

Digital Accessibility Guidance for Managers

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Introduction

Making a website accessible means making sure it can be used by as many people as possible, including those with impairments to their:

- vision - severely sight impaired (blind), sight impaired (partially sighted) or colour blind people
- hearing - people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- mobility - people who find it difficult to use a mouse or keyboard
- thinking and understanding - people with dyslexia, autism or learning difficulties

At least [1 in 5 people in the UK have a long-term illness, impairment or disability](#). Many more have a temporary disability.

Accessibility means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

For example, someone with impaired vision might use a screen reader (software that lets a user navigate a website and 'read out' the content), braille display or screen magnifier. Or someone with motor difficulties might use a special mouse, speech recognition software or on-screen keyboard emulator.

As well as making our website easier to use, we **MUST** meet the new government accessibility requirements: [The Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No.2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#).

What the university is responsible for

Information Services staff are responsible for making sure the website as a whole is accessible. This includes things like:

- making sure site navigation can be used without a mouse
- making sure text can be enlarged by the user without making the page unreadable
- making sure that images used in the header and footer of pages have alternative text
- making sure that forms have field labels
- making sure that there is sufficient contrast between text and background colour

What you are responsible for

You are responsible for making sure that the content that you create is accessible. Even though you are not directly putting content onto the website, you are providing content for your departmental CMS editor(s) to put online. It is essential that this content is accessible to all.

Guidance

Language

We need to make sure users can understand what we are saying.

Use plain English (or Welsh) when writing your content. Use the simplest words to say exactly what you mean. Don't use jargon unless your content is aimed only at people who are sure to understand these terms. Imagine that you are talking to the reader.

When you want a user to complete an action, give simple, clear instructions such as 'apply now' or 'download our prospectus'.

Always read over your text before approving your content. Check for spelling or grammar errors.

Structure

We need to structure our content in a logical way, so that it is easy to understand. Some people will be using the site in different ways which rely on well-structured content.

Headings

Headings help people understand the structure of our content. Be careful to use headings in the correct order so that they don't become confusing. The main heading of your page is the heading 1. You shouldn't have any further heading 1s in your page.

Don't use bold or underlining to mark text as the title of a topic. Make sure to use a heading of the appropriate level.

If you already have a section of your content with a heading 2, you can split it further by using heading 3s and 4s.

Layout

The way you lay out your content can have an effect on its accessibility. If you put all the information into one large paragraph without any breaks it can be hard to read.

Sentences and paragraphs

Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. A useful rule is to aim to have no more than 25 words in a sentence, and no more than 5 sentences in a paragraph.

Check your sentences and paragraphs using the [Hemingway Editor](#).

Content topics

Splitting content into separate parts can make it easier to understand. Use appropriate headings to show what topic each part is about. See [structure](#) for more details on headings.

Text alignment

Keep your text aligned to the left (default). Don't use align-right, centre or justify.

Links

We need to tell users where a link will take them. This sounds obvious, but we need to make sure that it is clear.

Use 'friendly links'.

Will a person know where they are going from the link text alone?

If they will, it is a 'friendly link'.

Don't

- use the same text for links that are going to different places
- use 'click here' as your link text

Do

- use the title of the page you are linking to as the link text, e.g.
[Open Days](#)

Tables

Tables are useful when we have a lot of information to put in our webpages.

When to use a table

Before creating a table, make sure that it is the right tool for the job.

Tables are for data.

If you have a number of items that can all come under one heading, that is data.

If you can't match the items you want to put in a column of your table with a single heading, then it is not data.

Usually a table will have multiple sets of items (columns) each with their own headings.

An example of data is a list of staff names, phone numbers and email addresses.

Don't

- use a table to lay out your page.

Do

- only use a table for data.

Table headers

We need to include table headers so that people can understand what the table contains.

Table size

We need to make sure our tables display correctly on different devices. To do this we set our tables to 100% width. This allows them to use all of the space available.

Images

When we use images in our webpages, we need to provide alternatives for users who can't view the images.

Decorative images

If you have an image in your content that is purely decorative, you don't need to provide alternative text. But take a moment to consider whether the image has purpose (see below) before assuming it is decorative.

Images with purpose

If your image conveys information, contributes to the feel of the page, is referred to in the text, or is used for navigation, it has purpose.

When an image has purpose we need to ensure that there is alternative information available (alt text). If in doubt, add alt text.

Alt text can be added using the CMS. After inserting your image from the media library, double-click on it. The Set media attributes pop-up will appear and you can type your alt text into the 'Alt' box.

Don't

- use 'photo of ...' in the alt text
- describe the image in lengthy detail

Do

- briefly describe the image
- bear in mind the context of the page – you may need to be more specific
- use text describing the action that will occur if the user clicks on the image (when the image is a link)

Images containing text

When an image contains text it is **especially** important to make sure that the text is available in another way for people who can't view the image.

We can do this by using alt text or by providing a link to the text from the image in another format.

If the amount of text in the image is small, put this exact text into the alt text (see above for details).

If the image contains a large amount of text (e.g. an infographic), you should provide a plain text version of the image on a separate page. You can do this in the CMS:

- create a new section
- add the text from the image using General Content
- return to the section where the image is inserted
- create a link to the new section immediately beneath the image

Make sure that the colour of the text in your image contrasts enough with the background of the image. If the contrast is too low, some people will not be able to read the text.

You can check the contrast (if you know the hex codes for the colours you are using) on [WebAIM's contrast checker](#). Otherwise make sure the image creator is aware that the contrast ratio must be at least 4:5:1.

Where possible, avoid using images that contain text. If you can create the same visual presentation using text, it is better to use text.

Images containing charts, graphs or diagrams

When an image contains a chart, graph or diagram, we need to make sure that the information is available in another way for people who can't view the chart, graph or diagram.

It may be enough to add alt text to the image describing what is shown in the image. For example you could add alt text "graph showing the increase in student numbers over time". This works if there is a clear message conveyed in the image and it's not necessary to include more detail.

If the chart, graph or diagram is more complex, you should provide an alternative. This might be a table within your page which contains the data that was used to create a graph.

You could also create a link to a new page containing a more detailed description of the image than you'd be able to provide via alt text.

Make sure that the chart, graph or diagram can still be understood if displayed in black and white, rather than in colour. For example, rather than just having different coloured lines to represent data for different periods, use patterns to differentiate the lines further.

Video

We need to include extra information with videos so that everyone can understand what the video contains.

If your video does not contain speech you will need to:

- provide a descriptive text transcript (unless the video is purely decorative)

If your video does contain speech you will need to:

- Provide synchronized captions
- Provide a descriptive text transcript (if the video contains conveys content visually that is not conveyed through the captions)
- Provide an audio description (if the video contains conveys content visually that is not conveyed through the audio)

If you need assistance with video creation, please contact [Joe Smith](#).

Audio

We need to include extra information with audio files so that everyone can understand what the audio contains.

You will need to:

- Provide a descriptive text transcript

Documents

We need to make sure that documents we provide on our website are accessible.

- Use clear, simple language
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short
- Use bullet points
- Use page heading styles (rather than bold or underline)
- Add alternative text to images, tables and diagrams
- Avoid using colour alone to communicate an idea
- Ensure sufficient colour contrast
- Use a sans-serif font, avoid italics, underlining and all caps
- Use 1.5 line spacing
- Use friendly links
- Keep text aligned left

It's best to provide both Word and PDF versions of documents as some users find Word documents easier to access and others find PDF documents easier. Providing both makes sure that everyone can access the information.

Preparation of accessible documents

The Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit provide [guidance on creating accessible learning materials](#), including Word documents, PowerPoint files, and PDF files.

Checking Pages

Some issues can't be seen by just looking at the page!

You can choose to inspect areas of the page in the browser:

- Right click on an image and choose Inspect (or Inspect element in some browsers), look at the highlighted code and see if there is anything after 'alt'. If there is alt text it should say something like alt="view of the campus".
- Right click on text that acts as a heading and choose Inspect (or Inspect element in some browsers). You'll see the HTML code for the page with the text you clicked on highlighted. Look for tags like <h1> (heading 1) or <h2> (heading 2). If it says or <p> but there is no heading tag, then it's not a real heading.

Help and Support

Contacts

IS Helpdesk: is@aber.ac.uk, 2400

Suzy Shipman: sfs@aber.ac.uk, 8785

digital-accessibility@aber.ac.uk

Digital Accessibility web pages:

General guidance for staff

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/accessibility/guidance-staff/>

Information for CMS users

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/it-services/web/compliance/accessibility/>

Looking for the accessibility web pages?

Scroll to the bottom of any of our webpages and click on Accessibility.