

Engage Virtual Learning Environment - Accessibility Statement

Introduction

The University is committed to ensuring that the platforms and resources that we use with our staff and students are accessible and comply with the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018 No. 952](#).

We work hard to design and deliver online courses that meet accessibility standards, leveraging all available resources and ensuring a positive learning experience across all devices for the largest possible numbers of students with the widest possible range of abilities.

Focus of this statement

This Accessibility Statement relates to Distance Learning programmes which are hosted, created and delivered on the Engage Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform. The technology behind the Engage VLE platform is based on the Moodle open-source learning management system which is written in the widely used PHP programming language.

The Engage VLE is configured so that, via your web browser or accessibility software, you are able to:

- adjust colours, contrast levels and fonts
- zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate the website using a keyboard or on-screen keyboard
- navigate the website using speech recognition software
- listen to most of the website using a screen reader.

We are not able to account for the accessibility compliance of any customisations to the VLE by the user.

Course Development

Design Approach

Course content is currently developed with the aim of adhering to Universal Design principles and best practices as outlined by the [W3C, WebAIM](#) and [WCAG 2.0 Level AA Standards](#). We use standards-based course design frameworks to help guide our design thinking. The contents of these frameworks conform to the guidelines outlined by WCAG 2.0 Level AA Standards.

Content developed in the Engage VLE is responsive to different screen sizes and resolutions to ensure minimal loss of quality of visual material.

However, we recognise that it is not always possible for all our learning content to be accessible. When content is not accessible, we aim to identify and/or create alternative content and activities (e.g., a clickable learning activity) may be replaced by static content achieving the same learning outcomes).

In addition, we will address specific requests for accommodations on a case-by-case basis if/when reported to us.

Reporting accessibility problems with Engage

Processes are in place whereby accessibility issues, either with the Engage platform itself or with learning content hosted on Engage, can be reported in such a way as to ensure the quickest response.

In the first instance, contact your Student Services Co-ordinator.

If the issue relates to any technology within the Engage platform, report any technical issues to your technical support service. (Details of how to contact your technical support service are displayed throughout the learning materials hosted on the Engage VLE.)

Media

In developing rich media (images, interactive objects, and video), we are currently working towards being compliant with the [WCAG 2.0 AA standards](#) as a benchmark for developing accessible content. To reach those standards, our aim is to ensure all rich media is developed with:

- Captioning for all audio (and video with audio).
- A text equivalent for every non-text element, via elements like alternative attributes for images (using “alt tags” in HTML).
- Adherence to WCAG 2.0 guidelines in our visual design process to make it easier for users to see and hear content (specifically, the guidelines on use of color, audio control, contrast, text size and visual presentation).
- The requirement that the functionality of any interactive be accessible and navigable via the keyboard (using keyboard focus, headings and labels and focus order principles).
- Enough time for users to read and use content. We do this by avoiding time-limited content presentations.
- Accessible or alternative versions for interactive media where required.

Note that the creation of text equivalents or alternative versions may be required.

Third-Party Materials

We evaluate all third-party learning tools based on WCAG 2.0 AA to ensure they meet WCAG 2.0 AA standards prior to implementation. We actively assess the accessibility of third-party materials, and will provide suggestions of alternative assignments where possible in the event that accommodations are required.

Virtual Learning Environment

The Engage learning management system is based on the open source Moodle VLE. Moodle's accessibility information documents that Moodle strives to be fully accessible to all users. Therefore, the Engage VLE works well with modern screen readers and leverages semantic markup and best practices as outlined by the W3C to ensure all navigation is straightforward and content is in the forefront.

We always aim to leverage the capabilities of the Engage platform to support accessibility. We strive to make sure that any theming or customisations adhere to WCAG 2.0 AA standards for visual presentation, including focus order, color contrast and text size where possible.

Technology

As a matter of good practice, we aim to use tools that meet the WCAG 2.0 AA standards for accessibility. We also incorporate third-party learning tools, each of which has its own accessibility statement.

What elements of the Engage VLE courses do not currently meet accessibility standards?

During the course development process, learning material that is hosted on the Engage VLE has been written by content authors and designed and built by our Learning Design and Learning Technology teams. We support our course authors in the creation of accessible resources during both the development and delivery of the courses. This also applies to third party content and resources which course leaders may wish to upload during the delivery of a course to support and enhance the learning content and learning experience. These may be third party services or websites.

However, in some cases during the delivery of a course, material may be added to courses by the course leaders that may not have been assessed for compliance with accessibility guidelines.

This statement refers to the core Engage functionality and content uploaded directly to Engage rather than third party content or services accessed through the platform.

Current level of compliance with the 2018 Accessibility Regulations of the Engage Virtual Learning Environment platform is:	Partly Compliant.
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The Engage VLE conforms to all principles, including the success criteria and techniques, listed in the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1](#), to the extent outlined in the table below:

Aspect on online materials	Current level of compliance
Issues with text, including hyperlinks, descriptions, labels, web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly compliant. • Some descriptions and labels are not fully compliant. • With some hyperlinks, it is not clear to what they refer, so clearer linkage needs to be made between the links and their destination page or document. • We will be working to ensure all text across the Engage platform is fully compliant by September 2020.
Issues with documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly compliant. • Some documents are not in sufficiently new versions of the software in which they were created, and therefore are not marked up to be accessible for a screenreader. • Some documents are uploaded to courses as attachments or as downloadable links in Portable Document Format (PDF). These may not be fully accessible. • We will be working to ensure all documents across the Engage platform are fully compliant by September 2020.
Issues with media/graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly compliant. • Some graphics do not comply with graphics standards in terms of clarity and format. • Some graphics do not have full descriptions in Alt-text, and are therefore not accessible for those less able to access the media/graphics visually. • Some graphics are non-responsive, and therefore full visibility is not possible on smaller-screen devices such as smartphones and other mobile devices. • In some cases, HTML-based alternatives will be created to ensure screenreader-accessibility. • We will work with content authors to ensure this is provided and is accurate.
Issues with video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly compliant. • Where there is supporting overlay graphics and text within created video material, we will ensure that accessible versions of these are available.
Issues with interactive tools and applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly compliant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are actively working to assess any third-party tools to ensure their compliance by September 2020.
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