Purchasing Accessible Electronic and Information Technology

Purchasing accessible technology is an essential part of MTSU’s commitment to providing access for students, employees, and visitors with disabilities to campus offerings and meeting associated legal requirements. Electronic and information technology refers to information technology and equipment or integrated systems of equipment used to create, convert, store, retrieve or duplicate data or information. It includes, but is not limited to, websites and content, system interfaces, data collections, software, e-books, information kiosks, office equipment, and classroom technology. Requesting, receiving, and properly evaluating information pertaining to the accessibility of products from vendors prior to purchasing is necessary to meeting our campus’ overall accessibility goals. The steps and corresponding documents necessary to complete this process are included in this packet.

Process to Document Accessibility   
  
On all purchases of electronic information technology:

1. Request the information included in the required portions of the Vendor Product Accessibility Agreement (Version 2.1 preferred).
   1. If the vendor does not provide the documents in a timely fashion, it could be a sign that accessibility has not been adequately addressed, and another vendor should be considered.
2. Review the information.
   1. If the information returned displays a number of concerns, consider another vendor.
      1. [Email the Director of ADA Compliance](mailto:adacompliance@mtsu.edu) to request assistance reviewing the information.
3. If the vendor’s entire product or parts of the product is not accessible and there is no other or better option, complete an Alternate Access Arrangement form and submit to the Director of ADA Compliance for approval. *See Appendix 2*
   * 1. [Email the Director of ADA Compliance](mailto:adacompliance@mtsu.edu) to request assistance in completing the form.
4. Purchase the product.
   1. Receive approval of the Alternate Access Arrangement (if applicable).
   2. Maintain records documenting the effort to ensure accessibility.
      1. If a vendor provides misleading information or does not fulfill promised accessibility updates, proper documentation can help with canceling a contract or if an accessibility complaint is lodged.
   3. When applicable, maintain communication with the vendor to assure that stated conformance timelines are met.

# Working with University Procurement Services

In general, purchases at or above $10,000 must go out to bid and will go through MTSU Procurement Services. In the procurement process, you will be asked if the purchase is an Electronic Information Technology. Procurement Services will provide assistance in following the process outlined above when a purchase is identified as an Electronic Information Technology. Accessibility will be used as a differentiating factor when determining the winning bid.

# Additional Points of Emphasis

Choosing not to comply or failing to properly document compliance with these procedures may make the university vulnerable to potential complaint and litigation.

When renewing a license, purchasing an update, or buying a newer version of a product that has met accessibility standards, do not assume that the new or updated features are accessible. Check with the vendor in a similar manner as a new purchase to ensure that any additional features have been appropriately tested for accessibility.

Since current contracts and licenses have not been vetted with accessibility standards in mind, confirm accessibility in the same manner as new purchases when those come up for renewal.

Appendix 1

Vendor Product Accessibility Agreement

# Accessibility Agreement

All Electronic and Information Technology developed, purchased, upgraded or renewed by or for the use of Middle Tennessee State University will comply with all applicable Federal and State law regulations including but not limited to the accessibility guidelines set forth in [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 A & AA](http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/), [EPub3 Accessibility guidelines](http://idpf.org/a11y), [Section 508](http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-ict-refresh) and all other regulations promulgated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act as amended. Further:

* 1. Compliance means that a person with a disability can 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 integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.
  2. The vendor warrants that any Electronic and Information Technology purchased by, developed, upgraded or renewed will comply with the aforementioned accessibility guidelines and the contractor/vendor will provide accessibility testing results, written documentation verifying accessibility including the most recent Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (Version 2.1 preferred) for the product/service identified in this document.
  3. The vendor will promptly respond to and resolve accessibility issues/complaints, and to indemnify and hold the Institution harmless in the event of claims arising from inaccessibility of the Bidder/Proposer’s product(s) or service(s).

To demonstrate the product complies with the aforementioned accessibility guidelines, the vendor shall verify accessibility by submitting all proceeding requested pieces of documentation.

# Required Documentation

## Voluntary Product Accessibility Statement (Version 2.1 preferred)

* Submit your most recent [Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (Version 2.1 preferred)](https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat).
  + Tables 1 and 2 under the WCAG 2.0 report and Chapters 3 and 6 under the 2017 Section 508 Report are required.
  + Chapter 4 and/or 5 of the 2017 Section 508 Report is required dependent on whether the product is hardware, software, or both.

## Accessibility Statement

* A clear statement of commitment to ensuring equal access for all users
* A summary of the overall level of conformance with accessible information and technology standards

## Compliance Status

* Indicate the specific accessibility standards that are targeted for compliance. For example, specify “Section 508”, the “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, level A & AA” and or EPub3 Accessibility Guidelines (note – response to all three standards is required).
* A copy of your most recent VPAT (Version 2.1 preferred) and answers to the listed related questions.
* Note any other best practices or guidelines utilized during design and development.
* Provide results from any third-party agencies with whom you have worked to evaluate accessibility support. Results may be required for products the university deems high impact/high reach.
* Provide results from any formal internal testing process you used to determine accessibility support.
* Indicate if you conduct user testing with persons with disabilities to verify accessibility support.
* Complete the included Access Conformance and Remediation Plan for resolving existing product accessibility gaps.
* Provide contact information for accessibility issues in your company.

## Product Usage Information for Users with Disabilities

* Describe any product features that may improve accessibility for users with disabilities including:
  + Accessibility-specific features (e.g. the ability to adjust font size and color/contrast settings for text or the availability of closed captions for videos)
  + General product features that may especially benefit users with disabilities (e.g. a mode optimized for mobile platforms that also improves keyboard-only navigation).
* Describe any high-impact product accessibility gaps along with suggested interim workarounds that allow users to complete key tasks until the gaps are resolved. For example, if a technical support website isn’t compatible with screen readers used by persons who are blind, appropriate interim workarounds might include:
  + Alternative business processes that bypass the accessibility barrier (e.g. providing phone-based support until the web-based support site is accessible)
  + Use of a third-party product to replace or supplement inaccessible product functions (e.g. indicating that users may submit or check the status of technical support tickets via email).
* Describe accessibility features provided by your communication channels (e.g. a deaf or hard-of-hearing user may contact you via a TTY line or access support personnel familiar with telephone relay services).

## Feedback Mechanism

* Indicate any specific resources devoted to handling accessibility questions/concerns and provide the contact information for these resources.
* Provide a specific mechanism for users to contact in order to:
  + Request accessibility-related assistance
  + Report accessibility problems
  + Request information in accessible alternate formats

# Template

Please complete the following pieces of required information. Most of the inquiries are sufficiently answered with a yes or no.

## Accessibility Statement

Include a statement that includes a clear commitment to equal access for all users and a summary of the conformance initiatives related to accessibility standards:

## Compliance Status

Indicate whether a review of your product’s compliance was based on each of the following standards:

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act:   
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level A & AA:   
EPub3 Accessibility Guidelines:

Indicate whether you included your most recent VPAT (Version 2.1 preferred):   
  
Answer the following questions related to the information on the VPAT (Version 2.1 preferred):

### Software

Can all functionalities be accessed using keyboard only?  
Are appropriate color contrasts used?  
Are all pictures/images tagged with alternative text?  
Is your multimedia captioned?  
Is a transcript provided for any audio only components?  
Is your multimedia audio described when necessary?  
Are forms and challenge options (like CAPTCHAs) compatible with assistive technologies?  
Are all buttons, form fields, and labels compatible with assistive technologies?  
Do all charts and graphs have detailed description of their content?  
Is your product compatible with screen readers and screen magnification programs like JAWS and ZoomText?  
Are all Word documents and PDFs structured in an open and navigable way?  
Is all mathematics content created with MathML or an equally accessible format?

### Hardware

Does your product have a touch screen?  
Do the buttons on your product have large bold lettering?  
Do the buttons on your product have Braille lettering?  
Does your hardware have a headphone jack for audio instructions?

### Further Information

Have any other best practices or guidelines been used during design and development (Describe if yes)?

Have you included results from any third-party agency with whom you have worked to evaluate accessibility support?

Have you included results from any formal internal testing process you used to determine accessibility support?

Did you conduct user testing with persons with disabilities to verify accessibility support?

Provide contact information for accessibility issues in your company:

## Product Usage Information for Users with Disabilities

Does your product have any product features that may improve accessibility for users with disabilities (Describe if yes)?

Have you identified any high-impact product accessibility gaps along with suggested interim workarounds that allow users to complete key tasks until the gaps are resolved (Describe if yes)?

Describe accessibility features provided by your communication channels (e.g. a deaf or hard-of-hearing user may contact you via a TTY line or access support personnel familiar with telephone relay services).

## Feedback Mechanism

Indicate whether you have specific resources devoted to handling accessibility questions/concerns and provide the contact information for these resources, so buyers or users can request accessibility-related assistance, report accessibility problems, and/or request information in accessible alternate formats.

# Accessibility Conformance and Remediation Plan

## Instructions

This form serves as a means to document accessibility gaps associated with Electronic Information Technology products and to indicate plans for addressing these gaps in the future.

We ask that you complete the **form** as follows:

1. **Product/Vendor Information:** Provide the information requested
2. **Issue Description:** List each major accessibility issue for the product Including the following:
   1. Gaps identified from the Accessibility Standards and Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT 2.1 preferred)
   2. Gaps identified in other product support documentation
   3. Gaps identified by a third-party accessibility evaluation report (if available)
3. **Current Status:** Enter one of the following values:
   1. Open: The issue has not yet been resolved
   2. Closed: The issue has already been resolved
   3. I/P: The issue is currently under investigation
   4. Other
4. **Disposition:** Enter one of the following values:
   1. Planned: The issue will be resolved
   2. Deferred: The issue will not be resolved
   3. I/P: The issue is currently under investigation
   4. Other
5. **Remediation Timeline:** Enter when you anticipate that the issue will be resolved
6. **Available Workarounds (for vendor only)**: Describe the business processes vendor will offer or third-party products that should be considered to work around the issue until full remediation
7. **Comments**: Provide details/description regarding the issue
8. **Additional Information (optional)**: Provide any additional discussion regarding accessibility plans

## Vendor/Product Information Template

| Vendor Name |  |
| --- | --- |
| Product Name |  |
| Product Version |  |
| Completion Date |  |
| Contact Name/Title |  |
| Contact Email/Phone |  |

## Template/Example

| **Issue Description** | **Current Status (Open, Closed, I/P)** | **Disposition (Planned, Deferred, I/P)** | **Remediation Timeline** | **Available Workarounds** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Images on the landing page lack equivalent alternate text** | Open | Planned | Q3, 2015 release (v1.2) |  | Functional images will receive descriptive alternate text; decorative images will receive null alternate text. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Additional Information:**

Appendix 2  
Alternate Access Arrangement

A fully accessible product may not be available. In those instances, a plan to arrange access must be in place to quickly handle access issues when they arise for individuals. Before purchasing the product, ways in which areas of concern will be addressed must proactively be considered.

If you have two or more inaccessible/partially accessible products that serve similar purposes and would be accommodated similarly, one alternate access arrangement listing all the products and potential accommodations can be submitted.

Once completed, email the following information to the [Director of ADA Compliance](mailto:adacompliance@mtsu.edu) for review.

Attach all the information from the Vendor Product Accessibility Agreement

Who will be using the product?

What is the purpose of the product?

How is the product used?

Proposed Accommodations for the currently inaccessible features (the vendor as well as campus resources such as the Director of ADA Compliance or a member of the staff at the Disability & Access Center could help when determining potential reasonable accommodations).