

Accessible PDFs

All PDFs shared with students should be readable and recognizable, and the text should be selectable. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) makes PDFs legible to screen readers and audio/visual assistance devices. PDFs which have *not been scanned* with OCR appear as an *image* of the text, which cannot be searched or read by assistive devices.

Most scanners have the option to create OCR'd PDFs from the original text. **If you are working with an existing PDF, there are ways to fix the document:**

- Enhance the accessibility of your document using Acrobat Pro's **Make Accessible Tool**.
 - GC staff, faculty, and graduate students can request Acrobat Pro from IT using their [request form](https://forms.gc.cuny.edu/IT_GCFormsAdobeCCStaffFacultyForm) https://forms.gc.cuny.edu/IT_GCFormsAdobeCCStaffFacultyForm
 - For more information, see the [GC Guidelines for Web Content Accessibility](#)
- You can also use the following websites to OCR already scanned PDFs:
 - [PDF24 Tools](#)
 - [Free Online PDF OCR Tool: AvePDF](#)

Instructors who add content to Blackboard can use a tool called Ally to improve accessibility of course materials. Ally generates alternative formats that enable students to download course content in a range of formats. For guidance, see "[Blackboard Ally](#)" from the [School of Professional Studies](#).

Images & Alt Text

All images shared with students that are not solely decorative should have accompanying "alternative text." "Alt text" is a short description of the image.

- Guide for [Adding Alt Text for accessibility in PowerPoint](#)
- Guide for Writing: [Alternative Text - Digital Accessibility | University of South Carolina](#)

Captioning and Transcripts for Audio & Video Materials

If you are assigning audio or video course materials, you must ensure that:

- Videos have closed captioning. Youtube has a tool that adds closed captions to uploaded videos. Be aware that auto-generated captions are 60-70% accurate, so you have to check generated captions and edit to improve accuracy.
- Students can also [use the Google Chrome browser to enable live captions](#) (English only).
- Audio files (podcasts, etc) must have accompanying transcripts. If no transcript is available, you can explore free and paid transcription services such as Rev and Otter, or play the audio file through a Zoom meeting and generate a transcription.
- More resources on captioning and audio/video see the [GC Guidelines for Web Content Accessibility](#).

Making Your Course Accessible

Quick Guide



Web Links

Audio/visual assistance devices use links to navigate through documents and pages; if the link text is unclear, readers will be unable to determine what is contained in the linked pages. Link text that contains words such as “[click here](#)” should be avoided; linked text should instead provide details about where the link leads. For example (and more information), see: [Create Accessible Links | New York State Education Department](#)

Word Documents

Audio/visual assistance devices use headings to navigate through documents. When creating or updating a Word or Google Document that will be shared with students, each section should be demarcated with heading text using the “styles” function of the word processing program (and not just bolded fonts of different sizes).

Syllabus Accessibility Statement

Sample Language for Syllabi

Making sure that this class is fully inclusive and accessible to every student is an absolute priority. If you require OR DESIRE any accommodation to facilitate your participation, please feel encouraged to let me know. It is the policy of CUNY and the GC to grant accommodations for any student with a disability. Please get in touch with [Student Disability Services](#) or call 212-817-7400 as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

Further Information: [Check Your Syllabus 101: Disability Access Statements](#)

GC Resources

The Graduate Center provides readers/library assistants, sign-language interpreters, notetakers, scribes, assistive technology, and other auxiliary aids and services as needed. Contact Clare Wilson (CWilson1@gc.cuny.edu) in the Office of Student Affairs to request accommodations or with questions about Graduate Center facilities, auxiliary aids, and services available to students with disabilities.

For more information, see:

[Student Disability Services | CUNY Graduate Center](#)

[Planning Accessible Events | CUNY GC](#)

[Better Practices for Accessibility | CUNY Graduate Center](#)

[Faculty Resources | CUNY Graduate Center](#)

[Distance Learning & Disability Services | CUNY GC](#)

[Making Your Course Accessible on the Commons](#)

[Web Content Accessibility | CUNY Graduate Center](#)

