



California Community Colleges  
Chancellor's Office

## Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 12/7/2018

### FACULTY

**1. Do I need to allow students with disabilities into my class?**

Yes. Faculty members must allow students with disabilities into their classes in almost all cases. Moreover, faculty members must allow students with disabilities to utilize approved accommodations. See the FAQ about utilizing approved accommodations

**2. What elements of my class do I need to ensure are accessible?**

You need to ensure every element of your class is accessible or able to be accommodated in an equally effective manner. Accessibility questions most commonly arise around course review and design, distance education courses, learning software, posting documents online, using videos (online and in class), and sending electronic communication to students. The California community college (CCC) system has created professional development opportunities and training materials to support you in meeting your legal requirements. Additional information can be found by following the links below.

- [Course review and design](#)
- [Online documents](#)
- [Online videos](#)

**3. When I author content, what are the accessibility requirements?**

Faculty authored content must meet the accessibility requirements of Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and federal requirements as further supported by the Chancellor's Office.

**4. If I want to create content, where can I get training and support to ensure it is accessible?**

The CCC system offers four opportunities for training and support in creating accessible course content:

- [The Online Network of Educators \(@ONE\)](#) is a collaborative, system-wide network of CCC faculty, staff, and administrators, and is coordinated by the professional development team of the CCC Online Education Initiative (OEI). @ONE provides [archives of webinars on accessibility](#) as well as a [certificate in course design](#), and various [blog posts](#) related to making content more accessible. @ONE also offers a four-week course on [Creating Accessible Course Content](#).
- [California Community Colleges Accessibility Center \(CCCAC\)](#) provides services, workshops, resources, and technical assistance in the areas of assistive technologies, the creation of alternate formats, and web/online accessibility. The Accessibility Center maintains information about accessibility standards and policies, and hosts the [Accessibility Center Help Desk](#), which provides a forum to ask questions related to websites, online videos, web applications, or mobile app accessibility. The Accessibility Center works with other CCC initiatives to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to web and information technology accessibility.
- [Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative \(IEPI\)](#) is a statewide collaborative effort to help advance the effective practices of the CCC system. IEPI hosts a variety of [workshops](#) throughout the year, many of which address accessibility issues.
- [Professional Learning Network \(PLN\)](#) – PLN hosts a link to videos with [training on making system materials accessible and 508 compliant](#) and provides information about a regular [Information and Communications Technology Accessibility Workshop](#).

**5. What is the difference between accessibility and accommodation, and how does it relate to what I am required to do?**

Accessibility is defined as when students with disabilities “enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.”<sup>1</sup> Accessibility is about content creation, and faculty are required to plan ahead and make their course content accessible to disabled students. This includes activities such as:

- Captioning videos;
- Selecting accessible websites when assigning online resources to students;
- Ensuring word documents can be read by screen readers; and
- Providing alternate text for images.

Accommodation refers to activities that specific students require in order to participate equally in the learning environment. Accommodation is about student service, not content creation. Example accommodations might include:

- Requesting sign language interpreters;
- Extended time for in-class assignments; and
- Note-taking assistance.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/11116002-b.pdf>

Some technologies cannot be accommodated, and therefore cannot be required as part of any course.

In determining whether a tool, product, or piece of content need be accessible or whether it can be accommodated, a good first question is to ask yourself what the learning objectives are for the course, and what components are necessary to achieve those objectives. If something is necessary to achieve a fundamental objective of the course, it must be accessible.

## 6. How do I provide reasonable accommodations?

Approved academic accommodations should be coordinated with your college's Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS). Do not try and do provide accommodations on your own.

The DSPS program provides support services, specialized instruction, and educational accommodations to students with disabilities so that they can participate as fully and benefit as equitably from the college experience as their non-disabled peers. An Academic Accommodation Plan (AAP) is developed for each student which links student's goals, curriculum program, and academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services and/or instruction to his/her disability related educational limitation.

## 7. What resources are available to help me make the following content accessible?

*For all content*

- [Online Education Initiative \(OEI\)](#), in partnership with @ONE, has assembled a [rubric](#) for creating courses that meet existing regulatory and accreditation requirements. The rubric covers web, multimedia, and document resources.
- [Portland Community College](#) offers an [Accessibility Quick Guide](#) with instructions about creating and checking accessible content.

*For web content*

Follow the links below if you want to:

- [See a handbook about web accessibility](#)
- [Evaluate webpage accessibility](#)
- [Search a database of information on accessible web content](#)
- [Learn about alternate text](#)
- [Structure accessible web documents](#)
- [Write accessible web documents](#)
- [Design for colorblindness](#)
- [Check Google Docs accessibility](#)
- [Write accessible math and science equations](#)

*For multimedia*

Click the links below if you are seeking:

- [Funding for live and synchronous captioning and transcription](#) for online classes, hybrid classes, on-campus classes using distance methods of content delivery, and digital learning object repositories used to collect and make available digitized content. Funding provided through the DECT Grant, hosted by College of the Canyons
- [An introduction to captioning](#)
- [An introduction to audio description](#)
- [Guidelines on Captions, Transcripts, and Audio Descriptions](#)
- Overviews of:
  - [Creating Accessible Video and Multimedia Products](#)
  - [Designing Accessible Software](#)
  - [Designing Accessible Webpages](#)

*For document management/content*

Click the links below if you are seeking:

- Guidance on creating accessible:
  - [MS Word documents](#)
  - [MS Powerpoint presentations](#)
  - [Adobe PDFs](#)
  - [Math and science equations](#)
- Accessibility checkers for:
  - [MS Office documents and Adobe PDFs](#)
  - [MS Word documents](#)

*For finding accessible materials*

Click the links below if you are seeking:

- [Accessible audiobooks for students with blindness and visual impairment or dyslexia](#)
- [A searchable database of accessible textbooks](#) (Requires membership to use - please ask your local DSPS if your school is a member)
- [Books in a variety of accessible formats including DAISY, BRF, and plain text](#) (Requires membership to use - please ask your local DSPS if your school is a member)

The California State University and University of California systems also host various resources for creating accessible materials. A list can be found below:

- [CalState LA](#) offers additional resources around creating and testing accessibility for documents and web resources.
- [University of California](#) provides standards and guidelines for creating accessible documents, PDFs, and web content, as well as captioning and surveys.
- [California State University's Accessible Technology Initiative](#) includes resources for creating accessible documents, spreadsheets, presentations, PDFs, and InDesign, as well as captioning and STEM-specific resources.

## 8. What happens when a student says my materials are not accessible to them?

Please refer them to your local DSPS, who will arrange appropriate accommodation.

## 9. How do I proactively improve my ability to support students with disabilities?

To better accommodate and serve students with disabilities, reach out and build relationships with your local Student Services and DSPS departments, who will be able to assist you when students make accommodation requests.

To build your skills in creating accessible content, see below for a variety of trainings, conferences, and webinar series.

- [Access Technology Higher Education Network \(ATHEN\)](#) offers discounts to the [Accessing Higher Ground](#) conference, which focuses on Accessible Media, Universal Design and Assistive Technology in the university, business and public setting; Legal and policy issues, including ADA and 508 compliance; and the creation of accessible media and information resources, including Web pages and library resources.
- [Chief Information Systems Officers Association \(CISOA\)](#) host an annual conference that frequently features sessions around accessibility in technology.
- As mentioned above, the [Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative \(IEPI\)](#) hosts a variety of [workshops](#) throughout the year, many of which address accessibility issues.
- [Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources \(OER\)](#) – OER offers a [database of webinars](#), many of which relate to accessibility topics such as student-centered course content.
- [Great Lakes ADA Center](#) releases [regular webinars](#) about topics such as PDF, video, and webpage accessibility.
- [The Online Network of Educators \(@ONE\)](#) is a collaborative, system-wide network of CCC faculty, staff, and administrators, and is coordinated by the professional development team of the CCC Online Education Initiative (OEI). @ONE provides [archives of webinars on accessibility](#) as well as a [certificate in course design](#), and various [blog posts](#) related to making content more accessible. @ONE also offers a four-week course on [Creating Accessible Course Content](#).
- [The Paciello Group](#) hosts biannual, day-long, free webinar series around [Inclusive Design](#), the recordings of which are maintained in [YouTube playlists](#).

## 10. What are my options if good pedagogy conflicts with accessibility?

Accessibility is both a legal requirement and an important educational tool. Designing your course using [universal design principles](#) is good pedagogy as it makes course materials more effective for all students. Simple universal design techniques, like sharing lecture-capture recordings, offer benefits for many students including students who:

- are English language learners;
- have difficulty taking notes while listening to lectures;
- cannot attend class due to illness or work demands; or
- are having difficulty understanding an instructor's accent.

Additional resources:

- CAST has put together another version of the [UDL Guidelines](#).
- This [EDUCAUSE](#) article lays out a useful chart of [UDL and Digital Accessibility Practices, Conflicts, and Recommendations](#).

**11. What are my accessibility responsibilities in comparison to other faculty and staff at my district?**

As Chancellor Oakley indicated in his [letter](#) on June 19, 2018, accessibility is a collective responsibility owned by all faculty and staff at each college. It is your responsibility to ensure that all course materials used in your class are accessible, as per the definition above, and to seek out assistance from DSPS when students require accommodation.

**12. How do I properly caption my online videos?**

If the video is for online classes, hybrid classes, on-campus classes using distance methods of content delivery, or digital learning object repositories used to collect and make available digitized content, you might be eligible for funding to caption the video through the [DECT Grant](#), hosted by College of the Canyons.

If the video is for the purposes listed above and you have yet to purchase it, please contact your local Procurement Department to ensure all institutional purchases meet accessibility requirements.

Alternatively, you may create an account with [3C Media](#), hosted by Palomar college, which allows CCC system users to create free accounts where they can request captioning.

In all other cases, please contact your campus DSPS, who will direct you to the proper person to assist you.

**13. What does accessible math look like?**

For web and online environments, math and other STEM-based content tends to be more accessible when using the MathML format. One quick method to check and see if the math content is presented in the browser is in the MathML format is to try and select the individual letters and numbers in an equation. If you can select the individual letters and numbers, then the equation is likely formatted using MathML. If you are not able to select individual letters and numbers, then it is likely the equation has been rendered as an image.

The benefit of using the MathML format is that it allows assistive technologies to “read” a math equation and navigate its discrete components. While images are often used to display math content, this is not an ideal solution as these images must include a descriptive text equivalent and do not offer the same navigation functionality.

When creating math equations in Microsoft Office applications, such as Word or PowerPoint, the [MathType Equation](#) plug-in can help create accessible content. Equations created using the default Microsoft Equation Editor do not include the appropriate accessibility information and are not recommended.

**14. How can I tell if things I find on the web are accessible? What do I do if it's not accessible?**

*For web content*

Please consult your campus IT specialist to evaluate web content accessibility.

*For multimedia*

Accessible video media will have non-auto-generated captions, incorporated on screen text, and demonstration or activities that are announced or have text descriptions.

*For documents*

You can evaluate the accessibility of a document through the accessibility checker internal to MS Word and Adobe PDF.

For more information, the California Community Colleges Accessibility Center (CCCAC) provides various [tools to evaluate the accessibility of online content](#).

**15. How do I know if my textbook is accessible?**

You can search for your textbook in AccessText Network's (ATN) [searchable database of accessible textbooks](#). If your textbook is not listed, ATN also offers Disability Services Professionals the opportunity to request textbooks in alternative formats from publishers.

**16. Who do I go to for support if extensive accessibility remediation are needed, beyond what is reasonable to expect of me?**

Go to the Distance Education Coordinator, Vice President of Instruction, or Faculty Resource Center to find a resource or get help on where to get help with remediation.

**17. What if my question isn't answered through these FAQs?**

Bring your question to the person identified on your campus accessibility resource page. If you cannot find that or you're not getting an answer, please visit the [Accessibility Center Help Desk](#).

For specific questions about purchasing, please visit the [Purchasing FAQs](#).