



CAL POLY

Center for Teaching,
Learning & Technology

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & PLANNING

Cal Poly SLO Course Accessibility Checklist

This checklist serves as a guide for faculty to ensure your courses are fully accessible for students with disabilities at Cal Poly. This checklist assumes you are using Cal Poly supported course technologies such as Canvas, Office 365, Microsoft Stream, Zoom, etc. For questions about this checklist or for further guidance in making your courses accessible, contact Pam Dougherty, Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, at padoughe@calpoly.edu.

Syllabus

- ☐ Post your class syllabus in [Canvas](#) and provide access before the first week of class so students can plan ahead.
- ☐ Make sure your syllabus includes an Accessibility Statement ([Sample syllabus statement](#)) with a link to the [Disability Resource Center](#). Invite students to reach out to you privately to share their needs or concerns regarding access to course materials and activities.
- ☐ Include a note in your syllabus or elsewhere in Canvas encouraging students to explore [Ally Alternative Formats and Immersive Reader](#) in Canvas to improve comprehension.
- ☐ Include a link in your syllabus to [SensusAccess](#) which converts materials into alternative formats outside of the Canvas system.

Readings

- ☐ Adopt your textbook early: Contact the [University Store](#) to identify textbook and course pack selections at least six weeks before classes begin. This allows time for materials to be converted into alternate formats if needed. [Academic Senate Resolution AS-654-07](#).
- ☐ Request an electronic version and extra hard copy of your textbook to facilitate conversion into alternate formats. California law requires publishers to provide electronic copies of textbooks.
- ☐ Use the [Electronic Course Reserve Process](#) to make reserve items available to students in accessible formats in [Canvas](#).
- ☐ Provide access to your course materials in [Canvas](#) before the first week of class, so students can convert materials into other formats before class begins.
- ☐ Make sure all files, documents, and presentations posted in Canvas are fully accessible. Review [Accessibility Resources and Tutorials](#) to assist you in creating and converting electronic materials into more accessible formats.
- ☐ Avoid posting PDF scans in Canvas, which are inaccessible. Instead, locate alternatives, such as electronic versions from online textbooks or direct links to library references or academic journal sites. Consider using [SensusAccess](#) to convert PDF scans into searchable PDFs.
- ☐ Use the [Canvas Accessibility Checker](#) to ensure your Canvas content is fully accessible.

- ☐ Use the [Ally Accessibility Report](#) in Canvas to check all course materials for accessibility issues. Ally provides step-by-step tutorials for fixing inaccessible content.
- ☐ Make sure third-party internet resources (e.g., websites, blogs, wikis, quizzes, etc.) you use in class are accessible to all students: [WebAIM Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#).

Video and Audio

- ☐ Use only accurate captioned videos, and have captions added to existing videos before using them in the classroom or online. Videos with automatic captions are not acceptable due to frequency of transcription and punctuation errors. If you don't have access rights to caption a video, visit [Cal Poly's Media Captioning page](#) and scroll down to Automatic Sync Technologies.
- ☐ Provide transcripts for audio-only presentations and materials such as podcasts. Consider using [Microsoft Transcribe](#) or [Otter.ai](#) to help you create accurate transcripts for podcasts.

Communication

- ☐ Create accessible email, so your students and colleagues can fully access your communication content equitably. [Make your Outlook email accessible](#).
- ☐ If you use social media for communication and/or assignments, make sure the content is accessible. Learn more: [Social Media Accessibility Guidelines](#).
- ☐ Add ASL interpreters and/or transcribers (if applicable) to Canvas so they can access course materials to prepare for upcoming classes and are aware of any last-minute schedule, location, or meeting platform changes.

Assignments and Assessments

- ☐ Make sure all quizzes and exams in Canvas are fully accessible. Learn more: [Creating Accessible Quizzes in Canvas](#), and [Accessibility Checker in Canvas](#).
- ☐ If students need an electronic version of a test to take at the [DRC](#), please provide the test to the DRC in Word format whenever possible. Exams in Word format can more easily be read aloud by text-to-speech software and converted to large print, if needed.
- ☐ Always use [Classic Quizzes](#) in Canvas, as New Quizzes have accessibility issues.
- ☐ Avoid using time limits on quizzes and exams when possible.
- ☐ Use [accommodation settings in Canvas](#) to extend time limits and/or due dates in assignments and/or quizzes for individual students.
- ☐ Provide a variety of assessment types, beyond the traditional exam, so students have more options to demonstrate what they know. Learn more: [Alternative Assessments in Canvas](#), and [Improving Student Success](#).
- ☐ Use [Rubrics in Canvas](#) to provide additional guidance and enable students to better meet assignment requirements and instructor expectations.
- ☐ [Provide timely feedback in Canvas](#) on assignments, quizzes, and discussions.
- ☐ Ensure that [Canvas Grades](#) can be viewed by students at any time. Students can see if their activities have been submitted, graded, and if they have received feedback.
- ☐ Reach out to students who are in danger of falling behind. Use the Canvas Gradebook feature to message students [who have not submitted, or with a score less than a certain number of points](#).

Next Steps

- ☐ Provide students with alternative methods to receive lecture materials, e.g., post lecture notes online, provide transcripts, allow students to record class lectures, etc. In your syllabus invite students to let you know privately if they require alternative methods.
- ☐ Consider adopting an [Open Educational Resources](#) (OER) textbook to make learning more affordable for your students: [Cal Poly Affordable Learning Solutions](#).
- ☐ Address the diverse learning needs of your students by providing a variety of learning materials, multiple instructional methods, and alternate ways for students to demonstrate mastery of course concepts. [CAST UDL](#) and [UDL-Universe](#).

During Class Meetings

- ☐ Play videos displaying accurate captions that include punctuation.
- ☐ Face the class while speaking for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- ☐ Use microphones in large classrooms.
- ☐ Describe images, charts, and diagrams in detail during lectures. Avoid using words like "here" and "there." This ensures an equitable experience for students who are blind or low vision.
- ☐ Provide materials before class when possible, so students with learning disabilities or cognitive disorders have time to process and prepare for in-class discussions or in-class assessments.
- ☐ Do not use flashing lights/strobes unless directly connected to curricular content. Make a statement to the class before using flashing lights to warn those with photosensitive epilepsy.
- ☐ If your class has field trips, site visits, or unique kinds of specific physical activity (e.g., trips to museums, theatre events, hiking, collecting samples, etc.) provide advance notice so students with disabilities may request accommodations.