

Digital Accessibility and Procurement

Digital accessibility is about ensuring that all members of our community have access to and can engage with digital products, tools, information, and resources in a way that's equitable, inclusive, and empowering.

Involve accessibility@umich.edu at the very beginning if you are purchasing a product that end users interact with.

Why Accessibility Matters

- Equity and Inclusion:** Our university, and ITS, is committed to equity and inclusion. It's critical that everyone can engage meaningfully with our digital spaces, which play a significant and growing role in our institution.
- Mitigation of Risk:** The university is required to provide equal access for individuals with disabilities. Any lawsuit would pose a significant risk to the institution's financial health and reputation.
- Technological Innovation:** Accessible design is a proven driver of innovation. It also enables us to be flexible and responsive in adopting new types of digital interactions, like voice and touchless interfaces.

Our Process & Methods

We strongly suggest that accessibility be reviewed **before a product is purchased**, as part of the procurement workflow, and **each time the product is upgraded or renewed** to ensure that it meets our university's standard. The process outlined below is based on higher education best practices.

Our level of involvement varies on the type and scope of the item being purchased. If the level of risk is low as determined in the **Intake** step we may not even be involved, beyond requesting and receiving compliance documentation from the vendor. The workflow below reflects a purchase of medium to high risk.

	Intake →	RFP issued →	Vendor Demo →	Post demo →	Contract
What we ask of you	Ask the requestor to fill out a Risk Assessment Questionnaire.	Include accessibility requirement language in the RFP and request compliance info from vendor: answers to the vendor questionnaire and a VPAT	Get access to a test bed from the vendor. Get test plans that exercise critical functionality from requestors.	If the product is very attractive to requestors but accessibility falls short in some ways - get us in a dialogue with vendors	Include in the contract clauses arrived at after discussion with the vendor.
What we do	We will assess the level of risk associated with the request If low, we may use accessibility compliance documentation / pass through.	We will assess the information supplied by the vendor and provide a tentative score computed from perceived risk and assessment of documentation	We will assess the vendor product vs the compliance documentation and turn in a quantifiable report as well as a recommendation.	We will discuss with vendors how to overcome accessibility shortfalls and help you stipulate conditions from the vendor under which the RFP can proceed.	We will provide you with standard accessibility contract language if purchase is unproblematic and with specific clauses reflecting arrangements with the vendor if it is problematic
Docs in play	Requestor Accessibility Form Helps us score the risk the purchase might pose.	Vendor Accessibility Documentation Vendor is asked to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPAT or evaluation by a reputable third-party Questionnaire response 	Product Accessibility Report Full report of accessibility violations - focusing on critical paths	Product Accessibility Report Prioritization Accessibility violation list, sorted into 1) must have addressed before purchase or deployment; 2) must be addressed in a given timeline	Contract accessibility language Standard accessibility contract language as well as conditional clauses

Elements of a Successful Partnership

Early collaboration

Including us as soon as you have received a purchase request ensures that we will be available to you throughout the process. It will also mean that there will be no steps missed and no need to backtrack.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities

Our role is to provide the requestor and Procurement with actionable data so that they can make informed decisions. The Requestor needs to provide all of us the information we need to calculate risk. Procurement will be the channel between the requestor, the Accessibility Team and the vendor.

Open & timely communication

We will be relying on Procurement and purchasing teams to mediate communication between us, vendors and requestors. In turn, we will provide all parties with timely data and reports as outlined in the process, and be available for consultations.

Supporting documentation

- [Movie overview of process](#)
- [Requestor Questionnaire](#)
- [Vendor Questionnaire](#)
- [How to evaluate vendor compliance documentation](#)
- [Summary version of procurement workflow](#). Contains language to be included in the RFP as well as language to be used in the contract phase.

Flow illustration

