University Policy 8140

Information Technology Accessibility

Effective Date

February 2017

Last Revision Date

September 2019

Responsible Party

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, (208) 426-1202
Chief Compliance Officer, (208) 426-1417
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, (208) 426-1200

Scope and Audience

This policy applies to Informational Technologies employed by all Boise State units and departments, including departmental websites hosted by non-Boise State servers, applications, and other technologies employed to store, convey, or otherwise host information and communications accessible to the general public.

Additional Authority

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as Amended
- Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- University Policy 1075 (Non-Discrimination On the Basis of Disability)

1. Policy Purpose

To ensure the University Information Technology (IT) environment is Accessible to all, and in particular to people with disabilities.

2. Policy Statement

The University is committed to supporting an Information Technology (IT) environment that is accessible to all, and in particular to people with disabilities. The University seeks to deploy Information Technology that is designed, developed, or procured with accessibility in mind. An Accessible IT environment generally enhances Usability for everyone, and in particular for people using Access Technologies. By supporting IT Accessibility, the University helps ensure everyone is able to access, benefit from, and contribute to its electronic programs and services.

3. Definitions

3.1 Accessible

Refers to the concept that a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

3.2 Accessible Information Technology

Information Technology that has been designed, developed, or procured to be fully usable by all people, including those who use Access Technologies. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability.

3.3 Access Technologies

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability. Examples of Access Technologies commonly used with Information Technologies include special input devices (e.g., head or foot mouse, puff- and-sip switches, speech recognition), screen-reading software, and screen magnifiers.

3.4 Information Technology

Anything related to computing technology, including but not limited to: networking; hardware; software; and website development, maintenance, and usage available for use by students, employees, or members of the general public.

3.5 Usability

Refers to how easily, effectively, and efficiently users can utilize a product or system to achieve their goals and how satisfied they are with the experience.

4. University Department and Unit Responsibilities

a. Adhere to all processes adopted and implemented by the University, including but not limited to, the processes outlined in Appendix A of this policy.

b. Develop, purchase, and/or acquire, to the extent feasible, hardware and software products that are fully Accessible to people with disabilities. It is the University's responsibility to ensure that products created or purchased from vendors or contractors are considered Accessible Information Technology under this policy.

c. Occasionally and intermittently review website content for conformance with this policy and related Appendix.

d. Designate at least one staff member to act as IT Accessibility Liaison. That staff member must regularly attend accessibility training and/or other educational activities offered by the University and ensure Information Technologies employed in that department or unit are Accessible Information Technologies. Departments unable to designate an IT Accessibility Liaison should work with the Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer who will ensure department and unit compliance with this policy. For current information on IT Accessibility trainings and educational materials, visit: https://www.boisestate.edu/webguide/accessibility/

5. Director of Web Strategy and Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer Responsibilities

a. Promote awareness of this policy to all members of the University community, particularly those in roles responsible for creating, selecting, or maintaining electronic content and applications.

b. Coordinate targeted website accessibility training opportunities for University departments and units to provide support and to enhance compliance with this policy.

c. Continue to offer accessibility training relevant to pedagogical methods through the Center for Teaching and Learning.

6. IT Accessibility Committee Responsibilities

The IT Accessibility Committee is responsible for recommending procedure and programs to bring applicable technologies into compliance with this policy as outlined in Appendix A.

7. Addressing Accessibility Concerns

Any member of the University community, or member of the public, who has concerns about the accessibility of any University Information Technology should notify the Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer who will work with the appropriate department or unit to resolve the concern.

8. Complaints of Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability are encouraged to file a complaint with the Office of Institutional Compliance and Ethics. The University processes complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of disability pursuant to University Policy 1060 (Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment).

9. Appendix A: University IT Accessibility Standards and Requirements

9.1 Information Technology Accessibility Program

The purpose of the IT Accessibility Program ("Program") is to establish processes to address IT accessibility in a systematic fashion at the University using current structures and practices as appropriate.

The Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer designates members to serve on the IT Accessibility Committee ("Committee") to oversee and make recommendations pertaining to the Program and to promote intra-campus coordination on IT accessibility initiatives.

The Committee represents a broad range of functional areas and addresses academic, research, and administrative concerns and needs. The Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer chairs the Committee, and the Committee is charged to build the Program and address IT accessibility in an innovative manner. The Program includes the following:

9.1.1 Authority and Responsibility

Assignment of roles, authority, responsibilities, and accountability for achieving policy compliance.

9.1.2 Audience

A strategy to address the different needs of the academic, research, and administrative functions and to support IT accessibility for decentralized academic and research activities.

9.1.3 Prioritization

A process to prioritize effort that takes into consideration local needs, practices, and available resources including providing access to centralized IT accessibility support.

9.1.4 Design Process

A strategy to incorporate accessibility into the design and authoring process of digital content.

9.1.5 Procurement

A procedure to incorporate IT accessibility into the procurement process, including establishment of a formal means for evaluating the accessibility of products or systems under consideration for procurement available on the Office of Information Technology's Project Management Office website at: https://www.boisestate.edu/oit-pmo/software-review-requests/

9.1.6 Training

A training plan for personnel who develop and maintain electronic information resources, author web content, or make IT-related purchases.

9.1.7 Awareness Campaign

A communication plan and campaign to raise awareness about IT accessibility.

9.1.8 Compliance Monitoring

Processes for monitoring compliance, including compliance with any standards listed in this Appendix.

9.1.9 Evaluation

An evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of the Program on an annual basis.

9.1.10 Exception Process

A process for determining exceptions and for ensuring the development, documentation, and communication of effective alternate forms of access.

9.2 Standards

Compliance to standards listed in this section must be considered high priority in the development and implementation of the University's IT Accessibility Program and must be measured as part of the formal Program evaluation process.

9.2.1 Web Standard

Electronic information must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA Success Criteria. Information about the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) standards for accessibility can be found at the W3C website.

9.2.2 New Development and Purchases

New development and purchases, including development and purchases for major revisions and updates of existing electronic information resources must receive higher priority over the retrofit of existing electronic information resources. Additional standards for other electronic information resources may be identified over time and added to this Standards and Requirements document.

9.3 Exceptions

a. Conformance to these standards and requirements may not always be feasible due to the nature of the content, the purpose of the resource, the lack of Accessible solutions, or an unreasonably high administrative or financial cost necessary to make the resource Accessible. However, these difficulties do not relieve University programs or services from their IT accessibility obligations. University managers of programs and services must be prepared to provide content and/or services in accordance with an equally Accessible alternative access plan upon request.

b. The University Chief Compliance Officer, or designee, or Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, or designee, are the only authorities that may approve exceptions to this policy. All exceptions and specific reasons for the exceptions must be documented in writing and kept on file for five years after the use of the excepted technology is phased out of use.

10. Additional Information

Office of Information Technology Project Management Office - Software Review Requests (process includes evaluating the accessibility of products or systems under consideration for procurement)
https://www.boisestate.edu/oit-pmo/software-review-requests/

W3C Website - World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) standards for accessibility
https://www.w3.org/

Revision History

September 2019