University of Washington
IT Accessibility Guidelines

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1. Purpose

The University of Washington (UW) values diverse experiences and perspectives and strives to fully include everyone who engages with the UW. Inaccessible IT negatively impacts people with a variety of disabilities, including mobility/orthopedic impairments, sensory impairments, specific learning disabilities, attention deficits, autism spectrum disorders, speech impairments, health impairments, and psychiatric conditions. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to UW administrators, faculty, and staff for fulfilling the UW's commitment to equal access to information technology (IT) through the provision of accessible IT.

The UW makes its offerings accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Amendments Act of 2008. Also, in its Executive Order No. 31, the UW affirms its commitment to providing access "in its services, programs, activities, education, and employment for individuals with disabilities." This commitment includes access to information technology (IT) that the UW develops, procures, or uses, such as websites, software, hardware, and media.

2. Scope

With respect to these guidelines, "accessible" IT means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and use the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and integrated manner. A person with a disability should be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability. Although this might not result in
identical ease of use compared to persons without disabilities, it still must ensure equal opportunity to experience the educational benefits and opportunities afforded by the technology.

IT covered by the guidelines include

- Websites
- Software applications
- Computers and peripherals
- Video and audio content
- Electronic documents

Examples within the above categories includes

- Web-based applications
- Learning management systems
- Campus-wide administrative applications
- Content management systems
- Classroom technologies
- Lecture capture solutions
- Cloud-based applications
- Email and calendars
- Library resources

Entities covered by the guidelines include academic, research, administrative, and all other units who support the University’s mission and support services.

3. Standards

Technologies and standards evolve at a rapid pace. The UW looks to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Level AA for guidance in meeting its IT accessibility commitments. WCAG 2.0 provides success criteria for measuring web accessibility and also provides useful metrics for products and services that are not specifically web-based.

4. Getting Started

The Accessible Technology at the University of Washington (AT-UW) website at
www.washington.edu/accessibility/ is designed to help campus units work toward improving their IT accessibility. The website provides guidance for

- Designing accessible websites
- Creating accessible PDF, Word, PowerPoint, and other files
- Captioning videos
- Procuring accessible applications and services
- Testing IT for accessibility
- Managing projects for accessibility

Considering accessibility throughout the design and creation process reduces the need for expensive and time-consuming revision. Below are a few tips for creating accessible content and conducting simple accessibility tests.

- **Usable without a mouse:** Ensure that all links, buttons, menus, and controls in web pages and applications can be used without a mouse, but instead can be navigated using only the keyboard. Whether an interface is functional using a keyboard alone is often a reliable indicator of overall accessibility.

- **Document structure:** Create web pages, Word documents, and PDF files that have good structure, including the use of headings, sub-headings, and lists that make these documents easier for users to understand and navigate.

- **Accessible images:** Include alternate text for graphics and avoid images of text. People who cannot see an image rely on alternate text to access its content and all document formats support this feature.

- **Test with accessibility checker tools:** Use online accessibility checkers and/or web browser plug-ins to identify common accessibility problems. There are many tools available to assist with accessibility efforts. These are listed at the AT-UW website under IT Accessibility Checklist.

For individual consultation on making IT accessible, contact the Access Technology Center included in the campus resources listed below.

### 5. Resources

The following resources can assist the UW community in understanding and meeting our accessibility goals. These resources can also be used as a reference for vendors and contractors providing products and services to the UW.

**Resources and Support for IT Accessibility**

- Accessible Technology at the University of Washington (AT-UW)
  www.washington.edu/accessibility/
• IT Accessibility Checklist
  www.washington.edu/accessibility/checklist
• Access Technology Center
  www.washington.edu/itconnect/learn/accessible/atc/
• Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0
  www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag

Additional Campus Resources

• Disability Resources for Students (DRS)—Seattle
dep.ts.washington.edu/uwdrs/
• UW Bothell Disability Resources for Students (DRS)
  www.bothell.washington.edu/studentaffairs/drs
• UW Tacoma Disability Support Services (DSS)
  www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm
• Disability Services Office (DSO) (for staff, faculty, and visitors at all UW campuses)
  www.washington.edu/admin/dso/
• ADA Coordinator
  f2.washington.edu/treasury/riskmgmt/compliance/ADA

Legal and Policy Requirements

• Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
  www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html
• Americans with Disabilities Act as amended
  www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm
• UW Executive Order No. 31
  www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/PO/E031.html

For further information on these guidelines, contact the Access Technology Center at 206-685-4144 or atcenter@uw.edu.

Approval

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