

Tips for Designing E-Courses to Meet Section 508 Requirements

This document contains a brief list of tips for developing e-course materials that will meet many the requirements of Section 508. These lists are not exhaustive but can be used as starting points for developing curriculum and learning activities that will be accessible to the broadest range of NIC constituents.

In general, you will want to design materials that present information in multiple formats and that do not rely on the use of a singular ability for completing tasks. The lists below are derived from information culled from various sources and may grow or change with advances in technology and online instruction.

Visual

- Don't rely only on color to convey information. Provide textual cues as well.
- Use larger size visuals for easy viewing.
- When using a diagram, provide meaningful descriptive text that explains the information you want students to learn from the image.
- When using a graphic, provide meaningful descriptive text that explains what is happening in the graphic.

Video

- Provide closed captioning for all video.

Audio

- Provide transcripts for all audio/podcast material.

Tactile

- If an activity is designed so that a student must use a mouse, the student must also be able to complete the activity in an alternate way. For examples, an activity that requires click-and-drag use of the mouse to sequence images on the screen could also be designed to be completed by typing letters corresponding to the images in the appropriate sequence.

Links

- Words that are hyperlinked should be underlined as well as highlighted with color or boldface type.
- Graphics that are hyperlinked should include both descriptive text and information that tells students where the graphical link will take them to. For example, if you use a picture of webpage to indicate a link to that webpage, include alt text for the image and a caption to the graphic that says “Click to view webpage” or something similar.

Assessments

- If students will be completing an exercise that gives them limited time to respond, provide students with the option to extend time as needed to complete the activity.
- Material presented in tabular form should have table row and column headers to ensure logical tab-through sequence.