

# Course Accessibility Checklist

## UMOnline Tip Sheet

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Digital accessibility means that all electronic and information technologies are designed in a way to ensure equal and independent access for all users.

In April 2024, the Department of Justice updated Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with specific [regulations for web and mobile accessibility](#). This checklist is designed to help you ensure your online content meets these requirements.

### Digital Accessibility Guidelines

- Text is easily distinguishable** with adequate line, paragraph, letter, and word spacing, and fonts are simple and have adequate weight to ensure contrast. Avoid using font stylizations (e.g. italics, underlining, all capital letters) as the only way to convey meaning. Text should be used to convey information rather than images of text.
- High-contrast colors are used appropriately** with adequate contrast between text and background, and color is not the primary means of conveying important information. Use [WebAIM's Color Contrast Checker](#) to ensure adequate contrast.
- Lists are formatted using the list controls** in the document authoring software or in the [Canvas Rich Content Editor](#).
- Tables use headers to identify each row and column.** Do not merge cells. Use tables only if necessary to communicate data and not to control layout of text.
- Alternative text has been added to images** (including pictures, illustrations, and charts) to describe the content of the images for screen readers. Decorative images are marked accordingly. Information contained in graphs and charts includes a short alternative text to identify the image and then is described in detail elsewhere. Learn more from [WebAIM's description of alternative text](#).
- All media resources are accessible**, meaning videos are closed captioned and include audio descriptions (comments interspersed between dialogue that describes non-verbal actions and events), and audio recordings are transcribed and include descriptions. [Request audio and video captioning](#) through the UM Solutions Center Service Catalog.
- Course content is organized, consistent and easy to navigate.** Use a consistent structure for each topic. Present topic activities in the same order as outlined in the syllabus and topic overview section. Break up and organize content with headings.
- Descriptive headings with appropriate heading structure are used.** Headings should be ordered sequentially, similar to outlines.
- Hyperlinks are meaningful and describe where the user will be taken.** Links to external websites and resources should always open in a new tab so that users do not exit the UM website or their Canvas course. Avoid URL addresses and phrases like "click here."

- ❑ **All software and learning tools meet 508 and WCAG 2.1 AA digital accessibility standards** and must be tested for accessibility as part of the approval and purchase process.
- ❑ **All documents (Word, PDF, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) are accessible** following the same text, color, list, table, image, formatting, and heading guidelines described above.
- ❑ **Accessibility Checkers are used in software and applications** to check resources and content, including the [Canvas Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor](#).

## Things to Remember

- Digital Accessibility is about eliminating access barriers for all students. The same design criteria that make content accessible to a student with a disability ultimately improves the course for everyone.
- According to [UM's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy](#), "accessible" means that individuals with disabilities can independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same time frame as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use.
- The [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA is the technical standard for state and local governments' web content and mobile apps.

## Learn More

- Additional information about accessibility in Canvas can be found in the [UM Canvas Essentials Course](#) or in the [Canvas Basics Guide Canvas accessibility standards](#).
- To ensure your shared Canvas content meets digital accessibility requirements, review the self-enrollable [Digital Accessibility Hub](#).
- Check out [UM's electronic accessibility guidelines](#) for creating accessible documents, web content, and media and for ensuring all software and learning tools meet accessibility standards.
- Register for live [UMOnline faculty trainings on Griz Hub](#) for focused training on using Canvas.