

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

FACULTY CENTER FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Blackboard Accessibility Checklist

[Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act](#), requires that all institutions that use federal funds, such as financial aid, are required to comply with these standards to make content accessible.

Some guidelines to ensure your course is accessible to Blackboard participants:

Media (Audio and Video):

Text alternatives should be provided to make audio and video content accessible to the deaf and those who have difficulty hearing.

- Text descriptions and ALT tags are provided for all video content
- Text transcripts provided for all audio content
- Text transcripts or closed captioning provided for all video content

Images, Tables and Graphs:

Images

- Use appropriate `alt` text for images, tables and graphs with function ([Video link in resources below](#))
 - o **NOTE:** To create an “alt” tag when adding an embedded image in Bb, click the image icon in the text box editor, browse for image file, In the Insert Image options box that appears, enter a description of the image in the Alt Text line, Enter a long description so the screen readers can describe the image, and then click Submit
- Images without function (decorative/background images) have no alt text entered.
- Minimal-to-no use of flickering animated graphic elements (reduces risk of optical seizures)

Tables

- Summaries are provided for data tables
- Data tables include identifying headers
- Are your tables images or text? Screen readers can read text tables. Provide long descriptions for tables that are images.

Text and Color:

Ensure that the foreground/background colors, as well as the written text, have sufficient contrast to make your content more readable for everyone. **NOTE:** Screen readers do not recognize color.

Text

- Use a standard font-size and style (no elaborate text) – Bb default is Arial, size 3 (12 pt.)
- Blinking or moving text is avoided
- Do not underlined text in Blackboard – this suggests a hyperlink to a document or external page for the user to click on. This can confuse those with visual disabilities.

Color

- Text color contrast
- Minimal use of color (overuse of many colors can be confusing to the viewer)
- Do not use only color to emphasize points in your content.
 - o **NOTE:** Example, avoid the use of “all items in RED are required”
- No yellow-blue or red-green combinations
 - o **NOTE:** Color blind students will not be able to read these combinations

Testing:

New features have been added to Bb’s test options called “Test Availability Exceptions.” Instructors can select one or more students to make a number of exceptions to the already established settings for the test. Exceptions can be used to provide accommodations to disabled students, such as extended time or more attempts on the test.

Course Layout:

Menu Buttons

- High contrast between text color and background for best readability
- Do not use patterned buttons.
- Remove or hide buttons/tools that are not used.

Course Links

- Descriptively and consistently name course links. Avoid usage of “click here” or “more.”
- Make sure links are recognizable (underlined).
- High contrast between text color and background.
- Set links to open in a new window.

Course Layout

- Use a standard navigation scheme and menu-structure for students to navigate the course.
- Appropriate use of white space
- Pages minimize scrolling
- Tables are not used to format/organize images or text

Attaching Documents:

- Linked titles for documents attached in Bb include the file extension (.pdf/.rtf/.doc, etc.)

Microsoft Word Documents

Office does a really great job of making your documents automatically accessible in Word, but you need to check and provide alt tag descriptions of images/tables/graphs in there as well.

- Use appropriate text for images/links
- Run the Accessibility Checker
 - o File > Info > Prepare for Sharing > Check Accessibility

Microsoft PowerPoint

PowerPoint is a great tool to use, but makes accessibility a little bit harder since you can embed audio/videos/images, etc. in your presentation. You need to be really sure you are using the notes section as well and alt tags to describe content that is not text based.

- Use appropriate text for images/links
- Provide transcripts for audio/videos
- Ensure videos have closed captioning where appropriate
- It may be necessary to provide a text alternative to PowerPoint
- Run the Accessibility Checker
 - o File > Info > Prepare for Sharing > Check Accessibility

Portable Document Files (PDF)

There are several concerns about PDF files. Many times, PDFs are scans from a textbook or other source. These scans are not accessibility friendly. For best practices, ensure that either:

- PDFs are created from Word documents or other programs that do text to PDF conversion (check that you are able to highlight the text in the PDF file).
 - o It may be necessary to create a text file in addition to your PDF.
- PDFs are created with OCR scanning software.
 - o Optical Character Recognition (OCR) allows you to convert different types of documents, such as scanned paper documents or PDF files into editable and searchable data.
 - o Many scanners today come with OCR capable software packages.
 - o Free online OCR scanner: <http://www.free-ocr.com/> will take files you have scanned and run them through the OCR software to output a text based file.
NOTE: OCR is not perfect and you will have to manually check your document.

Applets and Plugins:

- Provide clear instructions and/or link to applets and plugins when required. ie) if the audio file requires Windows Media Player or a Flash presentation requires Shockwave, the link must be given for students to download.

Resources:

- Accessibility Features. (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2015, from https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_12_and_SP_13/Administrator/035_Accessibility
- Blackboard Course Accessibility Checklist. (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2015, from <http://www.temple.edu/cs/training/accessibility/blackboard/CourseAccessibilityChecklist.pdf>
- Making your content accessible in Blackboard. (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2015, from <http://info.uwe.ac.uk/online/Blackboard/staff/guides/accessibleContent.asp>
- Palacios, K. (2012, March 23). Adding Alt Text to Images in Blackboard. Retrieved February 23, 2015, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRdxvtT57qg>
- Section 508 Of The Rehabilitation Act. (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2015, from <http://www.section508.gov/Section-508-Of-The-Rehabilitation-Act>