POLICY, PROCEDURE, AND TRAINING FOR ACCESSIBILITY

What are your policies, procedures, and training for accessibility?

QUESTION:
We have been discussing issues of accessibility here especially with podcasting and lecture capture. Do any of you have policies, procedures, training etc around accessibility/ADA, 508/compliance that you would be willing to share.

– Diane J. Goldsmith, 
Director of Learning, Assessment, and Online Education, 
University of Rhode Island

RESPONSES:
We have a course on Accessibility at the @ONE Professional Development Project in California. The course content is available through Creative Commons. Our site is <http://onefortraining.com>. The content could be useful for you.

– Patricia James, Dean of Instruction: 
Library and Technology (and Distance Education, too!), 
Mt. San Jacinto College

Cal State - Sonoma has the following website for UDL, which of course is important for accessibility issues. It is a wonderful resource for faculty. <http://www.udluniverse.com/>.

There are also some excellent case stories about UDL in the MERLOT-ELIXR collection: <http://elixr.merlot.org/case-stories/understanding--meeting-students-needs/universal-design-for-learning-udl?noCache=337:1286973265>. These are great for demonstrating success stories.

I also searched the MERLOT website and found some other great materials in our Faculty Development collection. These are all OER materials and should be helpful to you.

<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=337902>
<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial?id=87590>
<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=674028>
<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=663198>
<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=225879>
<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=526768>

Our Faculty Development Editor is at UNC Greensboro and has done some training on several campuses of UNC about UDL. He also has some training materials available: rcpurdom@uncg.edu

– Cathy Swift, 
Director - Academic Partner Services, MERLOT
The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office publishes a set of distance education accessibility guidelines which are located at the URL: <http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/DE/2011DistanceEducationAccessibilityGuidelines%20FINAL.pdf>.

– LeBaron Woodyard, Dean, Academic Affairs, Chancellor’s Office California Community Colleges


We also have a course on Universal Design for Digital Media, <http://conted.colorado.edu/courses/category/alliance-for-technology-learning-and-society-atlas/?department_id=85,89>.

– Howard Kramer, Instructor, University of Colorado at Boulder

At the San Diego Community College District on our SDCCD Online Learning Pathways website, we have an Accessibility Resources and Tools page: <http://www.sdccdonline.net/faculty/resources/accessibility.htm> and we also include accessibility information in the SDCCD Online Faculty Training and Certification program (OFTCP). Faculty in the OFTCP create their own accessible media to demonstrate their understanding.

The SDCCD has a Board of Trustees Policy on Accessibility Standards for Electronic and Information Technology: <http://www.sdccd.edu/docs/policies/Student%20Services/BP%203108.pdf> and an Administrative Procedure: <http://www.sdccd.edu/docs/procedures/Student%20Services/AP%203108_01.pdf>.

Following is an excerpt from the Accessibility portion of the Distance Education Guidelines Learning Module in the OFTCP.

Accessibility

All faculty, whether they teach online or on campus, are required to meet the State and Federal requirements for ensuring accessibility of all course offerings. In 2011, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office produced a set of Distance Education Guidelines, with the latest opinions and advice for us to follow.

All courses must be accessible regardless of whether or not a disabled student is currently enrolled. Accessibility is always a priority when designing and delivering a class, but it’s especially relevant in the following areas of the online classroom:

- Course materials (files, links, videos, images, etc.) must be accessible to students with disabilities. This means that audio files must be transcribed, videos must be captioned, and text and image content must be accessible to students using assistive technology.
- If third-party websites are used as required course materials and you cannot guarantee accessibility of the content, you must be prepared to provide accessible equivalent versions of the content for students with disabilities.
- DSPS students who need more time to take their online tests must be accommodated. (This is covered in Module 8 of this training course.)

SDCCD Online Learning Pathways provides information and resources regarding accessibility on our Accessibility Resources and Tools page. Please contact us at support@sdccdonline.net if you would like to receive assistance with making your courses accessible.

FAQ

Here are 10 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers regarding accessibility in Distance Education from the CCC Chancellor’s Office Distance Education Guidelines. You can access the full report at: <http://www.htctu.net/dlguidelines/dlg_index.html>.

1. Do I really have to make my course accessible?

Yes. The California Community Colleges are bound by Federal law (Section 508) and California state
1. law (Government Code Section 11135, that mirrors Section 508), to ensure that all DE courses be made accessible to students with disabilities. Following the Section 508 standards and the principles of Universal Design that are included in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 is the recommended approach to use in achieving accessibility.

2. I have a video I want to use in my distance education course that is not captioned, but I don’t know of any deaf students currently enrolled in my course. Do I still have to caption the video?

Per Section 508 guidelines, video files should always be captioned whenever possible, and in most situations they MUST be captioned. Generally speaking, if the video has audio and it will be stored for later or repeated use in a course, it must be captioned. It does not matter if the video is instructor or institution owned, or if it is a collection of clips and snippets. In order to use non-captioned video, the video must be contained in a secure, password-protected environment, there must be no students requiring captioning, and the video can only be used for a single term. Other exclusions to captioning include student work and raw footage that will never be archived after the current use, as well as video with foreign language subtitles, and instructor-made videos that record feedback to an individual student who doesn’t require captioning. Quite simply, if you’re keeping the video and more than a very limited audience might view it, then you must caption it.

3. How much time will it take to make my course accessible?

There are several variables that affect this question. The quantity of multimedia you incorporate into your course can impact the amount of time required. In addition, the more complex the multimedia, the greater the time that can be expected to address accessibility. The key is to build accessibility into your course content during the development phase, so it will not be necessary to go back later to retrofit inaccessible content.

4. If I do not have a student with disabilities, am I still required to caption my videos?

Disabled students are not required to disclose their disabilities and, in an online course, it would likely be more difficult to identify disabilities than in a face-to-face course. All materials have to be accessible when presented, not in the after-the-fact accommodation style that is the norm in many face-to-face courses. Again, following the principle of Universal Design to make courses usable and effective for everyone benefits all students, not just students with disabilities.

5. Where do I go for help?

City, Mesa, Miramar and Continuing Education have an Access Technology Specialist whose duties include helping faculty to make their courses accessible. Please contact the DSPS office at your campus to reach an Access Technology Specialist.

- City College DSPS: (619)388-3513
- Mesa College DSPS: (619)388-2780
- Miramar College DSPS: (619)388-7312
- Continuing Education DSPS contacts

6. The files I upload into my course are mainly Microsoft Word, PowerPoint files, and also Adobe PDF files. Are those accessible?

In general, your files will most likely be accessible. The accessibility of Word and PDF depends on the complexity of the layout of each document. In order to help ensure accessibility of Microsoft and Adobe files, a good starting point is the training materials that are available on the High Tech Center Training Unit (HTCTU) web site at http://www.htctu.net.

7. I don’t have time to caption or transcribe all of my videos and podcasts. How can I get help?

Contact the person responsible for web accessibility on your college campus. One resource is the DECT (Distance Education Captioning & Transcription) Grant provided for the CCCs. This grant will help to alleviate some costs for the captioning of digital audio and video files used in DE courses.
8. My course is not a DE course. Do I still have to make my web materials accessible?

Yes. Any content placed on the web must be accessible. For that matter, any online materials that you require students to access, whether you are using a campus-hosted learning management system, your campus faculty web page, or a site that you are maintaining outside the scope of the college altogether, all materials must be accessible to your students.

9. I am an adjunct instructor. Am I required to make my course accessible?

Yes, accessibility is a requirement for all faculty. In addition to your College’s Access Technology Specialist, the High Tech Center Training Unit can provide assistance with specific accessibility issues or questions at: http://www.htctu.net/.

10. What are the ramifications if my courses are not made accessible?

If your online materials are not accessible, there is a chance that a student with a disability could file a discrimination complaint with the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. That would likely trigger an investigation. If the OCR found that the student’s complaint was valid, your institution would likely have to agree to some binding conditions as part of a costly resolution. Another possibility would be that a student might file a lawsuit and the college or district could be held liable for any damages awarded to the student.

Looking for more detailed information about the accessibility of specific file types? Visit the HTCTU Training Manual and Tutorials page for access to several other tutorials on making your files accessible.

In Module 6 of this training course, we’ll cover the different ways that you can create your own accessible media for your online course.

Intellectual Property Statement
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– Andrea Henne, Dean, Online and Distributed Learning, San Diego Community College District

You might find the benchmarking and planning tools and other resources available through the FIPSE-funded GOALS Project helpful. Gaining Online Accessible Learning through Self-Study: <http://www.ncdae.org/goals/>.

– Patricia A. Shea, Director, Academic Leadership Initiatives, WICHE

The Minnesota Learning Commons has developed a site for web accessibility standards, training and handbook: <http://www.accessibility.project.mnscu.edu>.

– Gary Langer, Executive Director, Minnesota Learning Commons