Web Accessibility Policy

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Subject: **Enterprise Information Technology**

Policy: **Web Accessibility**

Effective Date: **March 1, 2019**

Revised: **September 12, 2023**

Review Date: **September 2026**

Responsible Parties: **Web and Digital Communications; University Communications; Legal Counsel**

Applicability: **This policy applies to Montana State University Bozeman**

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The university is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational and working environment for people of all abilities and ensuring equal access to information and services for all its constituencies. Web communications are one of the ways the university communicates and conducts business with the campus community, potential students, and the public.

This policy clarifies the requirements for web pages and web content to assure individuals with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to participate in the university's programs and activities offered through the university's website. Creating and maintaining accessible web pages and web content is the responsibility of all university administrators, faculty, and staff.

This policy establishes the accessibility requirements for university-affiliated web pages and web content published, hosted, or otherwise provided by university employees, departments, colleges, or other units of the university beginning March 1, 2019.

2. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

a. "*Web pages and web content*" means any content published, hosted, or otherwise provided by university employees, departments, colleges, or other
      units of the university in connection with university-related programs and activities which is

made available to the public without need for
  authentication or other login requirements.

b. "*Content developers*" means persons responsible for the creation, review, or update of a web page or other web content published, hosted, or
  otherwise provided by the university, university employees, and individual departments.

3. Use of University Content Management System (CMS) Required

Effective March 1, 2019, all new web pages and web content published, hosted, or otherwise provided by the university employees, departments, colleges, or other units of the university must be published in the CMS offered by the university. Official branded templates will be made available by university communcation on the montana.edu web domain and the use of these templates is required. The web and digital communcation and/or the vice president of university communication may approve an exception to these requirements in advance. The CMS tools for accessibility provide a consistent platform for guiding university compliance with this policy.

Exceptions will be granted only if there are compelling and justifiable reasons for not using the CMS and/or the montana.edu web domain, the sponsoring unit establishes a written plan for keeping the web content current, in compliance with this policy, and maintaining continuity in case of employee turnover.

4. Accessibility Requirements

Web pages and content:

Effective March 1, 2019, all new or revised web pages and web content published, hosted, or otherwise provided by the university, university employees, and individual departments must be accessible to persons with disabilities. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, Level AA (WCAG Level AA) and the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0, set forth the accepted guidelines for accessibility for most content on websites. Standards comparable to WCAG Level AA and WAI-ARIA may also be used, if appropriate.

Multimedia Content (e.g, videos):

Effective May 30, 2021, any multimedia content published, hosted, or otherwise provided by the university on webpages must be captioned using one of the university's approved captioning processes. For more information on captioning, see the captioning guidance provided by Web and Digital Communications.

Exceptions:

If compliance would impose a fundamental alteration of the program or undue financial or administrative burden, exceptions to this policy may be granted by Web and Digital Communications, in consultation with Office of Legal Counsel and the Vice President of University Communications. Requests for such exceptions must be made in writing and must provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for seeking an exception. If an exception is

granted, the university will provide equally effective alternative access that will ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in the programs and activities as their nondisabled peers.

5. Existing Content

Content developers must revise existing web pages and web content which are maintained by university, university employees, and individual departments to meet the accessibility requirements of this policy.

Any edit, update, or revision of existing web pages and web content will require the content developer to revise the entire web page and web content so that it meets the accessibility standards of this policy before the edit, update, or modification is published.

If Web and Digital Communications, or any user, identifies inaccessible content on a web page, the content developer and the web content sponsor of the web site will make the content accessible as required under this policy in an expedient manner.

6. Responsibilities

Web and Digital Communications:

The Web and Digital Communications unit will be responsible for maintaining the accessibility tools in the CMS. The unit will also serve as a resource for content developers and those approved to publish in the CMS. The Web and Digital Communications unit will coordinate the delivery of website accessibility training for university employees.

Content Developers:

The content developer is responsible for assuring that any new or revised web page or content that is published in the CMS meets the accessibility requirements established by this policy at the time of publication and that all web pages and web content they are responsible for maintaining meet the accessibility requirements of this policy.

7. Training

Content developers must complete training as required by the Web and Digital Communications unit to be approved for initial and continuing access to the CMS.

8. Quality Assurance Procedures

The Web and Digital Communications unit will develop web accessibility evaluation tool(s) for content developers. Each content developer will be responsible to use the tool to provide feedback about the accessibility of any content published.

The Web and Digital Communications unit will establish procedures for the regular monitoring of existing, new, and revised university web pages and content to identify any areas of

noncompliance with this policy. The Web and Digital Communications unit will have authority to take any actions necessary to direct content developers and web content sponsors to maintain compliance with this policy, including removal of non-complying content.