

Course Accessibility Best Practices for Faculty at Providence College

The Instructional Technology Development Program at Providence College is committed to aiding faculty in creating equal access to information, programs, and activities through its technologies, web pages, services and resources for their students. The suggestions listed here establish a baseline for the accessibility and usability of course management systems (Sakai) and the materials used within them.

Documents (Word, PowerPoint, PDF)

- a. Use certain fonts designed for legibility on the screen (e.g., Georgia, Tahoma, Verdana, Helvetica, Arial, Calibri) and keep the number used to a minimum.
- b. Use bold or italic text to convey emphasis instead of using underlines, colors, or writing whole sentences in all caps.
- c. Maintain sharp contrast between text color and background color by using black text on white background. Use a [color contrast checker](#) to determine if there is reasonable contrast between text and its background.
- d. Apply [heading styles](#) to your document by using the ribbon (toolbar) in Word or PowerPoint. Headings are required for screen readers to be able to read the document. A table of contents can be included that allows learners to move easily throughout documents. Many mobile devices have a built in screen reader, which can be used [test](#) documents and articles.
- e. Create bulleted or numbered lists by using the ribbon (toolbar) in Word or PowerPoint instead of manually typing the characters or numbers.
- f. Provide alternative text/captions for all [images](#). For alternative text, describe the image and, if necessary, include an explanation about what is important about the image in terms of the context of learning.
- g. Insert active hyperlinks for all URLs in your document. Instead of using “Click here”, the anchor text should be descriptive of where the link will take the user.
- h. Check [correct math formatting guidelines](#) if you use equations. If images are the only option, make sure to supply sufficient alternative text.
- i. PDF
 - i. Starting from an accessible Word or PowerPoint document is the easiest approach. You can then use “Save to PDF” or “Print to PDF”.
 - ii. In cases where PDFs have already been created and are inaccessible, remediation must be done via Adobe Acrobat.

Multimedia (Images, Audio, Video)

- a. Provide alternative text/captions for all images. For alternative text, describe the image and, if necessary, include an explanation about what is important about the image in terms of the context of learning.
- b. Provide a text transcript for all audio-only files and video presentations that consist primarily of the image of the speaker.
 - i. Transcripts can be manually created in a word processing program or can be created by using pay services such as [Rev](#), [CastingWords](#), or [GMR Transcription](#)
 - ii. If using and sharing an original PowerPoint or Keynote file, a script added to each slide's Notes area can suffice as a transcript.
- c. For video presentations with a significant amount of images, graphics, or animation, captions should be provided.
 - i. Captions can be manually created using a word processing program or an editor such as [Amara](#); YouTube will create machine generated captions that can be edited; and, paid services such as [Rev](#), [Cielo24](#), and [3PlayMedia](#) can be used to create captions.
- d. When using video created by others (e.g. TED, YouTube) try to identify a source that includes captions/transcripts. The Phillips Memorial Library has over 200,000 streaming videos in their collection through more than [20 multimedia databases](#). The streaming videos provided in these databases already provide captioning, synced transcripts, and in-browser editing functionality to create playlists.

Course Management

- a. Course management systems should have a link to an accessibility statement. The [Sakai community](#) has done extensive accessibility testing. Any questions or to consult with a technologist, contact sakai@providence.edu.
- b. Based on Providence College syllabus guidelines, include a [syllabus statement](#) detailing the process of requesting accommodations, including link(s) to [Office of Academic Services](#).
- c. Navigation in course shell or course website should be consistent across pages.
- d. All online courses should have information regarding the date the course was last updated.

For additional accessibility resources, visit:

Web Accessibility in Mind: <http://webaim.org/>

Accessibility @ Rutgers*: <https://accessibility.rutgers.edu/>

NYU Accessibility: <https://www.nyu.edu/life/information-technology/help-and-service-status/accessibility/getting-started.html>

*Our thanks to Rutgers for letting us use their content as a basis for this document.

<https://accessibility.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/Rutgers-Course-Accessibility-Guidelines.pdf>