

Digital accessibility regulations



New accessibility regulations are in force for public sector websites, apps and online resources.

What do the regulations mean?

New regulations already in force mean that public sector websites, mobile apps and online resources need to be accessible.

Lancaster University has to meet the requirements of these regulations in relation to its websites, module resources hosted on Moodle, WordPress sites, and services provided via a web browser.

We all have a responsibility to make sure the University meets the regulations, and we may be breaking the law if our websites or apps don't.

In addition, all websites must link to an accessibility statement describing any inaccessible content, with details of how to get assistance.

Why make your content and resources accessible?

Making your websites and apps accessible to everyone is a legal requirement, and it is also the right approach to take to be inclusive.

Not only will it enable disabled students to fully engage with their studies but also make the learning experience more user-friendly for all.

However, please don't avoid using digital content and resources or innovative teaching practices that will benefit the majority for fear of disadvantaging a small number of people.

Instead, be prepared to make adjustments to help those who can't access a resource.

Guidance for web pages, documents and media

As a general rule, present digital documents and resources in PDF format as this is easier for people to open them on a variety of platforms.

If you're teaching, give students access to learning materials before a lecture or seminar where possible.

Text

This guidance applies to web pages and digital documents/resources.

Headings and body text

- Use headings styles (e.g. H1, H2, Normal/Paragraph etc.) to make it clear what are main headings, subheadings, and normal text.
- Don't present headings purely by enlarging the text or using bold.

Bullets

- Use the bullet icon to create a list (ordered or unordered).
- Don't present bullets by using hyphens or symbols.

Text formatting

- Allow white space in documents where you can, avoiding dense areas of text.
- Use sentence case for headings (i.e. use capitalisation on the first word only, unless there's also a proper noun within the heading), and avoid using all capitals which can be difficult for some people to read.
- Spell out abbreviations and acronyms in full the first time they appear, unless commonly understood (e.g. BBC).

Colour

- Use good colour contrast for text against the background it sits on.
- Don't use colour alone to convey a message as it may be difficult for someone with colour blindness to see. Colour blindness affects 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women.

Images

This guidance applies to web pages and digital documents/resources.

- Add concise 'alt text' (sometimes referred to as alternative text or description) to an image to explain what it shows. This will be read out to anyone using a screen reader.
- You only need to provide alt text for images that convey essential content (and not for those used for decoration).
- Never present text as an image, unless you also include that text in the alt text.

Links

This guidance applies to web pages and digital documents/resources.

- Create links that will make sense when read out of context (e.g. Use 'Download course handbook'; don't use 'Click here').
- Only present web addresses and URLs as links when the address is short (e.g. <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/iss/help>) and doesn't contain lots of numbers or special characters, (e.g. ampersands).

Tables

This guidance applies to web pages and digital documents/resources.

- Use tables to present data. Avoid using them for layout purposes.
- Table content should make sense when read out across each row.
- Header cells (rows and columns) should be identified using the table header style.

Video

For video content provide captions, or a transcript if captions aren't possible. These will be read out to anyone using a screen reader.

Solutions for lecture recording captions are being explored. In the meantime continue to use lecture capture as fully as possible to make lectures accessible to a wider audience.

Audio

Provide a transcript for audio content.

Scanned documents

Scanned documents are simply images unless they've been created using OCR software. Documents created using OCR software can be read by screen readers.

Use the Library's Digitisation Service to scan journal articles so that they are accessible.

Get advice at: lancaster.ac.uk/library/digitisation-service

Learn more about the accessibility regulations

We recognise that there is a lot to consider in making your websites and resources accessible, and at this point you may not fully understand some of the guidance included in this document.

So, we'd encourage you to make use of the information, guidance, and resources on the following website that's been set up to help you: lancaster.ac.uk/accessibility-regulations

The website includes:

- Deadlines for compliance
- Further guidance for making your website
- and resources accessible
- Details of training, including face-to-face sessions and access to a short online course
- How to get further support

Support and training

- Support for CMS Foundation pages, email: webmaster@lancaster.ac.uk
- Support for non-CMS websites, contact via Help Centre request form: lancaster.ac.uk/iss/helpcentre-web
- Support for Moodle content, contact via Help Centre request form: lancaster.ac.uk/iss/helpcentre-moodle
- Training:
 - Accessibility sessions and courses: lancaster.ac.uk/iss/accessibility-training
 - To request an accessibility regulations presentation for your department or team: lancaster.ac.uk/iss/training-request