

Making Your Course Content Accessible

A Quick-Start Guide for New Faculty | Teaching and Learning Center

Why It Matters

Accessibility supports every student — not just those with disabilities. Clear headings help students skimming for exam prep. Captions help students in loud dorms or learning in a second language. ***West Chester University aims to have all digital course materials accessible by December 31, 2026.***

Make creating accessible content part of your workflow. Use the frameworks below to review what you have and make quick, high-impact fixes.

The 4Rs: Triage Your Existing Materials

Tip: Start with your most used materials, such as the syllabus, slide decks, and lecture videos

Review	Retire	Replace	Remediate
Audit what you already have — syllabus, slides, PDFs, video.	Remove outdated or unused material instead of fixing it.	Swap for something already accessible (OER, publisher files). Replace PDF articles with library permalinks when available.	Fix what's worth keeping

Support: Your Accessibility Toolkit

Training & Support	Resources	Accessibility Checkers	Templates
• D2L Site: Digital Accessibility Foundations • Workshops and Webinars • 1-1 Consultations with TLC	• Library Permalinks • Editing Panopto Captions • YouTube Transcript Generator • Digital Accessibility Checklist • TLC Accessibility Resource Site	• Microsoft Accessibility Checkers • YuJa Panorama • WebAim Color Contrast Checker • Adobe Acrobat Accessibility Checker	• Accessible Syllabus Templates • D2L Course Design Resources

The 7 Core Accessibility Practices

- **Heading structure:** Use properly structured heading levels (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) to organize content, so screen readers can navigate documents logically.
- **Lists:** Format lists using built-in list tools rather than manual bullets or numbers, so screen readers can announce them correctly and keyboard users can navigate efficiently.
- **Descriptive links:** Write link text that makes sense out of context — “view the syllabus,” not “click here.”
- **Tables:** Create tables with designated header rows and columns, and structure tables to be read from left to right and down, so screen readers can interpret content correctly. Avoid using tables for layout purposes.
- **Color Contrast:** Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background (at least 4.5:1 ratio for normal text), so content is readable for people with low vision or color blindness.
- **Alt text for images:** Add a short description to every meaningful image; mark purely decorative images as decorative.
- **Video/Audio:** Provide accurate captions and audio descriptions so all students can access lectures, podcasts, videos, and visual performances.