Digital Accessibility (WCAG) Unit Toolkit

# Introduction

Compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines may seem, at first, like a very difficult task. However, with a few changes in habits and an understanding of how accessibility practices work, your unit can ensure that the content you create is easily accessible by anyone.

This toolkit is designed to help you plan your unit for digital accessibility.

# What is Compliance?

## WCAG Summary

Since the mid-90s, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has applied the [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/regulations-policies-standards/americans-disability-act.php) to “websites of covered entities”. At the time, there were many organizations publishing guidelines for digital accessibility. Over time, however, the [Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C)](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/regulations-policies-standards/world-wide-web-consortium.php), a non-profit international community devoted to making the internet accessible to people with disabilities, developed the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/regulations-policies-standards/web-content-accessibility-guidelines.php), which has become the most common standard for web accessibility. In April of 2024, the DOJ published [Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Agencies](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/regulations-policies-standards/doj-rule.php), which finally established WCAG 2.1 level AA as the official standard for digital accessibility.

To learn more about the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, specifically how it is organized and what we mean by “level AA,” please visit DLI’s [WCAG Summary page](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/regulations-policies-standards/web-content-accessibility-guidelines.php).

## Basic Four

Even a cursory look at WCAG will reveal that it is a very technical document with many layers. In fact, there are many pieces of WCAG addressed within the applications we use or the settings that UITS administrators establish for us that typical content creators may never need to consider.

For that reason, we recommend thinking of WCAG and digital accessibility as a type of *grammar.* It is a set of habits we develop to help us consider when we write a piece of text or create a piece of media, ensuring that content can be accessed by someone with limited vision, hearing, or movement and is optimized for people who use [assistive technology](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/assistive-technologies.php) to access the web. We’ve narrowed all these habits into a set of practices we call the [Basic Four of Accessibility](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/basic-accessibility-solutions/basic-four-accessibility.php). The Basic Four website has more detail, but the Basic Four can be summarized like this:

1. **Document Structure:** “Documents” here refers to many types of content from HTML pages (the website) to Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, PDFs, etc. It infers many elements of documents including:
	1. **Proper Semantic (Heading) Structure**: This allows non-sighted readers to browse content using headings the same way a sighted reader does.
	2. **Use of List Styles:** Properly formatted lists are used for sequences or bullets.
	3. **Table Structure:** Proper table headings are used so that assistive technology can provide proper context for data in the table.
	4. **Proper Color Contrast:** Use of different colors of text may make reading more difficult for people who cannot differentiate between colors.
	5. **Descriptive Links:** Full URLs are typically ignored by sighted readers but can be tedious for someone listening to a document using assistive technology.
2. **Alternative Text:** Descriptive text written for images that tell a reader who cannot see the image what they need to know about it.
3. **Media Accessibility:** Closed captioning, audio descriptions, and transcripts ensure access to our video and audio content.
4. **Accessible Third-Party Applications:** When working with or acquiring an application or using a resource from another institution, it is important to be able to tell whether that application or resource is compliant.

# Accessibility Roles

The Academic Web Accessibility team is recommending that any unit, whether academic or non-academic, consider their unit members to fall into four categories when it comes to accessibility responsibilities.

1. **Non-Content Creators:** There may be people in your unit who never write, create, or curate content that will be published publicly or disseminated to the KSU community. While it is helpful for everyone to know about digital accessibility, it is far less urgent for them.
2. **Content Creators:** This term is a wide one. It includes anyone who writes, creates, or curates digital content—text, documents, or media—that will end up being published on the website, in a course, or disseminated to the KSU community.
3. **Unit Accessibility Champion:** We recommend that every unit, whether academic or non-academic and depending on the size, establish one or multiple “Accessibility Champions”. An Accessibility Champion will have taken some official training and can be a guide, answer questions, help review content before it is published, and know where to turn for help when the unit runs into accessibility challenges.
	1. **NOTE:** If your unit has a person who manages your public website, it is recommended they be a Unit Accessibility Champion.
4. **Unit Administrators:** While an administrator may not create and/or publish content themselves, there are helpful pieces for an administrator to know before making decisions that may impact accessibility.

## What Content Creators—and All Roles—Should Know

We recommend that Content Creators in your unit:

1. Review the [Digital Accessibility and You](https://share.percipio.com/cd/FK863LmUa) module.
2. Review the [Basic Four of Accessibility](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/basic-accessibility-solutions/basic-four-accessibility.php) site.
3. Utilize the [Creating Accessible Content](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/basic-accessibility-solutions/creating-accessible-content/index.php) site, a collection of resources showing how to use common office tools to ensure that your content is accessible.
4. Knowing where to go to get [self-paced training](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/accessibility-training/index.php) resources.

## What Your Unit Accessibility Champion Should Know

### Academic UACs

For academic Unit Accessibility Champions, we recommend:

1. Taking the [Accessible Teaching Essentials](https://ksu.percipio.com/liveCourse/bf3f8979-48c6-4c9f-8164-6189b1a5f837) workshop (especially for faculty). This is a self-paced, asynchronous, three-week workshop devoted to training for accessibility on the academic side. It is available to faculty, staff, and student workers.
2. Using the [AWA Course Accessibility Checklist](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/basic-accessibility-solutions/course-accessibility-checklist.php) to review your course content.
3. Learning about Universal Design for Learning:
	1. Review our [UDL Page](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/universal-design-learning.php).
	2. Review the [UDL in Practice](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/universal-design-practice.php) page.
	3. Take the [UDL Experience](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/accessibility-training/index.php#:~:text=The%20UDL%20Experience%20(UDLEX)) workshop.

### Non-Academic UACs

For non-academic Unit Accessibility Champions or those who work in academic units but whose content is published or circulated outside of the classroom, we recommend:

1. The [Accessible Web Essentials](https://ksu.percipio.com/liveCourse/f28b6270-156d-47cc-af09-8e7c5c77b4fe) workshop. This is a self-paced, asynchronous, three-week workshop devoted to training for accessibility. It is available to staff and student workers.

### Both

For all Unit Accessibility Champions, we recommend:

1. The [Complex Alternative Text Solutions](https://ksu-dli-as.azurewebsites.net/complex-alt-text-solutions/index.html#/) self-paced module.
2. The [Using Equidox for PDF Accessibility](https://ksu-dli-as.azurewebsites.net/using-equidox/index.html#/) self-paced module.

## What Unit Administrators Should Know

Because Unit Administrators make decisions which may impact accessibility efforts, these are our recommendations:

1. Review the [DOJ Rule](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/regulations-policies-standards/doj-rule.php) page.
2. When considering a technology acquisition or reviewing current technologies used by your unit:
	1. Learn about Accessibility Statements:
		1. View the [Accessibility Statements Microlearning](https://mediaspace.kennesaw.edu/media/Accessibility%2BStatements%2BMicrolearning/1_bidudg8v).
	2. Learn about Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs)
		1. View the [Finding and Using VPATs Microlearning](https://mediaspace.kennesaw.edu/media/VPATs%2BMicrolearning/1_ta3d9qjj).
	3. Review both on the Review the [Accessibility Statements and VPATs](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/accessibility-statements-vpats.php) page.
3. Review the [Accessibility Plan Template](#plan) document at the end of this kit. Employees who take the Accessible Web Essentials training are encouraged to use this to help their unit meet WCAG compliance requirements.

# Where to Get Help

For academic units, please contact the Instructional Designer for your college using the DLI [One on One Assistance](https://kennesaw.service-now.com/dli?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=83353d4edbcc59100149c8cb13961935&sysparm_category=3dc61feadb770d500149c8cb139619b5&catalog_id=0de493aadb770d500149c8cb13961904) form.

For non-academic units, reach out to Jason Rodenbeck (jrodenb1@kennesaw.edu), and our unit will direct you to the right resources to help!

# Accessibility Plan Template

This document uses fields created in the Word Developer tab. To fill out the form, click a gray box and start typing.

## Whose Plan Is This?

Name:

Title:

Department:

Date:

## Goal

It is essential for KSU that all the University’s web content meets basic accessibility standards to better serve all our constituents and be compliant with accessibility regulations and USG policy. To that end, DLI recommends reviewing/auditing all your department’s current pages, identifying any pages or content that fails to meet these standards, and remediating these accessibility gaps. Additionally, it is imperative to develop a process for ensuring the ongoing accessibility of any new content moving forward.

## Initial Concerns

Based on what you’ve learned in the Accessible Web Essentials (AWE) workshop, what are the accessibility gaps or issues you expect to find in your department’s web content?

## Types of Content

Your department may host many different types of content. Use the check boxes below to indicate which types of content are on your department’s web pages. Next to each content type listed, you will find additional information on what to look out for on each type.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Checkbox | Type of Content | Pay Close Attention To… |
| [ ]  | Stylized HTML content | …heading structure, especially if you use widgets such as accordions, tables, etc. These are keyboard accessible, but you do need to ensure that the heading structure in that content maintains the page’s logical structure. Don’t forget to write proper alt text for images as well! |
| [ ]  | Downloadable documents, especially PDFs | …all basic four options. When you’re reviewing your pages, make sure to download the docs and run an accessibility check. Look for PDFs especially. For help with PDF accessibility, check DLI’s [PDF Resources.](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/pdf-accessibility-solutions/equidox.php) |
| [ ]  | Media | …accurate captioning. **Don’t assume** that auto-captioning is sufficient. Review the captions to make sure there are no errors—and edit the ones you do find. We recommend hosting all videos on MediaSpace for ease in creating and editing captions. We also have an option for easily adding audio descriptions if necessary. |
| [ ]  | Complex images, charts, or stylized infographics | …sufficient text alternatives. Because the web is such a visual medium, it’s tempting to focus on asthetics to create engaging and attractive content. But don’t forget to include text alternatives for those who will access that content with assistive technology. |
| [ ]  | Other | …unknown accessibility issues. For help reviewing content that you’re unsure about, contact DLI through the [DLI Service Portal](https://kennesaw.service-now.com/dli). |

## Audit Process for Current Pages

DLI recommends reviewing all of your department’s pages for accessibility. Depending on the size of your department and its footprint on the KSU website, this can be a big task! Write a plan for how you will review your pages for accessibility. Consider how many sections your web pages are broken into and the types of content, what sections you will prioritize, etc.

Set a goal for when you will have completed the review and remediation of your department’s current content.

## New Content Process Moving Forward

If your department is like most, you likely find yourself changing content or adding new content frequently. In the next field, indicate the process you plan to follow to ensure new content meets accessibility standards. Consider how many of the people in your department create documents or write content that end up on your pages. Should they receive training? Or, will you try to remediate all content yourself prior to sharing on the web? Is there someone involved in creating media, infographics, or other content? If you would like to request accessibility training or resources for your department, contact DLI through the [DLI Service Portal](https://kennesaw.service-now.com/dli).

## Third Party Sources

Lastly, does your department rely on third party resources or applications? If so, you’ll want to review those for accessibility as well. List those that you are concerned about below. You can review DLI’s resources on [third party applications](https://www.kennesaw.edu/academic-affairs/curriculum-instruction-assessment/digital-learning-innovations/academic-web-accessibility/advanced-accessibility-solutions/accessibility-statements-vpats.php) or contact DLI for help reviewing these sources.