How do I make my Blackboard module accessible (staff)?

Blackboard is a web-based application that requires a web browser to access it and is designed by default to be [accessible](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Administrator/Hosting/Accessibility).

By making your Blackboard content accessible at the point of creation it makes it easier for all learners to access it. Following the introduction of [Accessibility Legislation 2018](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/952/introduction/made), staff members should follow the guidance below to make their content accessible.

# Creating Content using Blackboard Content Editor

We recommend using the Blackboard Content Editor where possible:



The following table demonstrates a best practice for developing web content in Blackboard.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Use | What do I need to do? | Why? |
| Text | Avoid large blocks of italic text. | This can appear 'wobbly' to some individuals and therefore difficult to read. |
| This can appear 'wobbly' to some individuals and therefore difficult to read. | Users will be able to alter font size in their browser. |
| Avoid moving, blinking and auto-refreshing text. | Low-vision users find these hard to deal with. Flickering screens can promote epileptic attacks. Students with dyslexia, low vision and screen reader users may find these difficult to read. |
| Avoid using large blocks of capitalisation.  | Some users find this difficult to read. |
| Images | If an image is essential, insert meaningful textual description. | It's important to use both images and text, but it is better not to use images of text. Use text with a style applied to it rather than an image containing text. Screen readers will pick up the ALT text of the image, this text should convey what is important or the purpose of the image. |
| Take care with animated images. | Users of screen magnification software may find difficulty in reading images if the information is moving around. |
| Underlining | Don't underline large blocks of text. | Underlining represents hyper-linked text. Large blocks of underlining can be confusing for users of screen reader software. |
| Headings | Use headings appropriately. Preferably via the Blackboard Content Editor. | Appropriately written headings will make navigation easier. You can use the Blackboard Content Editor for this. It's good to use HTML header tags, for example H1, H2, H3, and to construct the document like an outline - the more structured the page is, the easier it is to read. It is important that these tags are used in the correct order (i.e. H1 before H2). |
| Links | Avoid using more than 10 links on an individual page. | For the visually impaired user, the process of scanning links is linear and therefore slow. The use of too many links on a page can be very frustrating for the user. |
| Don't use 'click here' for a link. | This can be confusing for screen readers. Instead use a description like: 'go to Blackboard'. |
| Course Menu | Don't amend the Departmental Course Menu on your module | The course menu has been purposefully created so it is as accessible as possible. Using textured backgrounds or changing the colour of the menu items can impact on colour contrast. |

# Creating accessible materials or other content in Blackboard

Documents and other content can be uploaded into Blackboard. The Accessibility legislation also includes documents that you make available in Blackboard as well as the

The following table demonstrates a best practice for uploading web content into Blackboard.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Upload | Accessibility Issues  | Solutions |
| Images | Screen readers cannot describe images without alternative text | Provide a textual representation of the image for people accessing the page in a non-graphic way (e.g. text only, or speech). This can be done by adding an alternative text attribute or ALT text. This text should convey what is important or the purpose of the image. |
| Graphs/ Charts | Some screen readers are unable to read them. | Provide a textual representation of the graph or chart so that it is meaningful and logical to students. |
| Tables | Screen readers are only able to read simple tables. Do not use tables unnecessarily. | Keep all tables simple and make line-by-line reading meaningful. Screen readers will read from the top left cell of the table to the bottom right cell. |
| PDF documents (Adobe Acrobat) | Some screen readers are not able to read PDF files. We recommend using Word so text size can be manipulated.  | Always ensure that HTML texts are also available and provide a link to download the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> |
| PowerPoint Presentations | PowerPoint files will be inaccessible to users of screen readers. | Provide alternative transcripts where possible. Make use of the notes field in PowerPoint.  |
| Multimedia | Screen readers will not be able to read multimedia files. | Screen readers will not be able to read multimedia files. |

# Ensuring Content is Accessible

Whilst the Blackboard interface is accessible, any content uploaded needs to be created as accessible as possible. For a checklist and further information see guidance on [Creating Accessible Learning materials.](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/accessibility/guidance-staff/#guidance-on-creating-accessible-learning-materials)

# For more information

* [University Digital Accessibility Information](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/accessibility/)
* [World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Information](http://www.w3.org/WAI/)
* [Blackboard Required Minimum Presence](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/informationservices/e-learning/Blackboard-Required-Minimum-Presence-%281%29.docx)
* Blackboard's [Accessibility Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.blackboard.com/Teaching-Learning/Learn-Resources/Accessibility.aspx)

If you need any further advice on accessibility, please contact the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit.