

# Accessibility Fact Sheet for Online Instructors

## Why should I make my course accessible?

Accessibility is for everyone. Although there are legal mandates requiring UMKC to make educational materials accessible (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act), accessibility is essentially just good design. Here are two examples of how accessibility benefits everyone.

### Images

Computers can read the text on a screen or document, but images and graphs are meaningless to persons without vision or to those who run their devices with the images turned off. Redundancy increases the likelihood that information will be understood by everyone. Text descriptions of graphs and charts (needed by persons without vision) can help all students understand difficult concepts.

### Captioned Video

Needed by persons who are deaf, captioning also helps students with learning disabilities by presenting text visually. It also helps clearly convey important information to all students, including those for whom English is a second language and those who watch videos in sound-sensitive environments, like offices and libraries.

## Coming 2018: Online course certification

If you were not aware, UMKC has adopted a policy that online courses and instructors be certified through a UMKC/Quality Matters review. This policy will take effect in 2018. Certification allows UMKC to meet nationally mandated accreditation standards associated with online education and also represents best practices. Accessibility standards in course design and materials (e.g., documents, slides, and video) are a part of this review. Fortunately, UMKC Online can provide support and free training opportunities for learning more about accessibility. A list of resources can be found at the end of this Fact Sheet.

## Where do I start?

It is much easier to build accessibility in to your course at the start of your workflow than to retrofit problem areas later. Documents and slides are common items that instructors can easily make accessible at the outset.

### Text Documents

- Add alt text to images and objects
- Use consistent styles in documents
- Ensure all heading styles are in the correct order and are unique

- Use hyperlink text that is meaningful
- Use simple table structure
- Specify column header information in tables
- Avoid using repeated blank characters
- Avoid image watermarks

## Presentation Slides

- Use pre-set slide templates
- Create unique heading titles
- Add alt text to images and objects
- Provide extended descriptions for charts and other graphics
- Use color contrast between text and background
- Ensure that the reading order of each slide is logical
- Limit animations and other dynamic effects

## What about videos?

There are many solutions for scripting and captioning video content. UMKC Online can help with individual or department workflow training.

### Transcripts

A textual version of the content that can be accessed by anyone, transcripts are valuable to both deaf and blind users. Deaf users can read the transcript, while blind users can digest a transcript with a refreshable braille reader or screen reader. For video, both captions and a text transcript should be provided. For audio only content, a transcript is sufficient.

### Captions

Time-synchronized text that can be read while watching a video, captions assume that the viewer is completely deaf and include all spoken content as well as non-speech elements such as sound effects and speaker identification. Captions differ from subtitles, which presume a viewer can hear, but can't understand the language.

## Helpful Resources

- [Free accessibility workshops from UMKC Online](#)
- [UMKC Online Course Certification](#)
- [Section 508 FAQ for Missouri Agencies](#)

## Where can I get more advice and information?

Visit [UMKC Online Teaching Resources for Online Instructors](#) to find out more about online course accessibility, your legal obligations, and the free resources and support options available to UMKC faculty and staff.