



Title: Digital Accessibility Policy
Effective Date: February 1, 2023
Issuing Authority: Senior Vice President for Marketing Communications
Policy Contact: Assistant Vice President for Marketing Communications
478-301-2716

Purpose

Mercer University commits to providing universally accessible digital content. Electronic and information technology (EIT) is an integral part of our educational environment. As an institution, Mercer seeks to ensure equal access, inclusion and use of accessible EIT products across the University. Mercer recognizes that websites and web-based applications are often integral to the academic and administrative work of the University. This policy is designed to help procure and create EIT that complies with federal and state laws and to provide guidance for inclusion that promotes full participation by all constituents.

Scope

This policy applies to all University websites and digital assets.

Exclusions

Any Site Administrators who wish to request an exception to this requirement based on technical feasibility must submit a request for review by the Digital Accessibility Review Team (DART). The membership of DART includes the Assistant Vice President for Marketing Communications, the Director of Access and Accommodations and the Assistant Director of Digital Communications for Accessibility. Insufficient funding within an academic or administrative unit will not be an acceptable cause for exemption. If compliance with the Standard is not feasible, Site Administrators should determine alternative ways to present their content to individuals with disabilities. An Equally Effective Alternate Access Plan (EEAAP) may be required for any unit that requests an exemption.

Policy Statement

Legal Requirements and Accessibility Standards

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the 2008 Amendments, along with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, stipulate that as an institution Mercer Is to provide access to all programs, services, and activities.

- [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [Americans with Disability Act of 1990 together with its 2008 Amendments](#)

For the purposes of this policy, Mercer University will use The Worldwide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1, Level AA Conformance (WCAG 2.1 Level AA) as "the Standards."

The Path Ahead

Upon adoption of this policy, the University will acquire or create materials to train Site Administrators on creating digital content that conforms to the Standards. Once training is in place, University websites that are created or redesigned will be expected to comply before they can launch. In order to bring existing websites into compliance, all Site Administrators must pass digital accessibility training. Reviews of existing sites will be conducted according to an approved schedule. Once trained, Site Administrators will be responsible to review, modify, create and maintain accessible content on their websites. To assist them, the University will provide tools that will monitor its digital properties for compliance and will conduct auditing and usability testing to ensure that content is universally accessible.

Digital Accessibility Review Team

DART will coordinate and schedule reviews of existing websites. This schedule will be presented to the Senior Vice President for Marketing Communications and Chief of Staff for approval. Schedule priority will be determined by site traffic metrics and those websites with critical University content. The review will assess the current state of compliance with the Standards and make recommendations to Site Administrators. In cases where compliance requires modifications beyond the technical skills of Site Administrators, DART may refer them to the Digital Communications team or IT for additional support.

DART will annually review and, if needed, modify the Digital Accessibility Policy, its procedures and structure. The policy review will ensure that the University's commitment to accessibility stays current and consistent with changing standards and with the mission of the University.

Training

Anyone who creates, manages, edits or purchases digital content for the University must receive digital accessibility training. Digital accessibility training will include:

- A repeatable program that teaches the Standards.
- Training sessions and resources specific to the sets of tasks that digital content owners and authors complete in the normal course of their work at the University.
- Regularly scheduled or on-demand online sessions for Site Administrators who are newly responsible for digital content at the University.
- A method of evaluation to ensure completion of training.

Escalated Training

If an individual or unit repeatedly fails accessibility guidelines over time, they may be required to complete escalated training to address specific and/or ongoing issues causing repeated compliance failure.

Failure to pass and maintain digital accessibility training may result in the revocation of access and the deactivation of website(s) within their responsibility.

Monitoring

Digital Accessibility Coordinators (DAC) will monitor the progress of compliance and maintenance of sections of the University's websites. At least one DAC will be appointed to represent each school and administrative division. DACs serve as a point of contact for digital accessibility and can help Site Administrators find resources to support their websites, online applications and digital assets.

The University will provide tools that automatically monitor websites and provide reports to DACs and Site Administrators. These reports identify possible areas of noncompliance.