

Accessibility Plan for
Information Materials and Technologies

2016-2017



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

In April of 2015 East Tennessee State University assembled an Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee under the charge of the Tennessee Board of Regents to assess and improve the accessibility of information materials and technologies (IMTs) and digital curricula used or developed by the university to persons with disabilities. As of the publication of this document, the committee is led by the CIO and Senior Vice Provost for Information Technology Services, and includes members from Student Affairs, Health Affairs, Finance and Administration, Academic Affairs, and Library Administration. The committee has been specifically charged with creating and maintaining an ongoing implementation plan which seeks to increase accessibility to educational resources at the University. This document has been submitted to the Tennessee Board of Regents Office of Academic Affairs to satisfy the requirement, and will also be posted online at the URL below upon approval.

[Accessibility Plan Information Materials and Technologies](#)

Commitment to Accessibility

East Tennessee State University values people first, and seeks to treat all individuals with dignity and respect. To this end, the University is committed to providing accessible information to all people wherever possible. The University will work to ensure that applicants, students, faculty, staff, and members of the public with disabilities all have an opportunity equal to that of their non-disabled peers to access and utilize information materials, technologies, and technology-related services, except where doing so would impose an undue burden on the University or require a fundamental alteration.

Rules for Asserting Undue Burden and/or Fundamental Alteration

Any assertion of undue burden or fundamental alteration related to the provision of an accessible technology resource must be made by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the University or an individual designated by the CIO to make such determinations, and will be accompanied by a written statement describing the reasons that this conclusion has been reached. If such an assertion is made, the University will seek to provide some form of equally effective alternative access, if one exists, to ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, those with disabilities receive the same benefits as their non-disabled peers. Plans for any form of alternative access will also be included in the written statement provided the University.

Benchmarks for Accessibility

In order to ensure the accessibility of our information materials and technologies, the University will measure the functionality of individual resources against a set of nationally-recognized accessible technology standards.

WCAG 2.0 Level AA and WAI-ARIA 1.0

The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) is an effort coordinated by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international standards organization for the World Wide Web. The WAI has published multiple guidelines for accessibility which address a variety of web-related technologies, including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and the Accessible Rich Internet Applications (WAI-ARIA) technical specification. ETSU will use these guidelines to evaluate and improve web content and applications. For details about these guidelines, follow the URLs below.

[WCAG 2.0 Guidelines](#)

[WAI-ARIA Technical Specification](#)

EPUB 3 Accessibility Guidelines

The International Digital Publishing Forum is a trade and standards organization for the digital publishing industry. They develop and maintain the EPUB content publication standard that is used by publishers industry-wide for the digital distribution of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc. They have developed a set of accessibility guidelines for content authors using the EPUB format. ETSU will use these guidelines when evaluating or creating content distributed in the EPUB format. For details about these guidelines, follow the URL below.

[EPUB 3 Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Implementation Plan

Overview

Below the University provides a list of priority actions that need to be completed in order to increase the overall accessibility level of its information materials and technologies. The University intends to make every reasonable effort to ensure that these tasks are complete by summer 2017. Oversight and accountability will be maintained by the Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee.

Annual Review Process

Beginning in summer 2017, and proceeding every summer thereafter, as needed, the Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee will provide an annual report which summarizes the status of all accessibility-related tasks undertaken by the University in the prior year. This report will also provide details regarding any ongoing efforts to improve accessibility, as well as planned improvements for the subsequent year. These reports will be made available online, when published, at the URL provided below.

[Annual Accessibility Reports and Plans](#)

1.0 General

[1.1 Accessibility Policy and Procedures Statement](#)

The University shall develop an Accessibility Policy for Information Materials and Technologies that communicates its commitment to accessibility in an official capacity, as well as a set of standard procedures to implement the accessibility policy across all disciplines and media formats. Once approved, the policy and procedures will be disseminated to all levels of University personnel and students, and will be made available on the University website.

[1.2 Accessibility Audit and Corrective Action Plan](#)

Having already completed an accessibility audit of websites, the University shall complete a similar audit of information materials and technologies related to admissions, scheduling, and instructional materials, which will examine the accessibility and usability of the resources provided by the University to students.

The University will then develop a corrective action strategy to address all inaccessible content and functionality identified during the audit, targeting high-priority areas of non-compliance first. This strategy will include specific dates for remediation.

The University will disseminate both the audit findings and the corrective action strategy to all levels of University personnel and students and will be made available on the University website.

1.3 Accessibility Training and Resources

The University will provide both instructor led and web delivered technology accessibility training to all appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to: content developers such as professors, staff, administrators; procurement officials; information technology professionals; and all others responsible for developing, loading, maintaining, or auditing online content and functionality. This training will be provided in stages as the University progresses through the action items outlined in this document.

The University will have training provided for staff members and student workers at the Information Technology Services Help Desk which will equip them to address the needs of individuals with disabilities using assistive technologies.

The University will proactively reach out to a selected group of instructors who will be teaching courses in which students with registered disabilities are enrolled in order to offer training and support related to the creation of accessible course content. This will allow the University to ensure during its transition to accessibility that it is meeting the needs of students with disabilities as quickly as possible.

By April 1st, 2016, the University will establish an Accessibility website which contains information regarding the ongoing work of the Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee, as well as accessibility training resources for the employees and students of the University.

1.4 Accessibility Grievance Procedures

The University will establish a set of procedures whereby any individual may submit a complaint to the University's Special Assistant to the President for Equity and Diversity for any discovered inaccessible content (e.g. web content, document, course content, etc.). The University will disseminate information about these procedures to all levels of University personnel and students on a recurring basis, and will also make the procedures available on the University website.

1.5 Accessibility Coordinator Position

The University will seek to establish a new, full-time Accessibility Coordinator position to lead the Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee and provide leadership and oversight regarding future work related to campus accessibility. A formal request for this position has been submitted to the University and is pending approval.

1.6 Accessible Syllabus Template

By Fall 2016, the University will provide an accessible syllabus template for faculty to aid them in the development of new course syllabi and/or the remediation of existing, inaccessible syllabi.

1.7 Top 30 Course Corrective Action

In an effort to make significant progress toward accessibility compliance in the University's top 30 courses, the Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee will select 10 faculty per year who teach one or more of these top 30 courses and provide said faculty with accessibility training and support with the goal of making their course(s) fully compliant with accessibility standards.

2.0 Websites

2.1 Academic Sites

By fall 2016, all academic websites and webpages for the University will be WCAG 2.0 Level AA conformant.

2.2 Web Applications

By summer 2017, the University's Information Systems division will develop and implement a WAI-ARIA compliant template for web-based applications.

2.3 Web Accessibility Policy Additions

Language will be added to the University's [Web Accessibility Policy](#) to state, in effect, that all new web pages, web content, and documents added to the University website must maintain WCAG Level 2.0 Level AA conformance. Responsibility will be placed on unit-level web administrators and department heads for ensuring compliance.

2.4 Electronic Web Governance Tool

The University will investigate a proposal to purchase an electronic web governance tool that will work in conjunction with the tools available within the web content management system (CMS) and identify accessibility errors within documents stored on University web servers.

3.0 Procurement

3.1 Accessible Procurement Procedures

The University's Department of Procurement and Contract Services will begin to integrate the model of accessible adoption/procurement recommended by the Tennessee Board Regents [Accessibility Initiative](#).

4.0 Electronic Media

4.1 Captions and Transcripts for Audio and Video Resources

In 2015 the University's Office of Information Technology Services purchased DocSoft:AV, a web-based product which provides automatic speech-to-text captions and transcripts for audio and video files, greatly increasing the efficiency of the caption/transcript workflow over time. Due to the web-based nature of the product, and its allowance for several concurrent users, the University intends to provide access and training to this resource for content developers who need to create captions or transcripts in order to make their multimedia content accessible. This resource will be managed by an individual designated by the University's Chief Information Officer, who will administrate the use of the product and ensure the availability of training resources.

5.0 Disability Services

5.1 Management Software

The University intends to investigate a proposal submitted by the Office of Disability Services for the purchase of a new Comprehensive Accommodation, Appointment, and Case Management Software. This software will, among other things, allow University staff who provide accessibility training to reach out to the instructors of courses which have students with disabilities enrolled, and will help them to meet the specific needs of those said students in a proactive manner.

Accessibility Plan Approval Process

This document has been created as an initial draft, and is being submitted for formal review by the University. It is subject to change as it progresses through the review process. The final version of the University's Accessibility Plan for Information Materials and Technologies will be posted to the following URL upon official approval: <http://www.etsu.edu/accessibility/implementation-plan/>.

Communication of Current and Future Plans

The University intends to communicate their commitment to accessibility, their plan for accessibility improvement, and any significant future developments to the entire University community, including all faculty, staff, and students, in order to build awareness and garner the support needed to accomplish the tasks outlined in this document. Communication will occur through a variety of media and at several intervals moving forward. However, the primary resource for communicating all current and future plans, as well as any other relevant information related to accessibility at the University, will be through a website which will be developed at the URL below and made available beginning April 1st, 2016.

[Accessibility at East Tennessee State University](#)

Campus Point of Contact

If you have questions about the information provided in this document, or about accessibility at the University in general, please contact the leader of the Accessibility Task Force Advisory Committee using the information provided below.

Email address: accessibility@etsu.edu