



## Virtual Learning Must Be Accessible

*“Inaccessible web content means that people with disabilities are denied equal access to information. An inaccessible website can exclude people just as much as steps at an entrance to a physical location.”*

—US Department of Justice,  
Civil Rights Division<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2022, March 18). *Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA*. [www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/](http://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/)

# Web and Mobile App Accessibility at Colleges and Universities

Both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that postsecondary educational institutions be accessible. With careful planning and by following best practices—such as using the [Title II information](#) on the ADA.gov website and following the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG)—schools can help all students succeed.

## What does the law require?

- Under the ADA’s Title II and Title III, public and private universities (except for religious-controlled universities) must ensure equally effective communication and equal access and opportunity for all students.
- Under the ADA’s Title II, public colleges and universities must follow the web and mobile accessibility regulations. While the Department of Justice has not published official web accessibility standards for Title III, best practice for private colleges and universities points toward WCAG 2.1 Level AA.
- The Rehabilitation Act’s Section 504 covers recipients of federal funding who must provide effective communication.

## WCAG 2.1 goals for a website:

- *Perceivable*: Can a person with a disability understand and recognize the website content and interface while using assistive technology?
- *Operable*: Can a person with a disability navigate and interact with the site?
- *Understandable*: Can a person with a disability understand and interpret the website’s content?
- *Robust*: Are accessible features consistent across different technologies?

## Tips for administrators:

- Determine a web accessibility policy and point of contact.
- Set accessibility benchmarks, and conduct ongoing accessibility testing.
- Train staff about new policies and digital accessibility, including accessible documents.
- Budget for digital accessibility costs.



Read the published rule: [Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities](#) (PDF)

Learn more about the ADA: [www.NortheastADA.org](http://www.NortheastADA.org) | 1.800.949.4232 | [NortheastADA@Cornell.edu](mailto:NortheastADA@Cornell.edu)

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