

## DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

### Purpose and Context

The University of Huddersfield is committed to ensuring that all its websites and digital content is inclusive by design and accessible to all. This includes both services and teaching and learning.

### Scope

Ensuring the accessibility of digital content and services is the responsibility of all University faculty and staff.

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 The University of Huddersfield is committed to ensuring that its websites and digital content is compliant with current legislation. This means that new and updated digital content produced by the University will meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 at level AA. Existing digital content produced by the University will also comply with WCAG 2.2 in accordance with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

1.2 This policy applies to the development and procurement of digital content and addresses the following areas:

- Web accessibility
- Instructional materials accessibility
- Document accessibility
- Electronic media accessibility
- Systems accessibility
- Procurement

## 2 Purpose

2.1 Incorporating digital accessibility principles into the development, acquisition and implementation of digital content helps the University to ensure that these resources (documents, webpages, media, information, services etc.) are accessible to the widest possible audience.

This policy will help ensure that all individuals have access to information and digital content associated with administration and services, courses of instruction, departmental programs, and University sponsored activities.

### **3 Legal requirements**

- 3.1 This policy ensures compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and the Equality Act 2010. It mandates that public sector bodies must make their websites and mobile applications perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. Incorporating digital accessibility principles into the development, acquisition and implementation of digital content helps the University to ensure that these resources (documents, webpages, media, information, services etc.) are accessible to the widest possible audience.
- 3.2 This policy will help ensure that all individuals have access to information and digital content associated with administration and services, courses of instruction, departmental programs, and University sponsored activities.

### **4 Guidelines**

- 4.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) (or designee) is responsible for interpreting the Digital Accessibility Policy and providing executive authority, with consultation as necessary, over all digital accessibility within the scope of this policy.
- 4.2 The following circumstances may qualify as exemptions from this policy:
  - 4.2.1 Where compliance is not technically possible or may constitute a disproportionate burden due to the nature or intent of the information resource or service. An assessment must be undertaken as required by the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
  - 4.2.2 Where compliance would result in a fundamental alteration of the information resource or service and not satisfy the original intent.
  - 4.2.3 Where the content is not currently compliant, but efforts are underway to fix the issues by a defined date.
- 4.3 An exemption to this policy may be made by submitting an exemption request to be reviewed by the Digital Accessibility Steering Group (DASG). Non-compliant information technology must not be purchased or developed prior to receiving an exemption approval.

### **5 Accessibility Standard**

- 5.1 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2, level AA, shall serve as the web accessibility standards for The University of Huddersfield.

## **6 Web Accessibility**

- 6.1 All new and redesigned webpages published for, hosted by, or otherwise provided by the University or any of the University's services or school, must comply with (WCAG) 2.2.
- 6.2 All pages created or last updated before 23rd September 2018 must be made accessible in accordance with the implementation timeline outlined in Appendix A
- 6.3 Web pages, including archived pages that are specifically requested to be made accessible as a reasonable adjustment for an individual with a disability shall be made accessible, or an equally effective alternative must generally be provided within 10 business days where possible..
- 6.4 Each University of Huddersfield website shall contain a link to a compliant Accessibility Statement which should include details on how to request an alternatively formatted copy of the page content for users having difficulty accessing the content.
- 6.5 All University of Huddersfield generated content (including PDFs, web forms, etc.) available on a page or discoverable by a search engine must comply with (WCAG) 2.1.

## **7 Digital Instructional Materials Accessibility**

- 7.1 This policy applies to all digital content delivered within the University's Virtual Learning Environment, in face-to-face lectures or in an alternate method (webinars, email, course websites, blogs, etc.).
- 7.2 All faculty and schools will:
  - 7.2.1 ensure that instructional materials comply with all requirements outlined in this policy;
  - 7.2.2 ensure that all lectures use and deliver accessible digital content;
  - 7.2.3 create and present accessible courses and instructional materials.

## **8 Document Accessibility**

- 8.1 This policy applies to all University produced or distributed electronic documents. Electronic documents include, but are not limited to Word, PDF, PowerPoint and Excel spreadsheets that are uploaded, posted, or otherwise published or distributed electronically. All documents available on a page or discoverable by a search engine must be made accessible or be removed from electronic publication. Electronic documents must meet the standards and guidelines outlined in the WCAG 2.2.

## **9 Electronic Media Accessibility**

9.1 All media resources, whether optional or required, used in University programs and activities must be accessible. This includes, but is not limited to, media that is instructional, informational, marketing, and promotional.

9.1.1 Video media resources must be closed-captioned and audio resources must be transcribed. If video and/or audio media resources are online and are password protected (e.g. VLE, Intranet, O365) or are shown/played on campus. Caption.Ed can be utilised to provide captions on demand (Appendix C). If video or audio media resources are in the public domain, they must be physically captioned as per the legislation.

9.1.2 Captions should be enabled by default on all compatible display equipment

9.1.3 When purchasing audiovisual materials, staff should ensure that:

9.1.3.1 a captioned version is purchased if one is available.

9.1.3.2 a transcribed audio version is purchased if one is available.

9.1.3.3 all other media that will be used on the web or during instruction is captioned unless Caption.Ed can be used, see 9.1.1.

9.1.4 Any non-transcribed audio and any non-captioned video that is in use and cannot be captioned with Caption.Ed (see 9.1.1) will be updated in accordance with the implementation timeline outlined in Appendix A.

## **10 Third Party Software and Systems Accessibility**

10.1 All purchased third party software and systems must be accessible unless granted an exception under this policy. Accessible, in this context, means compatible with assistive technology. Examples of software and systems include, but are not limited to library systems, administrative management systems such as finance and human resources, and all software and software services used for student services. Software that is accessed through a web browser must also be accessible according to the Web Accessibility section of this policy.

10.2 All procurements are required to be reviewed for compliance prior to procurement and if purchased should have a compliant digital accessibility statement.

10.3 When a contract is renewed, an accessibility review of the product is required before submitting the contract to purchasing. If the product is not fully accessible any failures should be clearly outlined within the product's digital accessibility statement.

## 11 Accessibility Statements

- 11.1 All distinct websites authored by the University, all individual modules on the VLE and all purchased third party software and web-based systems must have published accessibility statement that is compliant with the guidelines laid out by the Government Digital Service (GDS) and the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO). These should be published in accordance with the implementation timeline outlined in Appendix A.
- 11.2 The accessibility statement should:
- 11.3 list any inaccessible parts of the website or app
  - 11.4 show how people with access needs can get alternatives to content that's not accessible
  - 11.5 provide details on who to contact to report accessibility issues
  - 11.6 provide information on the enforcement procedure if people are not happy with the response
  - 11.7 be published in a fully accessible form
  - 11.8 follow a consistent format

The statement will also need to be updated annually.

- 11.9 The University is responsible for authoring and publishing compliant accessibility statements for all purchased third party software and systems that do not provide their own.

## 12 Specific Requests for Access

- 12.1 Upon specific request for accessible versions or alternative formats, web pages or documents must be made accessible, or an equally effective alternative format provided, within 10 business days of receiving the request. The school or service responsible for the creation and maintenance of content on the web page is responsible for making it accessible. If the content cannot be made accessible within 10 business days, this timeframe may be extended in consultation with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) (or designee).

## Appendix A – Implementation timelines

From September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020;

- all websites must include a compliant accessibility statement.
- all existing web sites, documents and digital content must be revised to be compliant in line with WCAG 2.1
- third party websites must include a compliant accessibility statement.
- third party websites and their content must be compliant in line with WCAG 2.1

All mobile applications must be compliant in line with WCAG 2.1 by 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021.

From October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024;

- all existing web sites, documents and digital content must be revised to be compliant in line with WCAG 2.2 as required by The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- third party websites and their content must be compliant in line with WCAG 2.2.

## Appendix B

Training on digital accessibility principles and features will be offered routinely and can be signed up for in advance on the People and Organisational Development site.

On-demand training is available through the HudStudy Brightspace Module.

Request for a review of document accessibility or assistance in remediation of a document can be submitted via HudStudy or University of Huddersfield Library.

[AbilityNet](#) has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability

For additional guidance, contact Christopher Ward, Digital Accessibility Manager  
[C.Ward2@hud.ac.uk](mailto:C.Ward2@hud.ac.uk)

<b>POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS</b>	
<b>Document name:</b>	<b>Digital Accessibility Policy</b>
<b>Version Number:</b>	1.1
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	
<b>Approved by:</b>	UTLC
<b>Date Approved:</b>	2025
<b>Date for Review:</b>	2026
<b>Author:</b>	Digital Accessibility Manager
<b>Owner (if different from above):</b>	
<b>Document Location:</b>	
<b>Compliance Checks:</b>	The Digital Accessibility Steering Group regularly reviews to ensure compliance which includes reviewing institutional reports for the VLE and remedy where non-compliance is identified.
<b>Related Policies/Procedures:</b>	Audio and Video Capture Policy

<b>REVISION HISTORY</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision description/Summary of changes</b>	<b>Author</b>
V1.0	October 2020	New policy added to the Policy Framework.	Digital Skills Trainer
V1.1	December 2025	Policy updated to reflect WCAG 2.2	Digital Accessibility Manager