Description

Ally accessibility scores range from Low to Perfect. Items scored less than 100 percent are given suggestions as to how to improve the accessibility of the file. Any score given by Ally is subjective and based on many different criteria. Each course should score in the High range highlighted below. Every file should be checked to ensure the accuracy of accessibility and to ensure that each file is conveying the correct information and intended purpose. For example, is each image description conveying the correct context the instructor is using it in?



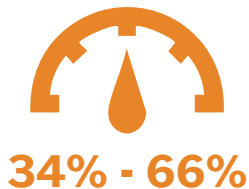
Ally Accessibility Scores

Icon Visuals



Low

Needs attention as several accessibility issues have been identified.



Medium

File is somewhat accessible but still has issues that need addressed.



High

File is mostly accessible but minor improvements are possible. (Recommended)

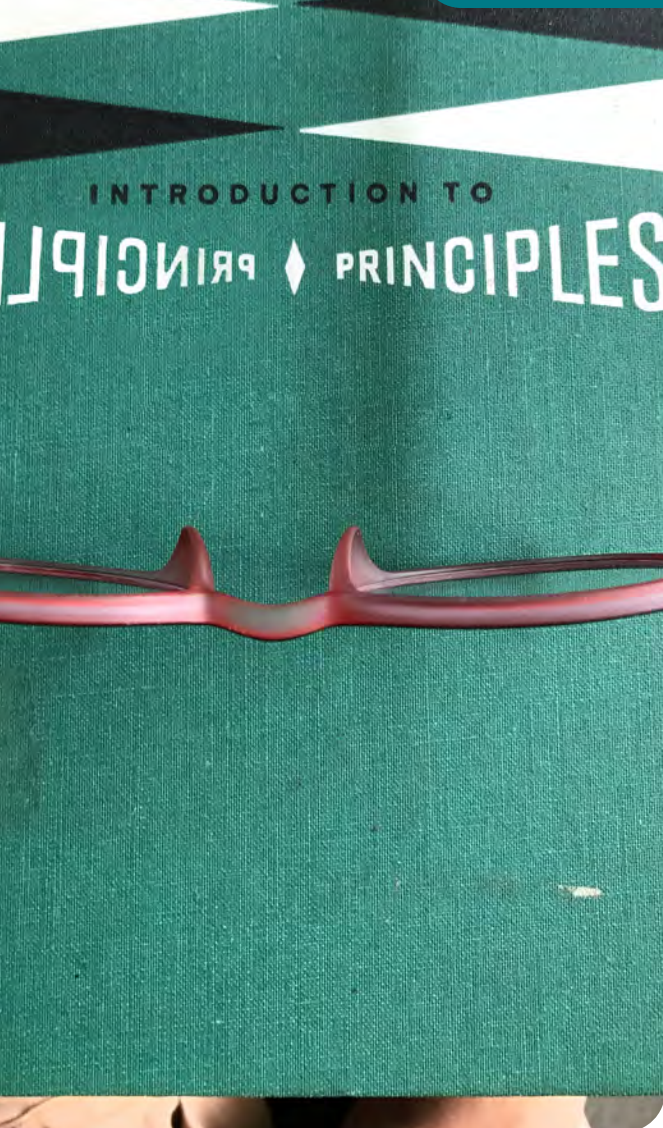


Perfect

No issues detected, but improvements may be possible.



Principles of Accessibility



There are four principles of accessibility that can impact how we create content for documents, presentations, labs, and online content for Brightspace courses. This guide is not comprehensive with regards to every aspect of accessibility that can be adopted. It does include best practices as set forth in the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#).

Questions about accessibility should be directed to the campus [Centers for Learning Excellence \(CLEs\)](#) or the office of [Online Learning and Academic Technology \(OLAT\)](#).





The four Principles of Accessibility are:

- ▶ **Perceivable** - Information must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
 - ▷ Information being presented can't be invisible to some users.
- ▶ **Operable** - User interface components and navigation must be operable.
 - ▷ This means that all users must be able to navigate a document or site.
- ▶ **Understandable** - Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.
 - ▷ Users must be able to understand the information as well as how elements like video players and web links operate.
- ▶ **Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.**
 - ▷ This means that all users must be able to navigate a document or site.



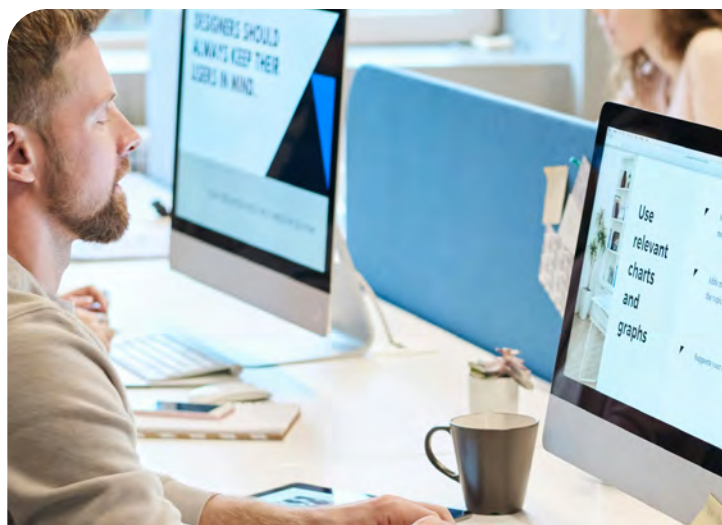


Accessibility Statement

The Tri-C accessibility statement should be made clear to our students. The current [Accessibility Statement](#) is included on the OLAT Faculty Digital Accessibility Resources webpage. Accessibility statements should also be included within the course site and within the syllabus.

Official Accessibility Statement

The Tri-C accessibility statement should be made clear to our students. The current Accessibility Statement is included on the OLAT Faculty Digital Accessibility Resources webpage. Accessibility statements should also be included within the course site and within the syllabus.



Accessibility Special Accommodations

If you need any special course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, please visit the [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\) website](#) or email SAS at cccsas@tri-c.edu. Students have the right to request accommodations at any point in the semester; however, accommodations are not retroactive.





Document File Types

The best way to create accessible documents is to follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Visit the Faculty Online Digital Accessibility webpage for more information on how to create accessible documents for a variety of programs such as Word and PowerPoint.

Microsoft Word



Microsoft Word is a preferred tool for creating accessible documents. Use the [General Documents webpage](#) for guidance, run the built-in [Accessibility Checker](#), and leverage Ally to check .docx files and convert them into alternative formats.

[Accessible PDFs](#) should be created from Word or PowerPoint (not scans), checked with Adobe Accessibility tools, and edited in Adobe DC (available to Tri-C employees). Faculty can contact their CLE for support with accessible documents.



Portable Document Files (PDFs)



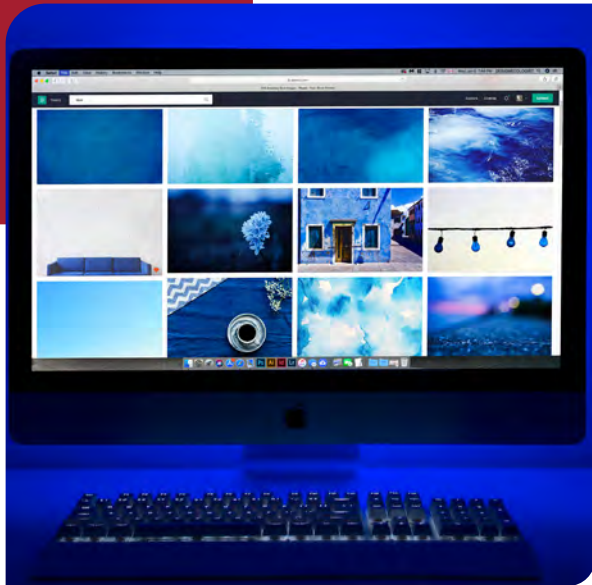
Text Accessibility

When creating documents, use headings/styles or the [Styles Tool](#) for structure, meet [WCAG color contrast](#), avoid complex image effects, and prevent flashing content. Use text cues (e.g., “required”) instead of just formatting, and write out full words to support assistive technologies.

Fonts

Fonts should be simple, easy to read, and support clear interpretation of symbols. Use [high-contrast text \(WCAG 4.5:1\)](#), at least 12-point size, and [accessible typefaces](#) for best readability.





Images

Use Alt Text (≤ 140 characters) for content images, and mark decorative images so screen readers skip them. Refer to the [Accessibility Images webpage](#) for guidance and [how to write alt text](#).

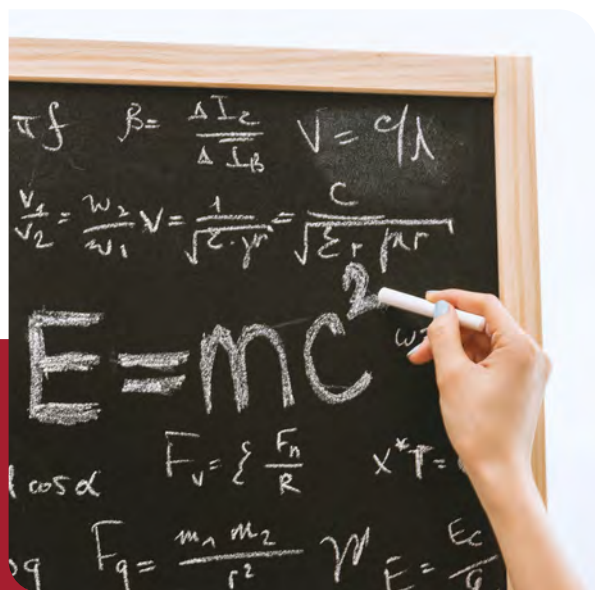
Graphs/ Complex images

For complex images, use Alt Text up to 280 characters, or provide descriptions through captions or brief text. See the [Accessibility Images webpage](#) for guidance and for graphs use a [table caption](#) or brief descriptive text.



Link

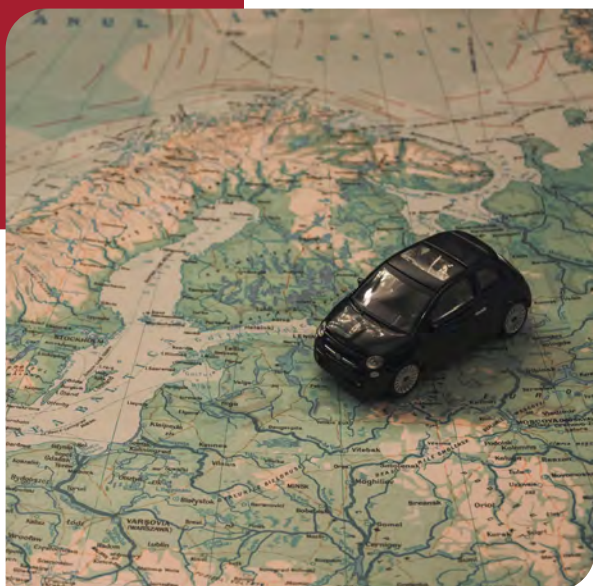
Links should be descriptive, text-based (not buttons/images), and indicate if they open in a new window. CLEs or OLAT can help check external sites. See the [Accessible Links webpage](#) for guidance.



Math and STEM

Code formulas and symbols for screen readers. Use the [Equation Editor in Microsoft Word](#).





Navigation

Navigation should follow the Brightspace Course template, which is accessible and mobile-friendly. Keep the layout consistent, don't alter the template, and minimize scrolling/clicking to support screen readers.

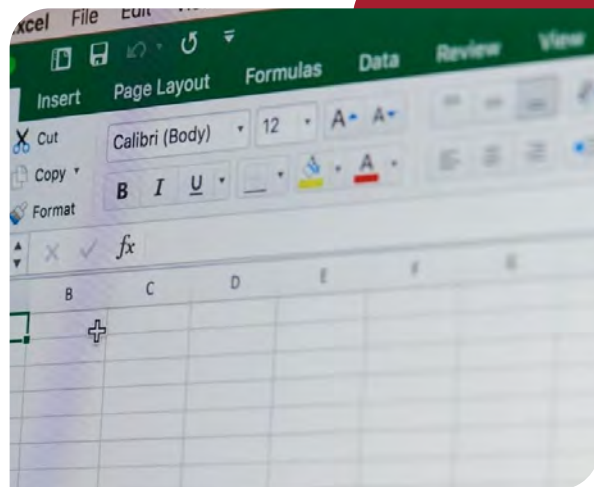
PowerPoint

PowerPoint presentations must be accessible for students. Describe visuals during lectures/recordings, consider [subtitles](#), and use built-in templates with high-contrast fonts (use 24pt+). Provide Alt Text for images, run the [Accessibility Checker](#), and ensure correct reading order.



Tables

Tables should be simple, with clear row/column headers. Screen readers read left-to-right, top-to-bottom, so provide concise Alt Text or captions for clarity. Use descriptive text if more explanation is needed. [See how to make tables accessible.](#)



Publishers' Materials

Publishers' materials must meet accessibility standards. Faculty should request or check for a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT), evaluate websites, eBooks, and digital content, and use tools like [WAVE](#). CLEs and OLAT can assist; see the [Vendor Information webpage for details.](#)





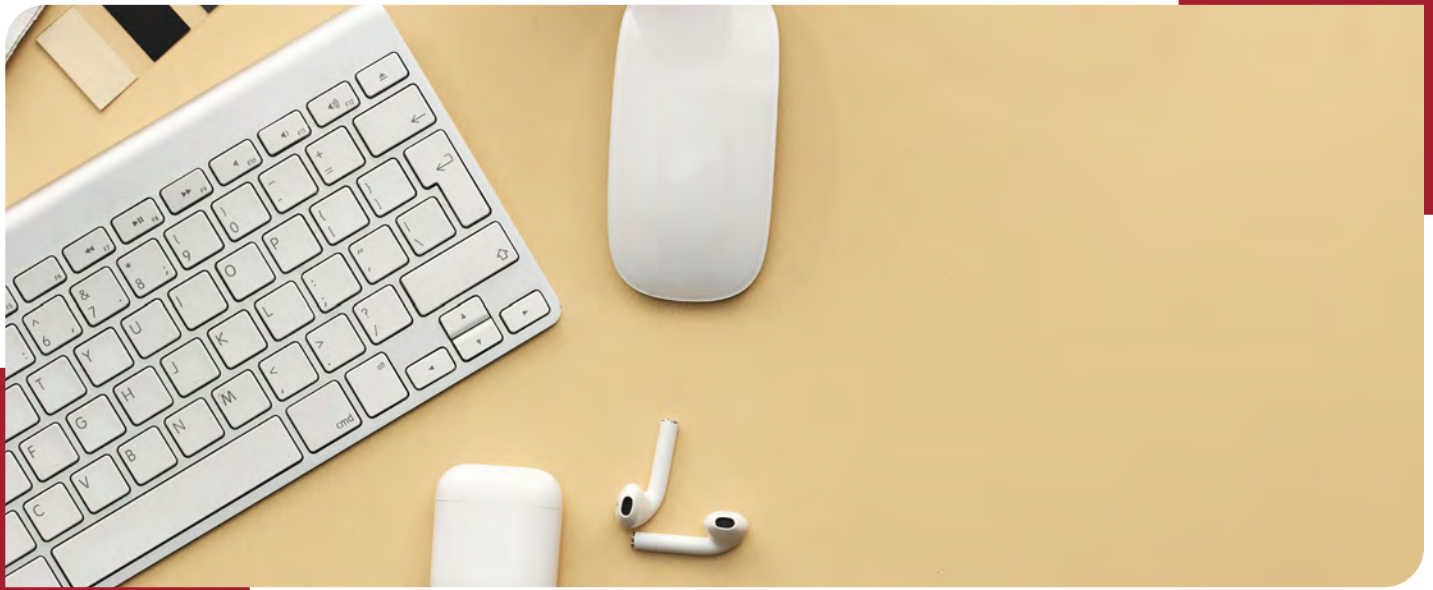
Audio

Audio files in Blackboard must include an ADA-compliant transcript. Brightspace can also generate audio using Text-to-Speech or Immersive Reader formats.

Videos

Fonts should be simple, easy to read, and support clear interpretation of symbols. Use [high-contrast text \(WCAG 4.5:1\)](#), at least 12-point size, and [accessible typefaces](#) for best readability.





Other Technologies

Other technologies used in courses must be vetted for accessibility and include accessibility statements. College-sponsored tools are pre-checked, while outside technologies should be reviewed with CLE or OLAT.



Contact



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