



Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 10.25: Accessibility in Electronic Information, Communication, and Technology Resources

DATE: August 30, 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish minimum requirements for the accessibility of Electronic Information, Communication, and Technology (EICT) resources necessary to meet Angelo State University's goals and ensure compliance with Section 504 and Section 508 of the American Rehabilitation Act and Texas Administrative Code accessibility requirements (specifically 1 TAC §206 and 1 TAC §213).

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in August of even-numbered years by the provost and vice president for academic affairs, vice president for student affairs and enrollment management, and chief information officer, in consultation with Information Technology, Student Disability Services and the Office of Communications and Marketing and with recommended revisions forwarded through the Office of the Provost to the president by September 15 of the same year.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Authority

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require federal agencies to make their Electronic Information, Communication, and Technology (EICT) resources accessible to people with disabilities. The law ([29 U.S.C § 794 \(d\)](#)) applies to all federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under Section 508, agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information comparable to the access available to others. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive federal financial assistance, including ASU.

The [U.S. Access Board](#) is responsible for developing EICT accessibility standards to incorporate into regulations that govern federal procurement practices. On January 18, 2017, the Access Board issued a final rule that updated accessibility requirements covered by Section 508. The final rule went into effect on January 18, 2018.

The rule updated and reorganized the Section 508 standards in response to market trends and innovations in technology. The refresh also synchronized these requirements with other guidelines and standards both in the United States and abroad, including standards issued by the European Commission, and with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG 2.0\)](#), a globally recognized voluntary consensus standard for web content and EICT.

2. Definition of Disability

A person with a disability is defined as an individual who has or is regarded as having any mental or physical condition that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activities, such as performing normal tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

"To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment." (www.ada.gov)

This includes, but is not limited to, such disabling conditions as visual impairments, psychological/emotional disabilities, speech and/or hearing impairments, mobility impairments or learning disabilities.

3. Differentiating Between Accommodations and Accessibility

- a. Accommodation is not the same as accessibility. [Section 504](#) includes provisions for individuals with disabilities to participate in programs and services with the use of auxiliary aids, where necessary. These aids are commonly referred to as accommodations. On the other hand, [Section 508](#) requires that people with disabilities have comparable access to and use of EICT — a subtle but meaningful distinction.

An accommodation is:

- Provided based on specific needs of a student or employee with a documented disability
- Determined by an accommodations officer, such as the Director of Student Disabilities Services, on a case-by-case basis
- Provided for students and employees whose needs require great intervention, such as live American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or lecture transcripts for live courses
- For circumstances that are difficult to anticipate and prepare for

Accessibility is:

- The responsibility of all who create or publish digital content
- Provided for all users, with no expectation of an explanation of need
- Expected for disabilities that are easily anticipated

Accessibility is the baseline of equal service, and accommodation is the second step when accessibility alone is not enough.

4. Electronic Information, Communication and Technology Resources

- a. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Angelo State University is committed to ensuring all EICT resources are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. No qualified individual with a disability will be denied participation in, and/or the benefits of EICT at Angelo State University.

EICT includes, but is not limited to, information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the creation, conversion, duplication, or delivery of data or information. Additional details on this term along with definitions of other technical policy terms are available in the [information technology glossary](#).

ASU will meet the standards and guidelines outlined in the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0 Level AA](#) for all Web-based EICT, as referenced in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Further, the institution will follow the [Guidance on Applying WCAG 2.0 to Non-Web Information and Communications Technologies \(WCAG2ICT\)](#), particularly for non-web documents and software.

This policy specifies the means by which ASU ensures compliance with Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If a future federal or state law applicable to ASU provides greater protections to persons with disabilities than WCAG 2.0 Level AA, this policy will be interpreted as requiring compliance with the provisions set forth in the law.

Specific applications of this policy are as follows:

Electronic Content Available to the Public

ASU will ensure that all electronic content that is made available to the public on or after January 18, 2018, such as web pages, blogs and social media, conforms to the Section 508 accessibility standards.

Electronic Content Used for Official Agency Communications

ASU will ensure that electronic content used for official agency communications on or after January 18, 2018, including such content posted to RamPort, conforms to the applicable Section 508 accessibility standards.

This requirement applies to all types of official agency communications including, but not limited to, the information provided within the glossary. This also includes course content provided within the ASU Learning Management System (LMS). For further information on the types of communications, please refer to the glossary within the ASU [Web Accessibility](#) page.

5. Responsibilities

All ASU employees, regardless of role, must adhere to accessibility guidelines as aligned with their position. By supporting EICT accessibility, ASU helps ensure that a broad

population is able to access, benefit from, and contribute to its electronic programs and services. In addition, the following roles and responsibilities are specifically outlined:

- (1) The **Office of Student Disability Services** is responsible for working with students (see [OP 10.24 Establishing Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)) through an interactive process to determine reasonable accommodation and coordinating the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids, services, and adjustments. The Office of Student Disability Services is also responsible for generating notification letters when reasonable requests are made by qualified students, serving in a liaison capacity to address disability-related barriers, and providing awareness-building opportunities and technical assistance for members of the ASU community. The **director of student disability services/ADA campus coordinator** consults with students and coordinates with the campus community on reasonable accommodations and other disability-related matters. The director of student disability services chairs the ADA Committee on Accessibility of Facilities and Services, which provides recommendations regarding ASU's services, policies, and practices to provide accessible facilities and services to disabled persons on the ASU campus as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Law 101-336).
- (2) **IT accessibility coordinator** is responsible for facilitating institution-wide IT accessibility compliance and practices in support of accessibility policies.
- (3) The **Office of Human Resources - ADA Coordinator for Employees** is responsible for consulting with applicants, employees (faculty, staff, or student), and supervisors on reasonable accommodations in the workplace and other disability-related matters.
- (4) The **Texas Tech University System Office of Equal Opportunity** is responsible for consulting with individuals who have complaints of noncompliance with ASU disability policies and/or state and federal disability laws and investigates disability-related complaints of discrimination and harassment involving employees.
- (5) The **Office of Communications and Marketing** is responsible for establishing electronic communication standards for official and general business of ASU for public consumption, such as the ASU website, ASU social media channels, and blogs, per [OP 24.03 Electronic Communication Policy](#).
- (6) **All ASU departments, organizations, and affiliated entities** will provide contact information for individuals who wish to make an accommodation request. Note that assistance and instructions about how to make an accommodation request are available from either The Office of Student Disability Services or the IT accessibility coordinator, depending on the type and nature of the offering.
- (7) **Faculty in teaching roles** are responsible for responding to requests for accommodation and working with The Office of Student Disability Services. Additionally, all faculty, whether they teach face-to-face, online, or a combination of both, are required to meet state and federal requirements for ensuring accessibility of all course offerings. All courses must be accessible regardless of whether a student with disabilities is currently enrolled. Universal Design for

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Learning (UDL) is a framework to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and challenging for all.

- (8) **Students who need accommodation** should reference the supporting pages detailed within the [Office of Student Disability Services](#) website for full process descriptions. Students are responsible for making reasonable requests in a timely manner and also for communicating with The Office of Student Disability Services if there are questions or concerns related to the implementation of specific adjustments.
- (9) **Technical Assistance and Training** to comply with state and federal requirements is available to employees (faculty and staff). The [ASU instructional designers \(IDs\)](#) and the [eLearning Center](#) provide support for faculty and others producing educational content. [Web Services](#) and [Communication and Marketing](#) provide support for public websites.

6. Complaints

[OP 16.04 Access for Individuals with Disabilities](#) outlines the following complaint process:

- (1) Applicants, employees (faculty, staff, or student), or members of the public who have concerns about violations of this policy or who wish to file a complaint of discrimination or harassment based on a disability should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity or file a complaint pursuant to OP 16.02 Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure for Violations of Employment and Other Laws.
- (2) Students who have a concern about violations of this policy or who wish to file a complaint related to their academic program should contact Student Disability Services at 325-942-2047.

7. Recommended Assessment Procedures

All Web applications and sites at ASU must meet the statutory requirements in Texas Administrative Code 206.70 Accessibility Standards (TAC 206.70), which references the U.S. Section 508 standards. These statutes require all Web applications and sites to comply with the TAC 206.70 standards. TAC 206.70 establishes only a minimum standard for accessibility; developers are encouraged to go beyond this minimum whenever possible.

Attachments:

[Open Education Resources](#)

[Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#)

[Universal Design for Learning](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Overview](#)