



ADA Compliance Guide for Virtual Classes and Accommodations

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Designing your ADA Compliant Virtual Class

When the design of a course is approached thoughtfully and inclusively, it creates an educational environment where all students have an opportunity to learn and demonstrate their mastery of the course content. If a course is not designed with accessibility in mind upfront, some students are immediately put at a disadvantage when compared to nondisabled students.

Creating Accessible MS Word Documents

Before sending your email message or sharing your document or spreadsheet, run the **Accessibility Checker** to make sure your Microsoft Office content is easy for people of all abilities to read and edit.

Using the Accessibility Checker

1. On the ribbon, select the Review tab. If you are using Outlook, note that you'll only see the Review tab when writing or replying to messages.
2. Select **Check Accessibility**.
3. Review your results. You'll see a list of errors, warnings, and tips with how-to-fix recommendations for each.

Tips for accessible documents:

1. Use headings (created by using the styles tool) to structure the document.
2. Add **Alternative Text** to images.
 - Alternative Text is a word or phrase that can be added to describe the image or graphic. This allows accessibility of text-driven documents, typically found in Word or PDF files. The Alt Text within the Alt Tag should let the user know the content and purpose of an image. Alt Text is accessed by screen readers to provide a text equivalent of images.
3. Create links by using meaningful text descriptions.
 - Providing clear wording for the text in a link can be challenging. In an effort to be concise, sometimes we sacrifice clarity. If a student using a screen reader is in your course, they have the option to scan links to find what they need. If links are not described adequately, scanning the course content in this way is not productive.
4. Avoid the use of SmartArt.
5. Avoid adding text boxes.
6. Avoid putting important information in headers or footers.

Creating Accessible PDF Documents

PDFs can provide an accessible way to provide content. If not created correctly, though, they can be totally inaccessible to people who use screen readers.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Start with an accessible source document. By following the previous suggestions for creating an accessible MS Word document, you are on your way to creating an accessible PDF.
2. Save the MS Word document to PDF by choosing Save as PDF rather than printing to PDF.
3. Simple documents should convert pretty well from MS Word to PDF. More complex documents may need to be checked for accessibility and even remediated for accessibility.

If you are using PDFs that were created by someone else, check to make sure they are accessible.

1. Can you highlight the text on the page? If not, it may be an image of the text instead of real text.
2. Older PDFs created by scanning an article are often purely an image.

Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

When you use MS PowerPoint to teach online, you may be using it in a variety of ways.

- Providing it for students to download it to view on their own computer.
- Loading it into Canvas so that students view it as a slide presentation there.
- Showing it during a live video conferencing session.

No matter the end product, several things need to be considered as you create the presentation.

1. Choose a design template that offers good contrast.
2. Avoid starting with a blank slide and adding text boxes.
3. Instead, choose the layout that fits your slide design.
4. Avoid the “Design Ideas” presented by PowerPoint. Some are accessible, but many are not.
5. Look at the “outline view” of the slide to see if the text on your slide is visible there.
6. Describe images, charts, and graphs with alternative text.
7. Use sans serif fonts and make sure your text is 24-point or larger for online classes (or 28-point or larger for face-to-face classes).

8. Create an accessible PDF version of the PowerPoint for students to download. This version will be more accessible to screen reader users. To do so, choose Save to PDF instead of printing to PDF.

Creating Accessible Video Content

Video content can be much more engaging than more static content, adding great benefit to an online course. At the same time, if accessibility is not considered, video content can present barriers for many students.

So what needs to be considered to make certain video content is accessible?

1. For videos embedded in a course, the video player needs to be accessible by keyboard, and the controls need to be labeled properly so that a screen reader user can access all of the video controls.
2. The video will need to be captioned.
3. The visual content will need to be described.
4. A transcript will need to be created that includes the captions and the descriptions of the visual content.

Accessible Video Players

If you are embedding videos in Canvas, a good practice is to also include a link that goes directly to the source video (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, etc.).

Using Captioned Videos

When choosing a video that has been created by someone else, make sure it is captioned. Transcription created by artificial intelligence often has many inaccuracies. Even when it is fairly accurate, it lacks punctuation and capitalization, making it very difficult to follow.

Checking a Video for Captions

To check to see if a video is truly captioned, click on the “CC” button at the bottom of the video. This information is displayed in the top left corner of the video.

Finding Captioned Videos

If you are searching for video content to share with your students, you can narrow your YouTube search to just those videos that are captioned.

1. Simply go to youtube.com and enter the topic you want to search for.

2. After you select the search button, you will see a button appear labeled **Filter**.
3. Select that button and open up the options.
4. Then, under **Features**, select **Subtitles/CC**.
5. This will bring up only those videos that have a caption file uploaded.

Again, make sure to check for accuracy before sharing the video.

Captioning Your Own Videos

If you have created your own video, you will need to caption it or have it captioned. If you plan to add your own, assuming your video is housed on YouTube, you can approach this a few different ways.

1. Create a transcript of all of the video content, upload that to YouTube, and allow YouTube to sync the transcript with the video.
2. Upload your video to YouTube and allow it to create an automatic transcript for you, then go in and edit the transcript by making corrections and adding capitalization, punctuation, and identifying speakers.
3. Create a transcript and use a tool that allows you to add timings to your transcript. Upload the caption file to YouTube.

Audio Description

Audio description refers to providing information about the visual aspects of a video to someone who is blind or who has low vision. Audio description can be provided as part of the general narration or can be added after the fact.

If the video is simply a recording of you providing a lecture, then there would be little need for audio description. If you are also showing slides, you'll want to describe what is in the slides.

❖ Important to remember:

- Are there sections of the video that provide content in text-only (i.e., credits, section titles, statistics, etc.)?
- Are the names and/or titles of speakers listed under the speaker?
- Are there presentation slides that are being shared that are not spoken by the narrator?
- Are there other visuals that add to the content of the video?
- Is something being demonstrated in the video?

All such content will need to be described in order for the video to be accessible. Good audio descriptions simply state in words what a blind person would miss visually.

Providing a Transcript

Once you have your transcript for the captions and the audio descriptions, you can combine the two to create a document that will make your video accessible to students who are deaf or blind. Simply create an accessible MS Word document with this content and provide a link to it below the video.

Accessible Video Conferencing Solutions

As you plan to lecture using video conferencing, remember that not all people will access your lecture the same way.

- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need captions or an ASL interpreter.
 - Students who access the computer using assistive technology or the keyboard alone may find learning the keyboard shortcuts (if they do exist) to be time-consuming.
 - Offering the option to connect by phone and sending any visual materials such as PowerPoint slides in advance is a good practice.
 - Also, providing descriptions of what you are sharing visually is a good practice, whether remote or face to face. This way, blind students and those joining by phone can follow along more easily.
- ❖ Here are some tips for providing accessibility during your lecture:
- ❖ Provide multiple means for people to ask questions (i.e., chat tool, unmuting the user so they can ask questions, and emailing questions).
 - ❖ If you are showing slides, announce when you are moving to the next slide.
 - ❖ Make sure students have an accessible version of the slides in advance.
 - ❖ Don't assume that everyone can access the slides during your presentation. Read the content or provide all of the content as part of your lecture.
 - ❖ If a captioner/interpreter is joining, make sure things are working properly before beginning your lecture.
 - ❖ Record your lecture so that students who lose Internet connection can access it later.

Implementing Accommodations in the Online Course

A highly accessible online course will remove the need for many individualized accommodations. If instructors take the time to follow the suggestions in the previous sections, students with disabilities will be included proactively and participate seamlessly. Students who require accommodations will notify you with a letter from the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services.

It is the instructor's responsibility to provide testing accommodations. Students may schedule an appointment with the Testing Center for Accommodated Testing or they may choose to have them provided remotely. If a student prefers to test with the Testing Center you will need to work with the student to select a date and time, they will need to register, and you will need to setup the assignment to not require Proctorio in Canvas or provide the Testing Center with a Word or PDF version to administer a paper based exam

If you need assistance or have any questions about implementing accommodations, please contact the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services at disabilityservices@mybrcc.edu.

Common Accommodations in the Online Environment

Extended Time for Exams, Quizzes, and Assessments

When timed exams are used, extended time is a reasonable accommodation for many students. You will need to provide time and a half or possibly double time for students to take the exam or quiz.

- Assessments such as untimed essays, untimed exams, or discussion boards do not require this exam accommodation.
- Extending due dates is NOT considered extended time.
- If you use timed exams, quizzes, and/or assignments, you need to verify if you have students who require extended time and breaks.
- Some students may require extra time and breaks during exams. In addition to adjusting for extra time, instructors need to adjust for break time, when a student has an approved break accommodation. Breaks typically amount to an additional five minutes for every 30 minutes of exam time. For instance, if a regular exam length is 50 minutes, the following extended time applies:
 - Student with 1.5 extended time has 75 minutes
 - Student with 1.5 extended time AND breaks has 85 minutes

- Students are advised not to begin a test if their time has not been extended, and to contact their instructor.
- In Canvas, you can extend time for specific students.

Adding Extra time to an Exam

1. Once you publish a timed quiz for the entire class, you can then give individual students extra time.
2. In Course Navigation, click the Quizzes link.
3. Click the name of the quiz.
4. Click the **Moderate This Quiz** link.
5. To moderate a quiz for one student, locate the student and click the **Edit** icon. (You can also filter students in your course by using the **Search People** field.)
6. If you want to select multiple students, click the checkbox next to each of their names.
7. Click **Change Extensions for [#] Selected Students** button.
8. Type the number of extra minutes in the **Extra Time on Every Attempt field**. Extra time can only be added in full-minute increments.
9. If you are adding time for multiple students, the student extension box will apply the extra time for all selected students.
10. If the student hasn't taken the quiz, the extra time will be added to the student's initial attempt and additional attempts.

Adding Extra Time on Current Attempt

1. If a student is currently taking the quiz while you are viewing the Moderate Quiz page, you can extend the quiz time as part of their current attempt.
2. For current attempts, the remaining time will display next to a **clock icon**.
3. To extend the time on the quiz, click the **clock icon**.
4. Canvas will show you what time the quiz began, and what time it is scheduled to end.
5. In the minutes field, enter the number of extra minutes you want to give the student as part of their current attempt.
6. In the time drop-down menu, choose whether you want to add those minutes to the current time or the current (scheduled) end time.
7. If you want to end the quiz in relation to the current time, select the now option in the drop-down menu.
8. Click the **Extend Time** button.

9. Verify student time extensions on the Moderate Quiz page.

Considerations for the Use of Adaptive Technology

Some students need to use adaptive technology (such as text to speech software, screen readers, or screen magnification software) to complete exams. Much of the adaptive technology software requires access to the internet.

- ❖ Important: If an exam requires the use of a lockdown browser, instructors may need to determine exceptions for students who require internet-based technology during exams. Instructors may consider using built-in exceptions within the lockdown browser or eliminating the requirement to use lockdown browsers.

Using Readers and Scribes

- Some students require a “reader” for exams if the exam cannot utilize a text to speech technology. Instructors can create a recording (audio file of the exam items) that is recorded with clear, distinct pronunciation.
- Clarity is extremely important for technical courses like Math, Science, or Foreign Languages.
- Students can also download the software used in The Testing Center to have their test read aloud at the link <https://www.nvaccess.org/download/>. It is free and will read aloud text when they move the cursor over it. Be mindful that some software may not be adaptive and may not work properly.
 - ❖ Additional Options:
 - Kurzweil 3000 -The Read the Web extension is designed to add a tool bar with text-to-speech, as well as dictionaries and language translation to web pages. Username and Password is provided by the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services.
 - Chrome Extension - Google Chrome has several tools to assist with Text to Speech, Speech to Text, Reading Comprehension, Focus, and Navigation. The following link has details about how to use these extensions through Google Chrome:
<https://www.controlaltachieve.com/2016/10/special-needs-extensions.html>
- Some students require a “scribe” for exams and are not able to utilize speech to text technology. Instructors should consider eliminating the need for a scribe by changing their exam format, such as moving from an essay exam to a multiple-choice/true-false format.
 - If a reader and/or scribe are needed, and the options above are unsuccessful, instructors can choose to proctor the exam via Zoom and serve as the reader and scribe.

Implementing Alternatives to Computer-Based Testing

Some students require a paper copy of the exam. Instructors can consider giving permission to print the exam and email it back to the instructor; providing an audio file of the exam items; or developing an alternate assignment for the student to complete.

Note-taking and Audio Recording

- Counseling and Accessibility Services offers two options for note-taking: peer note-taking and audio recording. Depending on a student's disability and study preferences, one option may be a better fit than the other. This will be indicated on the student's accommodation letter.
- For students requiring peer notetakers, the instructor should receive a Volunteer Notetaker Information sheet. It is the instructor's responsibility to obtain a peer notetaker for the student, without identifying the student publicly. Some instructors offer class incentives for this service. Have the notetaker email the information sheet to disabilityservices@mybrcc.edu. We provide them with a letter of recommendation and priority registration for their service.
- It is important for instructors to inform notetakers that note-taking should continue as if classes are being held in person. Peer note-taking should continue without interruption for synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid lectures. Notes should be emailed to the student in a timely manner.
- As an alternative, instructors can choose to provide their own copies of notes from their lectures to students with this accommodation.
- Audio recordings of lectures should continue without interruption.

Captioning/ Sign Language Interpreters

Even if you use videos that are captioned already, there are some situations where live captioning or interpreting will be needed as an accommodation.

- If you are using video conferencing technology, such as Zoom or Teams, to deliver a live lecture and discussions, your lecture will need to be captioned or interpreted for a deaf or hard of hearing student. You will probably need to provide access or the appropriate link to the lecture to a live captionist/interpreter so they can log in and provide services.
- Students who use sign language interpreters or captionist will also need captioning of videos and transcripts of audio used in any portion of an exam, quiz, or assignment.
- Pre-recorded asynchronous lectures must be captioned.

Consideration for Absences

If a student has Consideration for Absences as an accommodation, the student may experience a disability-related absence that may impact their ability to attend a specific class event or complete assignments on time.

Students with chronic health-related conditions that are episodic in nature and periodically worsen or “flare-up” may experience legitimate barriers to class attendance and may need flexibility in the application of attendance. These include, but are not limited to:

- Students with autoimmune disorders such as lupus, multiple sclerosis, or rheumatoid arthritis; Celiac disease, Crohn’s disease, or ulcerative colitis; sickle cell anemia; seizure disorders; forms of arthritis; cancer; and/or conditions requiring debilitating treatment (e.g., chemotherapy, dialysis).
- Students with mental illness who are experiencing an acute exacerbation of symptoms
- Students with mobility impairments and pain who may have particular difficulty with physically moving during weather changes

Based upon the nature of the medical condition, it may be known in advance that absences could occur; however, some students could experience an unexpected exacerbation of their condition, resulting in acute symptoms. While some of these conditions require treatment and, in some cases, hospitalization, the majority of such students typically do not go to the doctor. Students are not required to provide a doctor’s note for each disability-related absence.

While there are guidelines for this accommodation, each situation should be addressed on a case by case bases, and instructors should be flexible and take other factors into consideration. Instructors must make themselves available to discuss the accommodation with the student in a place that allows for confidentiality.

- The instructor should discuss with the student any graded in-class/clinical/lab activities or assignments that are impossible to replicate at a later time or in an alternate format, and how it would impact the student’s grade.
- The student should be made aware of the total number of disability-related absences that will prevent them from meeting the essential components/requirements/objectives of the course and whether withdrawing from the course or receiving an incomplete is an option.

If a student is unable to attend class because of a disability:

1. The student, or a designee, must notify the instructor as soon as they are able to do so, that their absence is disability-related, and provide an estimated date of return.

2. The instructor and student must develop a plan on how class events (e.g., assignment, exam, etc.) will be addressed if missed.
3. The student will not lose attendance or participation points.
4. The instructor will determine how the student will receive lecture material missed during a disability-related absence.
5. If an absence prevents the student from taking a test/quiz or submitting assignments or coursework, the instructor will provide a new due date (without late grading penalties). After said extension, the student will be subject to the same late grading penalties as other students in the class.

Examples of Online Accommodations

Below are examples of accommodations and types of technology used by students with disabilities, organized by disability type.

Low Vision

- Use of screen reader
- Use of voice commands and dictation software instead of a keyboard and mouse.
- Enlarged text and illustrations.
- Contrast-enhanced printed materials, including color contrast. Avoid using color to convey meaning; don't refer to color as the sole means of bringing important content to students' attention.
- Image-enlarging technology (e.g., TV monitor, magnifier)
- Electronic format for syllabi, assignments, readings, resources
- Glare guards
- Supplementary light source
- Perform online activities that do not require drag and drop.
- Zoom-text software and/or amplifiers
- Use of Accessible Mobile Apps and Tools

Blindness

- Use of screen reader
- Use of voice commands and dictation software instead of a keyboard and mouse.
- Verbal or audio descriptions of visuals and videos
- Audio-recorded, braille or electronic-formatted lecture notes, handouts, and texts
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Braille lab signs and equipment labels; auditory lab warning signals
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g., talking calculators, tactile timers)

- Computer with optical character reader, speech output, Braille screen display, and Braille printer output
- Accessible Mobile Apps and eTools

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- Remote American Sign Language
- Real-time captioning
- Transcriber
- Notetaker
- Visual aids in a video and/or written supplements to spoken instructions
- Written assignments, lab instructions, summaries, notes
- Use of written text for class and private discussions
- Transcripts of podcasts, voice-over PowerPoints, videos, and other online media such as synchronous web conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom or Teams)
- Flexibility with web conferencing (video) discussions (e.g., discussion boards, online chat in writing only)

Learning Disability

- Notetaker
- Text-to-speech software
- Software for reading, writing, and study
- Audio recorded lectures
- eBooks and audiobooks
- Captioned videos
- Extended time on exams and assignments
- Computer with voice output, spell checker and grammar checker
- Concise and clear oral and written instructions.
- Well organized course navigation including visual aids
- Guidance or Adaptive reading text or interpreting illustrations
- Use of screen reader to help understand text
- Brief sections of text, audio, or video - Students may have trouble focusing on or comprehending.

Mobility / Motor Impairment

- Notetaker, scribes, lab partners
- Accessible Mobile Apps and eTools
- Computer with speech input, voice output, and alternative keyboard
- Voice-to-text dictation software
- Class materials available in electronic format (e.g., image files are not accessible)
- Extended time for completion of activities. These individuals may become easily fatigued by movements that wouldn't be tiring for most people.

- Perform online activities that do not require drag and drop as many individuals are not able to use a mouse.
- Use of assistive technologies like head wands and voice-recognition software to access a course.

Speech Impairment

- Alternative assignments for oral presentations (e.g., written assignments, one-to-one presentation)
- Flexibility with web conferencing (video) discussions (e.g., consider discussion boards, online chat)

Chronic Health Condition

- Notetakers
- Flexible time to access content and complete assignments
- Extra exam time

If any further assistance regarding ADA compliance and guidance for online courses, please contact BRCC's Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services.

Disabilityservices@mybrcc.edu, 225-216-8643.