PURCHASE

LEARNING

MATERIALS

ACCESSIBLE

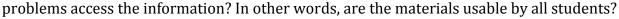


Guidance for Purchasers

In purchasing learning materials, there are many factors that must be considered. One of

the most important points, but sometimes underconsidered, is accessibility. Generally, materials are considered accessible if *all* students, despite knowledge, skills, and abilities, are able to use them successfully. Of course, determining if materials will be effective for all students quickly becomes complicated.

Can a student who is blind or visually impaired access the materials? Can a student who has a physical disability use the materials? Can a student who has decoding and/or comprehension



Steps you can take:

Below are 3 steps you can take to help ensure you are purchasing accessible learning materials.

1. Check your current purchasing policies and practices to see if accessibility is addressed. Does your policy—

- Establish accessibility criteria for review that all materials are required to meet (*see step 2*)?
- Require vendors to provide accessible digital materials that meet specific access requirements to the maximum extent possible (*see step 2*)?
- Bring special education and assistive technology professionals into discussions about instructional materials purchases and adoptions?

2. Require that all materials purchased from publishers/developers be aligned with the following—

- Relevant accessibility standards
 - o Section 508 (or Section 508 Refresh once approved)
 - o WCAG 2.0 (minimum level AA compliance)
- Indicators of accessibility
 - Device-agnostic file formats (e.g., accessible HTML, Microsoft Word, PDF, EPUB, etc.)
 - o Content represented in multiple ways (e.g., video captions, alt text, live text for audio, digital braille, etc.)
 - o Compatibility with screenreader, refreshable braille, text-to-speech, and human-voice reading software

- Compatibility with assistive technology (AT)
- Text image descriptions that can be voiced
- Navigation alternatives (e.g., keyboard shortcuts/mapping or screen gestures, etc.)
- o Location supports such as page numbers and/or progress bars
- o Mathematical, scientific, and music symbols, formulas, and notations represented in multiple ways (e.g., explained with text alternatives, MathML)
- o If writing is required, keyboard entry is supported by alternatives (e.g., word prediction, on-screen keyboards, voice input, etc.)
- Digital rights management (DRM) must not prevent access to built-in accessibility features or necessary assistive technologies
- o e-book content can be voiced and navigated with appropriate delivery systems (e.g., iBooks, EPUB, etc.)

3. If you are entering into contracts, include language about accessibility. For example—

Vendor represents that the materials delivered under this contract or purchase order [hereinafter "the materials"] conform to, at a minimum, the standards for accessibility as set forth in—

- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794d), and its implementing regulations (36 C.F.R. § 1194), or
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (minimum Level AA conformance).

If any portion of the materials does not conform to the aforementioned standards of accessibility, vendor agrees to provide a written explanation of the reason for non-conformance.

Vendor further agrees to provide a written description of compatibility of the materials with commonly used assistive technology products (e.g., JAWS, Window Eyes, ZoomText, MAGic, Dragon Naturally Speaking) and a description of the process used to evaluate such compatibility.

If the materials include textbooks or related core instructional materials, vendor agrees to prepare and submit a NIMAS fileset to the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC).

What if no accessibility information is made available?

It is expected that accessibility information be readily available from publishers/developers and that their representatives are aware of and can explain it. When this is not the case—

- Specifically request information regarding compliance with accessibility standards
 - For example, ask the publisher/developer to complete WebAIM's <u>WCAG</u> <u>Checklist</u> or <u>Section 508 Checklist</u>
- Ask publishers/developers if they produce a similar, but accessible, product
- Examine previous evaluation work from others, such as—:
 - o http://aim.cast.org/learn/e-resources/accessibility resources
 - o http://wac.osu.edu/ebook-access-overview/#funct
 - o http://www.web2access.org.uk/
 - o http://diagramcenter.org/index.php
 - o http://webaim.org/
- Consider other materials for purchase

For more information about the PALM Initiative please visit http://aim.cast.org/learn/practice/palm.