Digital Accessibility

Effective: February 10, 2022
Contact: Information Technology Services (ITS)

Introduction

Iowa State University is committed to ensuring the accessibility of electronic and information technology resources used by members of the university community and general public. This commitment supports the university’s mission of teaching, research and service, and is maintained in accordance with relevant federal and state laws.

“Accessible” means that individuals with disabilities can independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same timeframe as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

Scope

- This policy applies to all electronic and information technology used by the university. This includes, but is not limited to, the contexts of teaching, learning, research, service, employment, and other official functions of the university.
- This policy applies to materials hosted or provided by the university or by third parties, whenever these materials are used in official functions of the university.

Policy statements

- In order to maintain equal opportunities for all individuals, the goal of this policy is to achieve accessibility as a proactive need, rather than a reactive response. While timely accommodation is required whenever accessibility is not achieved, an accommodation-only strategy is insufficient under this policy.
- The university will maintain processes for evaluating accessibility as part of the procurement process.

Policy compliance dates:
July 1, 2026: All new digital content produced and purchased on this date or after must be in compliance with this policy.

Timeline
July 1, 2023: Departments begin to take inventory of digital resources. All university licensed software, all university websites with .iastate domain and subdomains (e.g. it.iastate.edu), all LMS-related content (e.g. digital course materials in Canvas), all digital training materials (e.g. Learn@ISU), all university communications used to conduct official university business (e.g. emails, newsletters, social media posts, PDFs, presentations, videos, video lectures, demos, pre-recorded meetings, video conferencing platforms, software purchased with university funds, touch screen signage, digital signage.)

July 1, 2024: Departments create plan to utilize existing university resources for education and professional development related to digital accessibility.

July 1, 2025: Departments continue education efforts and work to create new digital content in compliance with this policy.

Questions: contact digitalaccess@iastate.edu
• All individuals will have access to education on the expectations, knowledge and skills related to accessibility. Information about these opportunities will be posted in the Digital Accessibility section of the Information Technology Services website and the IT Portal knowledge base.

• The Office of the Chief Information Officer in Information Technology Services (ITCIO) will oversee coordination and implementation of this policy. The ITCIO will publish and maintain technical standards for implementing IT digital accessibility, including standards for web-based and non-web technologies.

• Exceptions to the policy are permitted only when full compliance would impose an “undue burden;” when an accessible format constitutes a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program, service, or activity; or when an accessible version of the materials does not exist. In all cases, the requesting individual or unit will be required to document and obtain approval(s) for the exception. The processes for documentation and approval will be found in the Digital Accessibility section of the IT Portal knowledge base.

Standards

• The technical standards for measuring compliance with this policy will be maintained in the Digital Accessibility section of the IT Portal knowledge base.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Each faculty and staff member, trainee, student, vendor, volunteer, contractor, or other affiliate of Iowa State University who designs, develops, recommends, procures or manages electronic and information technology is subject to and has responsibilities under this policy.

2. Individuals responsible for the design, development, management and use of electronic and information technology will include accessibility in all phases of the software lifecycle.

3. All University web resources must contain an accessible link a visitor with an accessibility concern can use to contact someone responsible for the resource. The individual responsible for the resource may contact the ITCIO for guidance in resolving the accessibility concern.

Resources

1. The ITCIO will maintain a Digital Accessibility section of the Information Technology Services website and the IT Portal knowledge base. This site will include news, information, tools, and best practices, as well as links to other campus resources related to digital accessibility and services for persons with disabilities. This site will also include frequently asked questions related to this policy.

2. The ITCIO will offer training and consultation on topics related to digital accessibility.

3. The ITCIO will develop processes to periodically assess the accessibility of university websites. The results of these assessments will be shared with appropriate individuals. Site owners will be responsible for addressing issues identified within a timely manner.
Enforcement

1. Address any accessibility-related complaints to the ADA Compliance Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity.

2. As part of the complaint process, ISU resources in violation will be referred to the ISU ITCIO by the ADA Compliance Coordinator for assistance with remediation or replacement. Remediation may include removal until compliant with this policy.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually, understanding that updates or modifications may be made as the need arises.

Related Policies, References and Attachments:

This collection of Iowa State University Information Technology Services policies and procedures contain acceptable use, security, networking, administrative, and academic policies that have been developed to supplement and clarify Iowa State University policy.

- Iowa Board of Regents IT Policy
- ISU Digital Accessibility website
- ISU Information Technology Services website
- Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources
- Copyright Ownership and Management of Software
- Procurement Services
- Office of General Counsel
- Human Resources
- Student Accessibility Services
- Office of Equal Opportunity