**Section 508 and Web Accessibility Requirements for Online Courses**

**Section 508 Standards**

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 states *in part*:

“*Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) must be equally accessible to people with and without disabilities*.”

U.S. Department of Education

All states that receive funding through [Assistive Technology Act](http://nichcy.org/laws/ata) must also comply

Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia has determined all institutions under BOR fall within scope of Section 508 (7.16 Compliance Policy).

**Accessibility Standards & Web Accessibility Guidelines**

Section 508 (U.S. Federal Law)

Section 508 *Refresh* (forthcoming)

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG)

Levels A and AA

**Recent Legal Issues in Higher Education**

2013 Louisiana Tech University

2012 University of Montana

2011 Florida State University

2011 Northwestern and New York University

2010 Penn State University

2010 9 Law Schools

For more information, please visit the website of the [National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE)](http://www.ncdae.org/) and review the article called:

[*Review of Recent Legal Issues in Higher Education and Web Accessibility*](http://ncdae.org/blog/recent-legal-issues/)

**USG Accessibility Resources**

For information for USG personnel involved in the design, development and delivery of online courses, please review the [USG Accessibility Resources](http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility)

Must Read document on this site: [Higher Education, the Americans with Disabilities](http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/higher_education_the_americans_with_disabilities_act_and_section_508)

[Act, and Section 508](http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/higher_education_the_americans_with_disabilities_act_and_section_508)

**USG Accessibility Resources, Web Accessibility Guidelines**

* [USG Web Accessibility Guidelines](http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility)
  + Lists the Section 508 Standards, section 1194.22

**USG Accessibility Tutorial**

[USG Accessibility Tutorial](http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility_tutorial)

For anyone who assists in the design, development or delivery of online courses

[Training](http://www.usg.edu/siteinfo/accessibility_tutorial/training) section: link to Dec 2011 webinar Section 508 Compliance and Online Course Content

(captioned recording), Handout and the 2011 Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines

**SPECIFIC CAMPUS REALTED ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES**

* **BOR Policy** – Faculty too frequently ask, “Why do I have to do this? There is no BOR policy that says I have to do this so I’ll just wait.” Consequently, they end up being reactive rather than proactive.
* **Videos** - One of the biggest issues in using videos is that they are not close captioned nor is a transcription provided. Both are time-consuming to do and most institutions do not have people designated to provide this for media resources.
* **Use of external tools**- that have zero ADA compliance. Faculty will often choose such non-school related sites and build a significant part of their course around them.
* **Hodge-podge of content**— instructors pull so many types of content (files, web pages, outside services, videos, etc.) and file types (Word, pdf, Excel, etc.) together to build courses that the overall ADA compliance is not only low but very difficult to assess and correct.

**Solutions**

* Faculty need to understand the federal laws require compliance and making courses accessible is an absolute necessity.
* Faculty must have access to reliable tools for conversion of content such as Word to html, PowerPoint to HTML, etc.
* Faculty should be trained to assess ADA compliance of potential services and discount those which are not ADA compliant.
* After a course is designed, there should be an audit of the content for ADA compliance with trouble areas identified and fixed before the course is taught.