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## Tip sheet - Accessibility and inclusivity in FLO

### Context

International [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#) specify three levels of conformance: A (lowest), AA and AAA (highest). **AA** is the minimum legal requirement in Australia and the standard you should aim to achieve. FLO is a web-based platform, so these standards apply.

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guideline 'Provide multiple means of **Representation**' means 'For resourceful, knowledgeable learners, present information and content in different ways'. If you design for people with disabilities, you get it right for everyone.

How can these standards and guidelines be addressed in FLO? Approach this question with two thoughts in mind: 1. Make it easy for students, and 2. Don't make them ask.

This tip sheet encourages you to be proactive (designing for accessibility/inclusivity) rather than reactive (responding to negative student feedback).

### Device accessibility

What devices are your students using? Students are likely to use their mobile phones to access FLO, so test your FLO topic in your mobile phone to get a student experience.

If you are unsure of student experiences using other types of devices and software, check with your local [eLearning support team](#).

### Support links

Draw student's attention to links to the student portal and FLO support in FLO. This action ensures that students have access to topic, course and University support information.

### FLO site structure and content

Aim: overall topic site consistency within the topic itself and (ideally) the bigger picture (eg within a program). Lack of **consistency** is an accessibility and usability problem reported by all students and the [FLO starter site](#) is designed to promote consistency. Below are some good practice guidelines for how to achieve consistency.

General principles include:

- Enable printer-friendly versions of content (files, FLO books/pages)
- Ensure instructions to learners do not rely solely on sensory characteristics such as size, location, orientation, and sound
- Ensure all users have enough time to read and use the content<sup>1</sup>

### Styles

Use hierarchical headings (large, medium, small) in the [HTML editor](#) rather than creating your own or just bolding text. This helps all users 'sense make' the site, but particularly those with a visual impairment (the screen reader recognises the hierarchy and uses it to explain the content). Make sure your headings follow a logical order (medium [h3], small [h4] etc). Use other HTML editor style features for layout (these follow good web practice).

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<sup>1</sup> [W3C, Sensory characteristics](#)

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Check that formatting styles allow for zoom in/enlarged text size flexibility, and that this function does not overcrowd the content. If it does, consider spacing options (eg text ‘chunks’ rather than long paragraphs, which makes for easier reading for **all** students).

## Narrative (whole site)

Ensure that the narrative you create in your FLO site is inclusive and accessible for the entire cohort. Are there international students? They may not understand Australian slang. Do you use acronyms? Make sure you say what they stand for when you first use them. (If there are a lot of terms or acronyms, you could create a [Glossary](#).) Use plain English, verbs rather than nouns, and active voice (‘you’). [Create a narrative/s in your topic](#)

Using **bold** and *italics* to emphasise words/phrases adds to the information load of screen readers (plus italics can be hard to read on screen), so try to emphasise via the words you use and the way you say it. **Never use bold and italics together**. Using bold text is a visual cue that doesn’t disadvantage vision impaired users.

Avoid using concepts that are inaccessible to sight impaired users (eg blue ball, background, foreground).

‘Chunk’ text in paragraphs and under headings. Use styles to dot point. Indent quotes and leave as normal text (not bold or italic).

See [HTML editor](#) for details on styling options available in FLO.

## Tables

Avoid using tables for layout (eg one cell only) – only use them for data. If you use a table for data, do not leave cells empty (put instead ‘0’, ‘n/a’ etc).

You can create columns for layout purposes using the ‘div’ tag (HTML). [Insert columns in a resource/module](#)

## Images/other visuals

Avoid using images for text information (eg headings). Use HTML text styles instead so the user is informed that it is a heading, and it can be read by assistive technology such as screen readers. See [HTML editor](#) for details on styling options available in FLO.

It’s great to use images in FLO for visual representation of information but ensure that they are audio or alt (alternative) text described. Some good practice tips for using images in your FLO site/s include:

- Download the [PowerPoint teaching template](#) and reference all images used in your slides
- Provide descriptive captions for graphics.
- Make them relevant through contextualisation (the image’s purpose).
- When describing an image, avoid judgement/discrimination statements.
- Describe only what is visible.
- Describe the big picture of the image first, then further (smaller) details about the image.
- Avoid using a text image (unless you are going to provide a transcript for the image).
- Dotted and solid lines can be used to indicate differences in graphs/other diagrams, rather than using colour differentiations.

Make sure you resize the image outside of FLO. If you resize them in FLO, the image looks resized but actually isn’t. This can affect site loading time so is a usability issue. See [Resize an image](#) for how to do this using Snagit and considerations around file size.

## Files

Documents, no matter what format (PDF, Word, PowerPoint etc), should be compatible with screen reader software. It is recommended that you provide ‘multiple means of representation’ (Universal Design). For

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example, you might provide your lecture slides in both PowerPoint and PDF format, or a guide to referencing in both Word and PDF format. Whatever file type you use, make sure you [optimise file size](#) (make them smaller and therefore easier to download).

WebAIM: web accessibility in mind includes information about how to make types of files (eg Word) accessible.

[Guide Dogs SA NT](#) provides multiple means of representation of information – PDF, Word and audio (automatic captioning).

## PDFs

The two most important tools for reviewing and repairing PDF accessibility are the Tags pane and the Accessibility tools pane.

Acrobat Pro is the only version of Acrobat that can be used to view and edit the accessibility information of a PDF. Acrobat Pro (DC) is pre-installed on staff computers. Staff can also [request it on their home computers](#). Students may have access to it in [teaching and learning spaces](#).

[Workflow for creating accessible PDFs](#) (Adobe Acrobat User Guide)

## PowerPoint (PPT)

PPT files are likely to be used for lecture slides. It is recommended that you convert these to PDF (for easier use and smaller file size). If you are converting a PowerPoint file to a PDF, you can check its accessibility prior to conversion.

In PowerPoint, accessibility issues are likely to be around:

- image alt text
- order of objects in a slide (eg Title, Textbox, Content Placeholder, Picture)
- headings for slides (unique titles)
- table and graph formatting

[Make your PowerPoint presentations accessible to people with disabilities](#) (Microsoft Office)

## Multimedia

Video and audio files (rich media) can be made accessible and inclusive using closed captions, transcripts etc – text alternatives. These alternatives benefit all students.

Kaltura, the University's video platform, has machine captioning functionality and can [generate captions](#). Captioning is a learning tool that helps all students (particularly international students who may struggle with spoken English).

If possible, avoid using YouTube for teacher-created videos and try to find alternatives for YouTube video resources. Video tutorials (how to use...) and YouTube videos can be problematic for vision impaired students.

Contact [Disability Services](#) for the process around providing accessible teaching materials for students with a disability.

[WebAIM: web accessibility in mind](#) includes information about how to make rich media accessible (eg captions, transcripts, audio descriptions).

[Guide Dogs SA NT](#) provides multiple means of representation of information – PDF, Word and audio (automatic captioning).

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## Assessment in FLO

FLO activities can be used as tools in student assessment (eg assignment, quiz, forum). Here are some ideas for creating accessible and inclusive assessment that will benefit all students:

- Be aware that variations (adjustments, extensions, deferrals) to assessment items may need to be implemented for some students/groups
- Involve students in assessment design ('students and teachers become responsible partners in learning and assessment'<sup>2</sup>) when developing the Statement of Assessment Methods (SAM)
- Ensure that the assessment item evaluates the learning outcomes (rather than physical attributes of the learner) and that this is clearly stated in FLO
- Ask students for feedback about the assessment (in class/online)
- Include a rubric with all assessment items and ensure it is logically placed in FLO
- Give students choice – of assessment approaches, file types etc
- Make submission times flexible (to allow for submission of multiple assessment items), and allow for variations in time taken to complete an assessment item (eg quiz)

[Assessment policy and procedures](#) (Flinders University)

[Jisc: Making assessments accessible](#)

## FLO activities (tools)

Ensure all users have enough time to read and use the content. Remove time limits on activities, unless this would invalidate the activity<sup>3</sup>.

### Forum

Because forums are often text-based discussions, it's a good idea to raise awareness amongst students, teachers and tutors around accessibility and inclusivity. This is an authentic exercise that is 'workplace authentic'. Examples include:

- Use clear headings online and in text
- Keep text simple and use paragraphs ('chunking') to organise text in FLO
- Provide text descriptions for any image
- Limit the use of multiple colour/style fonts (eg red, green, italics, cursive)

### Quiz

You can [set up a user/group override](#) so students can take longer if they need to (eg if they are on a [Disability Action Plan](#)).

When designing quiz questions, to make sure no-one is disadvantaged:

- If using images in a quiz question, provide information about the image
- If using a video in a quiz question, [add captions](#) if creating the video yourself

## Collaborate (virtual classroom)

The support page [Accessibility and screen readers](#) outlines what the best screen reader experience means in practice (including [live closed captioning](#)), and screen reader browser support.

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<sup>2</sup> [Assessment policy and procedures](#) (Flinders University)

<sup>3</sup> [W3C, Timing adjustable](#)

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Be aware of good practice around accessibility and advise students who are presenters in Collaborate sessions. For whiteboard activities and uploaded files, it is recommended that presenters choose [share files](#) over [share application](#).

Help materials (Collaborate) provides useful resources for students (and to inform teachers):

- [Jaws, VoiceOver and other audio/video settings](#)
- [Global keyboard shortcuts for common actions](#)
- [Navigate recordings using assistive technology](#)
- [Navigate the Collaborate panel with assistive technology](#)

## eBook accessibility

If you are using an eBook in your topic consider the accessibility of the textbook you have selected. Aspects to consider:

- many eBooks available for the library are only available as limited user eBooks (1-3 simultaneous users). These will generally be view online only.
- not all platforms allow PDF download or they have a daily limit on downloads (these are set by the publisher and out of Library control).
- the eBook models available to the Library never include added interactive content such as videos.

## eBooks and exams

If setting open textbook exams and quizzes in your topic you need to consider the eBook models available as this can impact on students. If the model is limited, view online, with no PDF download options, students will have access issues at assessment time. If the title is limited but allows PDF download you will need to strongly encourage your students to download and keep their weekly readings to help mitigate access issues at assessment time. Unlimited and DRM free models are preferred and provide the best experience for our students.

## Contact

- [Academic Disability Advisors](#)
- [Disability Services](#)

## Resources

### Flinders University

- [Disability policy](#)

### Australian

- Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative (AIPI), [Making content accessible](#)
- Blackboard, [Accessibility checklist](#) (for accessible content)
- Government of South Australia, [Online Accessibility Toolkit](#)
- [Guide dogs SA NT](#) (for multiple means of representation)
- University of New South Wales, [Guidelines for accessible blended and online courses](#)
- University of South Australia, [Disability Hub](#)

### International

- [18F Accessibility Guide](#) (US)
- CAST, [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) guidelines](#)
- University of Washington, [Accessible technology](#)
- WebAIM: web accessibility in mind, [Introduction to web accessibility](#)