

Approved Plan for Accessibility Compliance of Online and Hybrid Courses

Academic Year 2016-2017

Introduction:

Texas A&M International University Office of Information Technology and Distance Education Services is committed to achieving equal opportunity and participation for all persons, including persons with disabilities, in our online and hybrid courses.

Texas A&M International University complies with federal regulations and strives to meet, or plans to meet the guidelines of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Many of the laws and guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act and its Sections 504 and 508 overlap.

The U.S. Department of Justice:

Per the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in the employment practices of federal contractors. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. ⁽¹⁾

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Section 504 states "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under" any program or activity that either receives federal financial assistance or is conducted by any executive agency or the United States Postal Service. ⁽¹⁾

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Section 508 establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the federal government. Section 508 requires Federal electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. An accessible information technology system is one that can be operated in a variety of ways and does not rely on a single sense or ability of the user. ⁽¹⁾

The State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts:

The State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts states the Electronic and Information Resources Accessibility Policy purpose as "to provide persons with disabilities the same access to and use of the website and electronic and information resources for which the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (the Comptroller's office) is responsible as do persons without disabilities." The Comptroller's office also follows guidelines established by the World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative, as defined in the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, as well as the guidelines in the 1998 Amendment to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) that are required by Texas state law. ⁽²⁾

Approved Plan for Accessibility Compliance of Online and Hybrid Courses

Academic Year 2016-2017

The Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative:

The Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative, as defined in the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guideline. The primary goal of these guidelines is to promote accessibility. (3)

Texas A&M University:

The Texas A&M System has a regulation in place, 29.01.04 Accessibility of Electronic and information Resources that states “The use of Electronic and Information Resources (EIR) supports the overall operation and mission of The Texas A&M University System (system). Ensuring such resources are accessible is not only good practice but also critical to the success of the system. In addition it is required by state and federal laws. (4)

Practices Currently in Place:

To comply with federal and state laws and guidelines, as well as The A&M System regulations, and the Council of Academic Technology in Education (CATIE – has formed an Accessibility taskforce seeking collaborative pricing for captioning services and standardized professional processes) Texas A&M International University Office of Information Technology and Distance Education Services has undertaken the responsibility of providing assistance and services for faculty which include, but are not limited to:

- Working with the Office of Disability Services for Students *to provide accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Quality Matters course creation using 2014 rubric*
- Captioning services for course video/audio *and applications*
- Transcription services for course video/audio and applications
 - Currently use Rev.com : no contract, \$1.00 per minute, 10 different file types included
 - Continue conversation regarding functional use of videos in class (ie: can they be used over and over or new captioning each semester – DVD v ECHO360 lecture capture)
- Continue process creation for audio and video applications
- Professional Development (Training)
 - Via TrainTrac: Accessibility Matters, System course number 2111971
 - Via OIT Professional Development; Creating Content for Different Learning Styles <https://trainings.tamui.edu/>
 - Via Atomic Learning; through **Blackboard** located on the **Institutional** page, or through **Uconnect** via the **Work Tools** tab, right hand side of the page under **Online Tools**
 - Distribution of Information Handouts: *How to Make Your Course Materials Accessible and Online Course Accessibility Checklist*
- Accessibility course reviews and remedy current accessibility course issues per faculty request.
 - Online Courses
 - Hybrid Courses

Together with good practice and training Texas A&M International University aims to keep in line with the mission of The Texas A&M University System by providing service and support to faculty

Approved Plan for Accessibility Compliance of Online and Hybrid Courses

Academic Year 2016-2017

for the creation of online and hybrid courses to contain accessible electronic resources including products, documents, audio and video.

Recommendations:

Through the creation of processes, documentation, training materials and faculty training while collaborating with A&M System schools the Office of Information Technology and Distance Education has discovered how time consuming these efforts are.

- 1) Continue with current practices as stated above *in the **Practices currently in Place***
- 2) Addition of the position of Lead Digital Accessibility Coordinator to oversee our commitment to maintaining accessibility in the digital environment.
- 3) Research and discovery of newly adopted eLearning applications accessibility compliance.
- 4) Coordinate the process of converting course materials into an accessible format.
- 5) Establish a cross-reference process with the library to prevent duplication of effort of already captioned/transcribed videos.
- 6) *Collaborate with Texas A&M International University departments to share resources, procedures and ensure forward progress with respect to accessibility by providing captioning and transcription services. University departments will be responsible for charges incurred for services provided.*
- 7) Continue collaboration with other A&M institutions to share resources and ensure forward progress with respect to accessibility.

(1) <https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>

(2) <http://comptroller.texas.gov/>

(3) <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>

(4) <http://policies.tamus.edu/29-01-04.pdf>