

Accessibility Quick Reference

Everyday habits for creating accessible course content



The Big 10 Accessibility Habits



1. Use Heading Styles

- Use built-in heading styles to organize documents and webpages.
- Do not rely on bold, size, or color alone to create sections.

Quick check: Can someone scan the page and understand its structure?



2. Add Alternative Text

- Describe the purpose of meaningful images.
- Mark purely decorative images as decorative.

Quick check: Would important information be lost if the image could not be seen?



3. Write Descriptive Links

- Use link text that explains where the link goes.
- Instead of "Click here," use "View the course schedule."

Quick check: Would the link still make sense when read by itself?



4. Check Color and Contrast

- Use sufficient contrast between text and its background.
- Do not use color as the only way to communicate meaning.

Quick check: Would the information still make sense in grayscale?



5. Use Built-In Lists

- Create bulleted and numbered lists with the list tools.
- Do not type dashes, asterisks, or numbers manually.

Quick check: Is the list recognized as a true list by the software?



6. Keep Tables Simple

- Use tables only for data — not for page layout.
- Identify column and row headers; avoid merged or split cells.

Quick check: Can the table be understood one row or column at a time?



7. Caption Videos and Audio

- Provide accurate captions for videos.
- Provide transcripts for audio-only content when appropriate.

Quick check: Can someone access the information without hearing the audio?



8. Create Accessible Documents

- Use built-in formatting tools and run the Accessibility Checker.
- Avoid scanned or image-only documents.

Quick check: Did you run the Accessibility Checker before sharing the file?



9. Organize Blackboard Clearly

- Use a consistent structure, descriptive titles, predictable locations.
- Create a clear place for students to begin.

Quick check: Can a student find what they need without guessing?



10. Review Before Publishing

- Check accessibility before uploading, emailing, posting, or distributing.
- Fix high-impact issues first and keep improving over time.

Quick check: Have you reviewed the content from the user's perspective?

Start now. Work a little at a time. Get help when you need it.

Before You Publish

Use this checklist before uploading a course file, sending a communication, posting online, or sharing instructional content.

STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION

- ☐ Built-in heading styles are used in a logical order.
- ☐ Content is organized into short, clearly labeled sections.
- ☐ Blackboard folders, files, assignments, and links have descriptive names.
- ☐ The reading and navigation order is logical.

IMAGES & VISUAL INFORMATION

- ☐ Meaningful images include concise alternative text.
- ☐ Decorative images are marked decorative when the tool allows it.
- ☐ Images of text have been avoided when possible.
- ☐ Charts and graphics are explained in surrounding text when needed.

LINKS

- ☐ Link text describes the destination or purpose.
- ☐ Phrases such as “click here,” “read more,” and raw web addresses have been avoided.
- ☐ Links have been tested.

COLOR & DESIGN

- ☐ Text has sufficient contrast with its background.
- ☐ Color is not the only way information is communicated.
- ☐ Fonts are readable and formatting is consistent.
- ☐ Flashing, blinking, or distracting visual effects have been avoided.

LISTS & TABLES

- ☐ Bulleted and numbered lists use built-in list tools.
- ☐ Tables are used only for data.
- ☐ Tables have clear headers and a simple structure.
- ☐ Blank cells are not being used for spacing or layout.

MULTIMEDIA

- ☐ Videos have accurate captions.
- ☐ Audio-only content has a transcript when appropriate.
- ☐ Important visual information in a video is described or otherwise available.
- ☐ Auto-generated captions have been reviewed for accuracy.

DOCUMENTS & FILES

- ☐ The Microsoft Accessibility Checker has been run.
- ☐ Accessibility issues identified by the checker have been reviewed.
- ☐ Scanned or image-only PDFs have been replaced or remediated.
- ☐ PDFs have been checked for tags, reading order, and document structure.
- ☐ File names clearly describe the content.

BLACKBOARD ALLY

- ☐ The Ally indicator or Course Accessibility Report has been reviewed.
- ☐ Frequently used and high-priority files have been addressed first.
- ☐ Updated files have replaced older inaccessible versions.
- ☐ Ally's feedback has been used as guidance rather than the only review.

Where Should I Start? — When time is limited, prioritize:

- New content
- First-week and frequently used materials
- Student-facing information
- Content identified as creating a significant barrier
- Older or lower-use materials, over time

Need Help?

Faculty Accessibility Resources

Templates, instructions, examples, and accessibility guidance.



Blackboard Ally Microlearning Videos

Short demonstrations for common accessibility tasks.



Help Sessions & Consultations

Current drop-in sessions, workshops, and individual support.



Accessibility Website

Campus information, updates, FAQs, and additional resources.



Accessibility Starts Here.