

## Electronic Documents

### Syllabus

We encourage faculty to use the Accessible Syllabus Template available online at [umaine.edu/upcc/forms/syllabus-templaterevised2-1312/](http://umaine.edu/upcc/forms/syllabus-templaterevised2-1312/). If you choose to make the syllabus available in an electronic format, please use MS Word or create an accessible PDF.

All syllabi should include a statement directed to students needing accommodations from Disability Support Services that is covered on the first day of class. Here is a sample statement: "If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services in East Annex, 207.581.2319, as early as possible in the term."

### Handouts

Documents such as handouts, articles, and other course materials that are available to students in FirstClass, Blackboard, Synapse or through another content delivery system should be in an accessible format such as a MS Word file, or an accessible PDF that can be read by a screen reader.

If you scan articles or other documents and create a PDF from a scan, your document may not be accessible to an individual using a screen reader (information about creating accessible PDF documents is available on the UMaine IT Accessibility website [umaine.edu/itaccessibility/accessible-pdfs/](http://umaine.edu/itaccessibility/accessible-pdfs/)).

Note that if scanning a photocopy, most of our UMaine copiers can produce an accessible PDF document. Some default to this, but other copiers require selecting an option such as PDF OCR (optical character recognition) to create a PDF that can be read by a screen reader.

When formatted correctly, PowerPoint Slides are accessible and available to students who have a visual impairment and are unable to view the slides during a lecture. For instructions on making your PowerPoint accessible, visit: [webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/](http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/).

### NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

The University of Maine does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, including transgender status and gender expression, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies: Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, 101 North Stevens Hall, 207.581.1226.

Disability Support Services serves UMaine **students** with a disability. For **faculty and staff** disability services and accommodations, please contact Bonita Grindle at the Office of Equal Opportunity, 581.1227 or [bgrindle@maine.edu](mailto:bgrindle@maine.edu).



*Disability Support Services*

## The UMaine Disabilities Insider

Welcome to this special edition of our Disabilities Insider Newsletter. Recent legal information about the University's responsibility to make courses accessible persuaded us to put out this early edition of our newsletter in hopes that we might assist faculty as they update and design classes over the summer.

### UPDATING YOUR COURSE FOR FALL - ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLISTS

Students with disabilities must be able to access course materials in an equally effective manner. Designing course materials with accessibility in mind allows the University to meet its obligations to students with disabilities.

When making decisions about course accessibility, please consider a variety of aspects of instruction, including selecting accessible texts and other readings (don't forget Web-based content such as documents and other files), and ensuring that any videos posted online are captioned. These are just some of the important aspects of creating a course that is inclusive to all students.

We have pulled together information from a number of sources to create the following accessible course checklist that we hope faculty will utilize as they create or modify their courses for the fall 2014 semester.

### Course Accessibility Checklist

#### Print Materials

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#### Non-Print Materials

- Classroom Acoustics, page 2
- Videos and Visual Media, page 3

### UMaine DSS

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Orono, ME 04469-5725  
Voice 207.581.2319  
TTY 207.581.2325  
Fax 207.581.9420



[umaine.edu/disability](http://umaine.edu/disability)

## ☐ Textbooks and Course Packs



Textbook and course pack requests should be sent to the bookstore on or before the textbook ordering deadline for fall, spring and summer terms. The deadline for ordering texts for fall 2014 classes was March 21st; the deadline for spring 2015 will be approximately October 17th.

This deadline is especially important for students with disabilities. For example, students who require the text in an alternate format need sufficient time for us to contact the publisher or an organization that provides accessible e-books. When the text isn't available through these channels we scan the entire text and create an accessible alternate format book from scratch here at Disability Services. In order to make sure the student has the alternate-format book the first day of class we need to know which text has been selected and begin the process of ordering or producing it well in advance.

If you are in the market for a new book, ask publishers if “accessible” texts are available. “Accessible” meaning: books that can be used by a student with a disability with a screen-reader. When you approach the publisher it's helpful to ask, “Is or will this book be available as an e-book?”

Please keep in mind that if the publisher offers an e-text, an e-text is NOT the same thing as an e-book. An e-text, while digital, may NOT be accessible for students with a disability because some e-texts have not been coded properly for a screen reader.

Many larger publishers (ex. Pearson) have a variety of accessible options, while smaller publishers may not be able to supply the same level of accessibility and may increase the difficulty of fulfilling alternative text requests.

Course Pack source materials should be submitted in a clean, legible format so they can be scanned and converted into accessible formats such as an accessible PDF document or large print if needed.



## Videos and Other Media

### ☐ Videos for my classes are captioned.

If you are showing movies either on Blackboard or in class, are the videos captioned or is there a transcript available? For many educational videos (ex. PBS or MediaEd) where there is no captioning, a transcript is made available on the web. The transcript need not only be for students with disabilities—the entire class may find them valuable.

Many videos can be purchased as a video stream, but please keep in mind these video streams are often NOT captioned. The captioning is often available only on the purchased DVD. The Faculty Development Center in the basement of the Union is available to help you stream videos from DVDs if your class is on Blackboard.

If your video is uncaptioned there are places where you might find it captioned online: for example DailyMotion or YouTube (please double check accuracy though). We have even found a captioned video posted to a Chinese viral video site! Beginning the fall of 2014, we will be able to caption “in house.” However, captioning is a long and costly process, so if this is an option you require, we will need considerable advance notice.

☐ If you use **clickers** in lectures it's helpful to talk with DSS about an alternative process for students who are unable to view the questions.



I have photocopied articles on reserve at Fogler Library

for students in my classes; do these have to be accessible?

All articles on reserve need to be in an accessible format. The Library Circulation Dept. has the capability, on a case-by-case basis, to identify the accessibility barrier and create a format for the material that fits the student's need. For example, if a paper document is placed on reserve and a student who is blind needs access, the Circulation staff can scan the document in an accessible format that would enable the student to use a screen reader.

The important step in this process is for you or the student to connect directly with Circulation staff so that they can take action. Creating an electronic version does not carry the same copyright restrictions when the change is a disability accommodation for the student to access the material. Thus, the need for format changes to be made by Circulation on a case by case basis.

Disability Support Services is also able to assist with this process if needed.



☐ **Classroom Acoustics** - Acoustics are often overlooked as a factor that can interfere with learning. Problems with the acoustics in a classroom can impact students with hearing impairments and all other students in the class as well. If you teach in a classroom where there is a loud fan, motor, vent or other sound please report it to Disability Support Services or Facilities Management. It's possible that sound dampening or baffling material can be installed to help the acoustics in the classroom.

If you teach in a large lecture hall, please use the amplification system in the room. Research shows that this benefits all students, not just those with hearing impairments, because they are more able to hear and understand the lecture or presentation.