

Five Accessibility Myths



Myth 1: I don't have to worry about accessibility if I don't have any disabled students.

If you provide information to the general public, students or faculty via the Internet, you must make your web pages accessible. All official ECU web pages and all Blackboard course materials must be accessible.

If you teach an online course, you may not know if your students are disabled, and they may not self disclose. Consider that many disabilities are hidden, for instance mental illnesses, ADHD, dyslexia, cancer, or brain injury. In the US, roughly 9% of college students are disabled.

Myth 2: Providing accessible documents is difficult and takes too much time.

It will only take a few more minutes to properly format your documents, and upload extra versions of your content to Blackboard. Take these simple steps to make your courses more accessible:

- Try to provide course content in two formats, for instance, MS Word and HTML.
- Use headings, lists, and other structural markup in your documents.
- Provide alt-text for images (description for those that can't see the image).

Myth 3: Accessibility is only about blind users.

No, accessibility is about universal design. For instance, adding captions to a video helps the deaf, but it also helps users with no access to sound in the library or an office. Captions can also help foreign students comprehend the spoken content.

Myth 4: ECU doesn't have a web accessibility policy, so we don't need to worry about compliance yet.

ECU does have a policy, and in any case, you still need to comply with the ADA. There are also additional Federal and State laws that require modifications or accommodations for students with disabilities.

Myth 5: I place my files in Blackboard, and it is accessible, so I'm fine.

While the Blackboard interface strives toward accessibility, it doesn't automatically make your content accessible. Here are some ideas for greater accessibility:

- Use a simple large font for your course masthead.
- Use sufficient color contrast for navigation buttons and other text.
- Use structural markup in the text you post (headers, lists, etc.)
- Organize content on a page into no more than seven folders. Remove extra navigation and tool buttons.
- Uploaded content, and external websites required for your class must also be accessible.

For more information, or help with your content, contact:

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The web should provide access to as many people as possible. It is only right that the University community adapt or remove barriers that keep some from gaining access to their education.

The Federal government has certain requirements for the fair treatment of persons with disabilities. The updated Eastern Kentucky University Policy endorses compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act's Section 508 standards - subsections 1194.22 and 1194.31. Any Eastern Kentucky University sites that are funded with Federal grants must abide by the rules of those grants, including website accessibility.

