



Creating Inclusive Courses

eLearning Accessibility Course Audit

The course audit is designed around a rubric and checklist based on WCAG 2.0 AA standards.

From the start of online courses and programs, learners with varying abilities have found that an online delivery mode provides opportunities for furthering their education without many of the challenges experienced from attending a physical location. While physical barriers may be less with eLearning courses, a new set of digital barriers were created. These range from communication barriers, such as a lack of closed captioning or descriptive tagging, to proper formatting of documents so that assistive devices can correctly read the document.

When providing an inclusive learning environment, pedagogical considerations need to also be taken into consideration examining the what, how and why of learning. With the organic development of eLearning courses over the years, accessibility considerations have not been given the priority focus but the need to is now changing. Institutions across higher education are seeing an increasing emphasis on the expectations established in accessibility laws and rulings that have been handed down by the Department of Justice and Office of Civil rights.

To help institutions meet these increased expectations, Blackboard provides specialized consulting services to assist institutions in understanding limitations in coursework and across the student experience that affect students with disabilities. This service is designed to assist professors, instructional designers and staff that create and build eLearning courses.

This solution results in a comprehensive accessibility audit of eLearning courses identifying areas that prevent a barrier-free learning environment for individuals with disabilities. The plan includes:

- An individualized course accessibility gap report providing the identified gaps as well as areas of strengths along with recommended remediation approaches.
- An institutional report identifying overall areas of strengths and possible areas of focus during faculty and staff development.

The solution provides the results of a comprehensive accessibility audit to the institution's eLearning courses by applying a rubric and checklist based on WCAG 2.0 AA standards. This audit examines documents, images, multimedia and pedagogical approaches for accessibility barriers to eLearning students with varying abilities.

The findings and recommendations are not a substitute for legal counsel.