

## UTILIZING INCLUSIVE COURSE DESIGN AND PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING IN THE CREATION AND DELIVERY OF ONLINE CONTENT

This brief resource guide is intended to highlight some of the ways in which faculty, instructional staff, and others who are engaged in the creation and delivery of online content may utilize [inclusive course design](#), including principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#), for their academic courses, professional development trainings, webinars, and events. By utilizing the below resources, among others, you can help create a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable learning environment.

### Inclusive Online Content Creation

[Harvard's Digital Accessibility Services](#) provides [resources and training](#) for faculty and staff on how to create documents and websites that are accessible to screen readers and other assistive technologies. The Digital Accessibility Services team is also available for consultation during their [office hours](#).

In addition to these resources and trainings, immediately below you will find a few concepts that may be applied to a variety of document formats, including presentation slides, handouts, email, etc. to create more inclusive content.

#### Color Contrast

- Use high contrast - a dark-colored font on a light-colored background is most effective
- Avoid red-green or yellow-blue combinations as contrasting colors
- Avoid using color or fonts to convey meaning
- The contrast of icons and graphic objects is just as important as that of text; use sufficient contrast for all elements on the screen

#### Formatting

- Use simple [fonts that are easy to read](#)
- Use built-in layouts and styles to create headings and document structure
- Only underline text that is hyperlinked
- Use large, bold fonts on uncluttered pages with plain backgrounds
- Ensure that text is searchable for words and phrases

#### Tables

- Identify column headers and labels
- Use clear, consistent layouts and organization schemes for presenting content
- Keep tables simple and avoid merging and splitting cells
- Utilize the color contrast concepts as outlined above
- Support tables with descriptive text
- Learn more about [How to Create Accessible Tables in Microsoft Word](#)

#### Bullets and Numbering

- Use the built-in bullet and numbering tools
- Select the closed bullet symbol for a bulleted list; it will be read as "bullet" by a screen reader before the text to indicate that it is a list entry (other symbols, including Roman numerals, may not be read correctly)

#### Links

- Use a descriptive link text (e.g., [Harvard University Disability Resources](#) rather than <http://www.accessibility.harvard.edu> )
- Avoid ambiguous link text such as "click here" or "read more"; avoid pasting long URLs

- Learn more about [How to create or edit a hyperlink in an MS Office Document](#)

#### **Alternate Text**

- Include alternative text (alt text) for images and graphics
- Learn more about [How to add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#) and How to provide [concise text descriptions](#) of content presented within images

#### **Inclusive Content Delivery**

The following concepts regarding content delivery may also be applied to help create a more inclusive remote learning environment.

#### **Lecture Recordings and Videos**

If you are recording your lectures or trainings for remote delivery, consider making a variety of other formats available in addition to the recording (e.g., PPT slides, separate audio files, transcripts, and/or lecture notes). This provides learners with flexibility to access content asynchronously and synchronously.

There are a [variety of options available for recording your presentations](#); your school or unit may also have guidelines for supported presentation formats.

[Harvard's Digital Accessibility captioning resources](#) provide detailed guidance for creating captions (and transcripts) for recorded lectures, trainings, and videos. If you decide to outsource your captioning, information on exploring and hiring captioning vendors can be found on the [HUIT Online Accessibility website](#).

Note that videos automatically captioned by YouTube, Kaltura, Panopto, or AI-assisted apps like Otter may need to be edited for accuracy. Learn more about how to edit auto-captions in [Kaltura](#) or [Panopto](#) and [create accessible narrated PPT presentations for online content delivery](#).

#### **Websites**

Harvard University is committed to making its public-facing websites and web-based applications accessible. Read the [Harvard University Digital Accessibility Policy](#), adopted on April 30, 2019. Digital accessibility resources and guidance are available on the [Digital Accessibility site, and for content creators, specifically](#). Harvard also has an [Accessible Technology Procurement and Development Policy](#) to guide the purchase and development of accessible technology applications and products.

Further support for user-centered design, digital accessibility, and testing is available through the [User Research Center \(URC\)](#) at Harvard Library.

#### **Additional Harvard Resources to Explore**

##### [Center for Workplace Development](#)

Various course offerings (search terms: accessibility, disability, inclusion, diversity, teaching)

The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

[Teaching Remotely](#)

Harvard Graduate School of Education

[Education Now](#)

[What Makes an Excellent Online Educator](#)

Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning  
[Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching](#)  
[Teach Remotely](#)  
[Learn Remotely](#)  
[Work Remotely](#)  
[Socialize Remotely](#)  
[University Disability Resources](#)  
[Student Disability/Accessibility Coordinators](#)