

Providing Barrier-Free Access to Your Program or Course Content

While we all wish to provide as much access to our course resources as possible, it doesn't always seem feasible given our limited planning time and resources. However, making your class materials available to students with documented disabilities is not only good practice, it's also a legal requirement.

Q: What is the general mandate regarding making course materials accessible?

A: To provide timely delivery of an accurate translation of materials in a manner appropriate to the individual with the disability.

Q: What are the relevant legal documents regarding disability accommodations in Higher Education?

A: Here's a starting point for further research:

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** set legal requirements relevant to Academic Institutions
- **Section 508** applies to Federal Agencies, but is widely considered the acceptable standard for all compliance
- **Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education** mandated the need to effectively communicate in accordance with these obligations.

Q: How can I find out more about supporting students in my program?

A: If a student in your course or program has a documented disability, Access Services will notify you to arrange appropriate accommodations. For more information regarding access services, please contact **Meredith Inocencio**, Director of Access Services.

Q: What can I do to make my course materials barrier-free and compatible with access technology?

A: This varies by document/file type. PDFs (articles, syllabi), Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and web pages can all be created in barrier-free ways. Talk to Academic Computing and they'll help you figure out solutions.

- **PDF** - Using Adobe Acrobat's accessibility report, OCR, and tagging features to make your text recognizable by screen readers.
- **Word Documents** - Using styles in Word for headings, tables, columns and other sections of your document makes the document more accessible and helps you make better PDFs.
- **Spreadsheets** - Both spreadsheets and tables benefit from good structure.
- **Web Pages** - Add the WAVE Toolbar for Firefox to help you evaluate the accessibility of your web page.

Evergreen's Library and Computer Center have many applications available to help make content accessible to students. While the Macintosh platform has many built in features, like screen magnification, voice command, text reading and sticky keys, our PC platform has a number of additional software packages. The AT Lab in the Library can provide additional support for this PC software that provides dictation, screen magnification and screen reading.

*This handout was created by Academic Computing, for more information contact: **Rip Heminway**.*