

NYU Digital Accessibility Policy Frequently Asked Questions

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Introduction

NYU approved a new University [Digital Accessibility Policy](#), effective November 14, 2025, that replaces the Website Accessibility Policy (adopted in 2018). The new policy aims to:

- **Elevate Accessibility Standards:** The policy elevates the digital accessibility standard from WCAG 2.0 Level AA to WCAG 2.1 Level AA, aligning with Department of Justice guidance, international regulations, and peer institution practices.
- **Establish Clear Accountability:** The revised policy defines clear accountability through role-specific responsibilities for School/Unit leadership, Website Owners, Application Owners, Content Creators, and Digital Accessibility Liaisons, ensuring a shared commitment to accessibility across the university.
- **Integrate Accessibility into University Processes:** The policy embeds accessibility requirements into procurement and contracting processes and establishes a formal exception process for undue burden or fundamental alteration determinations, supported by Alternative Access Plans.
- **Ensure Policy Actionability:** The new policy is supported by a [Digital Accessibility Procedure](#), which is reviewed annually to ensure the policy remains actionable and responsive to evolving needs.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why was the policy updated?

NYU has updated its Digital Accessibility Policy to align with WCAG 2.1 AA, which enhances accessibility guidance to improve mobile accessibility, support users with cognitive and learning disabilities, and provide a better experience for those with low vision. WCAG 2.1 AA is now directly incorporated into accessibility regulations across multiple jurisdictions, including requirements for higher education institutions. This update expands upon the previous Web Accessibility Policy (effective February 15, 2018), which focused only on websites. The revised Policy now broadly applies to all digital content and information technology.

2. What is "digital content and information technology" under this policy?

"Digital content and information technology" encompasses electronic systems, equipment, technologies, software, and applications used to create, convert, communicate, manipulate, store, display, receive, and transmit electronic data and information. This broad definition includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Content:** Text documents, multimedia (images, video, etc.), and other content posted on public-facing and access-restricted university websites (including Learning Management Systems), or shared internally via email or on social media platforms.
- **Applications and Services:** Cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) applications, development, hosting, maintenance, archiving services, video platforms, and website hosting and design services.
- **Hardware:** Hardware with digital interfaces, e.g., kiosks.

3. What accessibility standards apply to digital content and information technology?

The NYU Digital Accessibility Policy requires that all digital content and information technology conform to the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 Level AA](#) standards.

In addition to WCAG 2.1 AA, NYU aligns with relevant federal, state, and international accessibility laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Compliance is expected throughout the lifecycle of digital content, from planning and design to procurement, implementation, and ongoing maintenance.

4. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all NYU faculty, staff, students, affiliates, and third parties who create, maintain, or procure digital content and information technology to conduct university business.

5. What is University Business?

University business refers to any activity conducted by NYU faculty, staff, students, affiliates, and third parties in support of the University's mission of teaching and research, or as part of official University operations. Examples of university business can be found in the Digital Accessibility Procedure, [Section VII. Policy and Procedure Terms and Phrases](#).

6. Who is responsible for digital accessibility at NYU?

This policy applies to all NYU faculty, staff, students, affiliates, and third parties who create, maintain, or procure digital content and information technology to conduct university business.

The revised policy defines clear accountability through role-specific responsibilities for **School/Unit leadership**, **Website Owners**, **Application Owners**, **Content Creators**, and **Digital Accessibility Liaisons**, ensuring a shared commitment to accessibility across the university.

7. Is there guidance on how my digital content and information technology can comply with the updated Digital Accessibility Policy?

The [NYU IT Digital Accessibility website](#) provides role-based guidance for [faculty](#), [staff](#), and [students](#), as well as task-specific guidance for [content creators](#), [developers](#), [event coordinators](#), and [technology buyers](#).

The [Digital Accessibility Procedure](#) provides additional role-specific and content-type guidance to help your digital content and information technology comply with the updated policy. It includes standards and best practices for:

- **Content Requirements:** Ensuring accessibility for websites, applications, videos, audio, course materials, documents, email, and collaborative platforms. NYU has negotiated rates for [captioning vendors](#) and [document remediation services](#).
- **Testing Methods:** Using automated tools, manual checks, and external reviews to confirm accessibility.
- **Platform-Specific Tips:** Guidance on accessible content creation on various platforms such as Google Workspace, Microsoft Office, Adobe PDFs, social media, and Zoom.

8. I am planning to buy technology. How can I ensure that accessibility is considered?

When working with a vendor to provide digital content, products, or technology, accessibility must be part of the evaluation and contracting process from the start. NYU Procurement incorporates the requirements and standards of the Digital

Accessibility Policy into its procurement processes for the acquisition of digital content and information technology. The [Digital Accessibility Assessment](#) [NYU Login required] is required for the selection and purchase of goods and services with user interfaces, including application purchases, software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions, websites, and professional services for application or website design. Review [Section IV of the Digital Accessibility Procedure](#) for more information.

9. What about hardware? Is that included in the policy?

Yes, hardware is included in the new Digital Accessibility Policy.

The policy applies to all "digital content and information technology" at NYU. The definition of information technology explicitly includes "hardware with digital interfaces".

The [Digital Accessibility Procedure](#) outlines the specific standards that hardware with digital interfaces must comply with:

- In the United States: Hardware with digital interfaces should comply with the federal Section 508 standards, specifically **Chapter 4 ("Hardware")** of [Appendix C to 36 C.F.R. Part 1194](#).
- In the European Union: Hardware with digital interfaces should comply with [EN 301 549](#) [PDF], specifically **Clause 8 ("Hardware")**.

10. Is there an exception process to meeting the updated Policy requirements?

Where compliance with the Policy imposes unreasonable expense or administrative effort, or would fundamentally alter the essential nature of university business, a [Digital Accessibility Policy Exception Request](#) must be submitted to the NYU IT Digital Accessibility team for review. Exceptions are granted by the Vice President, Information Technology and Global University Chief Information Officer.

Exceptions **are not automatic** and require formal approval from the Vice President, Information Technology and Global University Chief Information Officer. Approved exceptions must include an [Alternative Access Plan](#). Review [Section III of the Digital Accessibility Procedure](#) for more information.

11. What is an "Alternative Access Plan"?

An [Alternative Access Plan](#) ensures that individuals with disabilities receive timely and accurate access to the same information, benefits, or services as provided in the original format, but through alternate methods appropriate to the individual's disability to effectively communicate the essential content.

12. I reviewed the policy, and I'm concerned that my digital content and information technology do not conform. I don't have a technical background. What do I do?

Get in touch with the [NYU IT Digital Accessibility](#) team for support. The NYU IT Digital Accessibility team offers virtual consultations and can be contacted at digital-accessibility@nyu.edu.

13. What should I do if I find an accessibility barrier on an NYU website?

The [Report an Accessibility Issue](#) form can be used to report problems with a particular website or to request that specific content be made accessible. This form may also be used to provide information about the accessibility of a service that we should share with others or to submit a formal grievance under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The NYU IT Digital Accessibility team will resolve the request or route it to the relevant Website Owner or Application Owner for follow-up and remediation. In the event that an individual accommodation may be required, the NYU IT Digital Accessibility team will notify the Moses Center for Accessibility and Inclusive Culture.

14. Where can I send comments or feedback?

The [Report an Accessibility Issue](#) form can be used to share feedback. Or, contact the NYU IT Digital Accessibility team directly at digital-accessibility@nyu.edu.