

Sharing the responsibility of accessibility

You are an amazing instructor. You have designed a brilliant online course. The semester is about to start. You click that “make course available” button in Blackboard and you have never been more ready.

Then you find out that one of your students is blind. You realize some of your readings are scanned images of book chapters. You have required videos that feature minimal narration or description of on-screen content. Your syllabus section titles are bolded text, not structured headings. And the course starts tomorrow. You hear that [sound effect from “Inception”](#) and wonder what you are going to do.

If you are teaching this online course through eCampus at UAF, you have a clear support structure to provide reasonable accommodations to this student, as well as resources to address these kinds of accessibility issues proactively during the course design process.

To help publicize and clarify this support, UAF eCampus and UAF Disability Services have created a chart titled Who’s Responsible for Accessibility in Online Courses at UAF.

Responsibility for the accessibility of an online course is shared between instructors, eCampus instructional designers and Disability Services. eCampus and Disability Services are committed to increasing accessibility and empowering instructors¹ in the design and accommodation process.

This graphic details these responsibilities and is available as a [printable, accessible PDF](#).

Who’s Responsible for Accessibility in Online Courses at UAF?		
Instructors, eCampus, and Disability Services work collaboratively to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design online courses using principles of Universal Design for Learning. • Test the accessibility of software used in online courses. • Provide resources to improve the accessibility of online courses. • Implement accessible accommodations when barriers are found. 		
Instructors: Responsibilities	eCampus: Responsibilities	Disability Services: Responsibilities
Proactive Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize course content clearly and consistently. • Follow standard accessibility guidelines for creating course documents. • Make use of searchable and tagged PDFs. • Include captions or transcripts for instructor-created video. • Check accessibility of required course software, publisher materials, and linked multimedia. • Include a well-written syllabus statement on disability accommodations. • Encourage students to contact Disability Services directly to ensure that they receive approved accommodations for all of their courses. 	Proactive Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research new tools and methods that aid in Universal Design. • Review courses for accessibility and provide guidance. • Train faculty on designing courses for accessibility. • Create open training resources on iteachu.uaf.edu/accessibility • Use Universal Design for Learning in templates provided. • Provide accurate captioning and transcription for media content. • Encourage well-written learning objectives in course design. • Innovate based on emerging trends in online accessibility. • Advocate for the importance of accessibility as a benefit to all persons. • Work with other UAF and UA units toward improved accessibility. 	Proactive Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential barriers to students with disabilities. • Remove or reduce barriers while maintaining learning objectives. • Provide training and one-on-one consultations. • Increase awareness of the disability experience campus-wide. • Promote services and resources to campus and the community. • Collaborate with departments and organizations to host events. • Research and provide access to tools that improve access for students. • Research and maintain assistive technology for loan. • Maintain awareness of disability law in higher education. • Administer proctored exams in a distraction-reduced environment.

REFERENCES

Lederman, D. (2017, March). [Understanding the Faculty Role in Digital Accessibility](https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/03/15/digital-accessibility-experts-discuss-how-they-approach-faculty). Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/03/15/digital-accessibility-experts-discuss-how-they-approach-faculty>