Accessibility Help Guide

Introduction to Accessibility Legislation

What it does:

This guide will provide a brief summary of the main accessibility legislation implications for teaching staff.

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What it helps with:

Creating resources in forms everyone can access in the first instance.

The EU Accessibility Directive came into law on September 2018. The legislation requires a proactive and inclusive approach to web accessibility. The aim is to minimise the need for individuals to request individual adjustments to access digital resources and services.

This legislation is in addition to the Equality Act 2010 where institutions are legally required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people when needed for example, by providing special formats. The new legislation requires information to be available in forms everyone can access in the first instance.

For Universities the legislation applies to the following areas:
- Internet and intranet websites.
- The VLE and other learning systems.

Everyone needs to be proactive in making the following content accessible:

• Documents and resources in active use such as learning resources students are required to access on the VLE. This applies to documents published after September 2019.

• Pre-recorded media (video and audio) for example a screencast published after 23rd September 2020. Live video such as a lecture capture will be considered pre-recorded once uploaded to the VLE. Alternative formats either captions or a transcript should be available for uploaded lecture capture within 14 days.

It is not a requirement to make third party resources accessible that you did not create or pay for, such as a YouTube video. Although you should consider the accessibility impact of the resource and make alternative arrangements in advance.

If you do have resources known not to be accessible but considered essential to the learning experience you will need to take proactive steps to source a more accessible alternative for future use. It is advisable to make it clear the potential issues some users may have in accessing the material and provide alternatives to help meet the required learning outcomes.

The legislation does not require teaching staff to provide digital resources in specialist formats for example Braille but to provide resources that are 'born accessible' and can be easily changed by anyone into a format they require. Step by step guidance will be available on how to do this.

Web accessibility explained

The legislation has defined for the first time what is considered a reasonable adjustment by defining a standard digital resources should meet. The web accessibility guidelines are based on the four principles of web accessibility:

Perceivable – Information should be 'readable' across different senses.

Operable - The website or resource can be used and navigated as needed.

Understandable – Information should be understandable and provide in clear language

Robust – Resources can be transformed into different formats and used across devices.

These principles address important access issues for people with disabilities using assistive technologies beyond usability problems that might be faced by all users. The principles are used to define a testable success criteria in order to meet the accessibility regulations.

For example, the principle of Operable includes ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are. This requires headings and labels to describe topic or purpose. This can be achieved by implementing simple techniques such as using the inbuilt formatting options within documents and providing meaningful text labels to any visuals. The In-built accessibility checkers within software will also help you check and fix potential issues as you work upon documents without requiring a detailed knowledge of web accessibility.

How to meet the accessibility regulations?

By implementing the advice in these four areas below you will be providing inclusive approach towards your digital resources and meeting the accessibility requirements:

1. Follow [guidelines for inclusive learning resources](#) and basic principles on correct formatting of resources.

2. Check for accessibility issues. Accessibility Checkers are embedded within apps and software including Microsoft Office and Adobe.

3. Provide resources in multiple formats. When developing resources and alternative formats focus on the purpose of the resource to ensure an appropriate learning experience.

4. Ask for feedback from your students. Provide approachable opportunities for students to highlight any issues they are experiencing in accessing resources.

Providing an accessible learning experience with Universal Design for Learning

When planning inclusive resources the [inclusivity principles of Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL) provides a framework for considering how to do so. The principles support the further development of inclusive practice that works for everyone, not a one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches and opportunities that can be customised and adjusted by individuals to meet their own needs. For example, the principle of [provide multiple means of representation](#) can help assist in thinking about how to appropriately provide resources and supporting options for learners.

Further Support:

There will be a comprehensive set of step by step guides to help you in creating accessible learning materials. These can be found on [LTE online](#).

Further support and clarification can be provided by contacting elearning@tees.ac.uk

Further Legislation Resources:

The follow resources provide in depth look at the legislation and web accessibility standard.

[Jisc meeting accessibility regulations](#)

[Government guidance on understanding accessibility requirements](#)

[Government guidance on understanding web content accessibility guidelines WCAG 2.1](#)

This document has been checked for accessibility on 10th August 2020.