

Campus Library Canvas Accessibility Guide

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Often, accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) materials are created for those who teach full courses as instructors of record. This brief guide focuses on how librarians can create accessible content when embedded into Canvas courses.

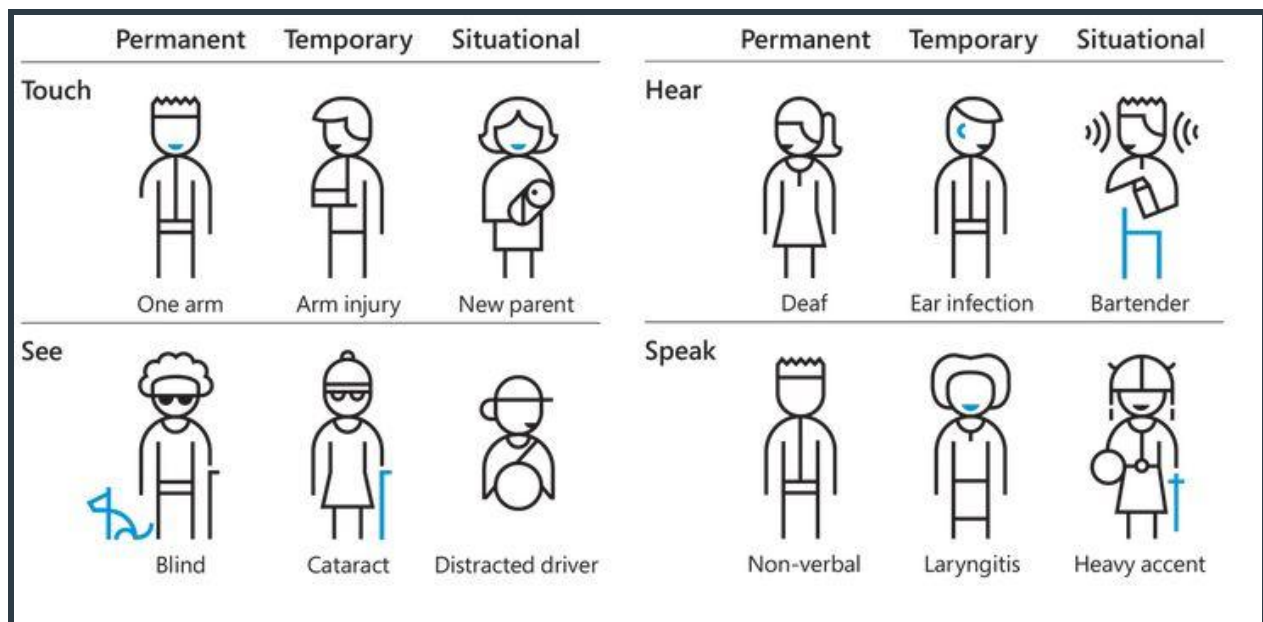


Image description: This graphic depicts how universal design creates access for those with permanent disabilities as well as those with temporary or situational disabilities. Permanent, temporary, and situational disabilities include those related to touch, hearing, sight, and speaking.

Image from [Cascadia workshop on Universal Design](#)

Referenced in 3 Play Media's [What You Should Know About WCAG 2.1](#)

Sourced from [Microsoft's Inclusive 101 Toolkit](#)

What is accessibility?

From the [Cascadia E & I course](#): Access is about peoples' relationships with spaces. Full access means all people have the ability to access a space, program, or process independently, without the aid of a modification or an alternative format. If something is not accessible, accommodations are required to create access. Designing spaces,

programs, and processes with access in mind is proactive, inclusive, and takes all community members into account. Accommodations, on the other hand, are reactive and are based on one person's requested need. Ideally, full access would be a given rather than a special request. Though, recognizing that many societal factors prevent full access from being a given, the next best approach is to make as many modifications as possible for someone to gain access and participate as fully as others.

What is Universal Design?

“[Universal Design](#) is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, universal design is good design.” - Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

Universal Design for Learning: “[Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.” -UDL ON CAMPUS: Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education

Inclusive design: A design methodology that enables and draws on the full range of human diversity. (from Microsoft's [Inclusive 101 Toolkit](#))

How can I use these principles when teaching in Canvas?

Text

- Font size should be 14 point or higher for all content added to Canvas. This not only increases overall accessibility, but may also reduce student anxiety because fewer words/paragraphs will show up on the page at any given time.

- When creating a list of items in Canvas, use the bulleted or numbered list function using the Canvas Rich Content Editor. This ensures ease of reading for those using screen readers and text-to-speech tools.
- It is preferable to use the default font in Canvas as it is sans serif. If you want to read more about accessible fonts, see here: [best fonts for dyslexic readers](#) and [readable fonts](#).

Tables

- Edit the page
 - Add a caption
 - Click into a cell in the table
 - Select the Table button>Table Properties
 - Check the Caption box and select OK
 - Click into the caption area above the table and type an appropriate caption that describes the table. If you are introducing the table using text and/or a heading, the caption can be made "invisible" by changing the font color to white.
- Set headers
 - Highlight the header cells
 - Select the Table button>Cell>Cell Properties
 - In the Cell Type box, select Header Cell, select the Scope (Columns for the first row and Row for the first column) and click OK. *Repeat this step for header cells on rows*
- Save your changes

Colors

- Use of highlighter in rich text - read more on [this Accessible Contrast, Colors and Backgrounds page](#)
 - Consider contrast between two colors of text
 - Do not use *only* color to denote difference/emphasis. Include other text emphasis such as bold or italics.
- When highlighting screenshots (with arrows, boxes, etc.), continue to consider contrast. Use black or other colors that provide contrast with the rest of the screenshot image.
- Use a contrast checker to ensure your page/graphics have sufficient contrast.

- [Web-based contrast checker](#)
- [Downloadable contrast checker](#) (works for web and programs such as PowerPoint, etc.)
- Checking for contrast is the most universal way to ensure the colors in your document are accessible, but if you wish to check how the page appears to those with color blindness, use this or another [color blindness simulator](#).

Videos/audio files

- If you create videos to embed in Canvas courses, they must be captioned. YouTube will auto-generate captions (check the auto captions for any major errors) or you may read a script and copy the script text into YouTube. The latter is most preferable. You can also record yourself in Zoom with captions turned on.
- Provide a transcript for audio recordings.

Images

- Always add alternative text (“alt-text”) to images. Canvas provides a space to type this in when adding images via the rich text editor.
- When adding screenshots to content in Canvas, include as much description of the screenshot (in addition to alt-text) so that those using a screen reader understand what is being shown. Then, you’re providing the content in multiple ways.

Document Files

- When uploading a document file, ensure that a [pdf is accessible](#).
- Remember that webpages are the most accessible form of content, then Microsoft Office documents, then pdfs.

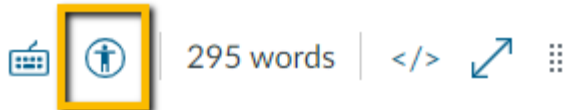
Links

- Embed a hyperlink into a small portion of descriptive text. Do not post the link itself unless it is short and describes the content well.
- Avoid using words such as “click here” or other less descriptive text to embed links.

- When printing Canvas content, embedded URLs are spelled out and not lost. See [snapshot example](#) of printed URLs.

Accessibility checkers embedded in Canvas

- Canvas has two different ways to check the accessibility of your content:
 - Ally Accessibility checker (information for [UW Canvas](#) and [Cascadia Canvas](#)) is the colored gauge on files you add to Canvas such as images, PDFs, and Microsoft Office files. You are “scored” by a percentage of accessibility represented as a color: red, yellow, orange, or green correlate to low, medium, high, or perfect for the accessibility of your file. You can mouse-over the gauge image to see your score and click to get more information.
 - Canvas also has its own Accessibility Checker built in for the Rich Text Content area at the bottom right of the editing box. It looks like a person with arms out.



- Click on that image, highlighted above, to see which issues Canvas detects with your content.

Updating others' Canvas content - editing errors

- Minor fixes vs. larger issues
 - Example: You're adding library content to a page or module in a course and you notice that the Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor has an alert. There is an unformatted list on the page! This is a quick fix that will benefit anyone using a screen reader and is almost imperceptible to anyone else viewing the page.
- It is never required to edit others' content!

Learn More!

[Accessibility Self-Paced Training](#) from UW Bothell Canvas

Sources Consulted and Additional Resources

- [Accessible Colors, Contrasts, and Backgrounds](#) from Dallas College
- [Canvas Accessibility Checklist](#) from UWB website
- [Canvas Accessibility Tips](#) from University of South Florida
- [Create accessible Canvas sites](#) from University Information Technology Service
- [What are the Canvas accessibility standards?](#) from Instructure Community
- [Best Practices for Accessibility in Canvas](#) from Emory University