

In addition to technical accessibility, Universal **Design for Learning** is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences. Through funding from the U.S. Department of Education, UDL-Universe (<http://www.udluniverse.com/>) was developed to serve as a one-stop portal for UDL and faculty development resources.

## Tips and Best Practices

- When choosing electronic resources for your class, such as ebooks or courseware, ask how their product complies with accessibility legislation.
- Visit and become familiar with the **Disability Services at UNT Dallas** website, <http://www.untdallas.edu/disability>
- Visit their section on **Accessibility** (<http://www.untdallas.edu/disability/access>), to learn how adaptive technologies might be used to access your course materials.
- Include information about students' rights and responsibilities in your syllabus and be aware of the rights and responsibilities of students with accommodation requests. New students may not be aware of these requirements and will need to register with Disability Services to receive academic accommodations.

For additional information contact the **Disability Services Office** by phone at 972-338-1777; by email at [UNTDDisability@untdallas.edu](mailto:UNTDDisability@untdallas.edu) or at Building 2, room 204.



## Important

Instructors should be familiar with the Americans with "Disability Act", Section 504 and Section 508 requirements and use resources to avoid violations and be in compliance. The **Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies** can assist and guide instructors with the creation of accessible online courses and material for the online environment.

## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

### Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technologies

Web: <http://www.untdallas.edu/dlit>

Phone: 972-338-5580

Email: [UNTDDistance@unt.edu](mailto:UNTDDistance@unt.edu)



## Accessibility in Online Learning Environments

Federal legislation, like the American Disabilities Act, Section 504 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, outlines the requirements for federal agencies to accommodate people of all abilities. For faculty, it is important to understand how these civil rights laws affect higher education and impact university services. At the course level, these laws can affect how content is delivered in the traditional, hybrid or online class.



## Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination of people with disabilities when attending any organization or institution that receives federal funding. This means that students of all abilities have an equal right to attend classes or programs that are physically or electronically offered on campus.

# ACCESSIBILITY

## Section 508

Section 508 is the portion of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that addresses the need for Federal Agencies, like the University of North Texas at Dallas, to make electronic information accessible to people with disabilities. Section 508 most often applies to web accessibility, but also includes web services offered by the university such as course management systems or electronic library resources.

## American Disabilities Act (ADA)

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that U.S. programs and services be accessible to individuals with disabilities. There are a total of 11 laws that protect persons with disabilities. A 1996 Department of Justice ruling makes it clear that ADA accessibility requirements apply to Internet resources. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has 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. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered.

**Section 508 addresses the accessibility of all course materials and media elements and applies to the design and development of online learning environments.**

**All distance education courses offered by UNT Dallas are required to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and all university web sites should also be in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.**

## Checklist for E-Learning Accessibility

This Quick Accessibility Checklist is meant to help faculty and staff who want to develop or modify Web-based course material, lectures, and assignments in an accessible way.

1. Instructions for my course use plain understandable language.
2. My documents and pages within Blackboard have simple, consistent formats.
3. My documents and pages within Blackboard contain enough contrast between font and background colors.
4. My documents contain actual text, not scanned or copied images of text.
5. All pictures, charts, and graphs that contain information or data within my course and course documents have alternate text or a text description that conveys the same information.
6. Text formatting (shape, color, and styling) cannot be the only way to convey information. Example: If the incorrect answer is colored red, you must add an identifier - "This answer is incorrect".
7. All audio-only content I have provided within my course, course documents, or linked to

outside of my course has a transcript available.

8. All video-only content I have provided and/or linked to within my course and course documents has a transcript available that describes the important visual content in the video.

9. All audio-video content I have provided and/or linked to within my course and course documents contain synchronized captions.

10. The links within my course and documents use descriptive text (Instead of "click here" use the name of the resource you are linking to).

11. All textual information within my PowerPoint slides appears in the proper order on the "Outline" view of the slides.

12. The websites that I have linked to and required my students to use follow all appropriate guidelines above.

13. My course syllabus contains the information about the required textbook(s), UNT Dallas' Disability Statement, as well as the current information on the location and contact information for the Office of Disability Services.

