



Process: WSU Tech Accessibility Exceptions Request

This document details the procedure for requesting exceptions to the WSU Tech Accessibility Policy for instructional materials delivered digitally.

The goal of an exception is to document the process by which we will ensure that the college provides effective access, with substantially equivalent and inclusive ease of use, to instruction and services for eligible individuals in a timely manner.

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Requirements for Exception Requests

Exception requests must contain the following elements in order to be considered.

Contact Information

Contact information should be for the person making the request (Requestor) and should include:

- Name, position, department, email, and department lead's name
- What courses the request will effect

Rationale

Explain how this request fits into one or more of the following categories:

- Compliance is not technically possible or feasible given current technology.
- The information or service is used by a specific, limited audience which has no known need for accessibility features.
- For third party and/or vendor delivered products, no accessible and equally effective alternative for the information or service exists.
 - Must document if other, more accessible alternatives were considered during purchasing and explain why the less accessible option was chosen.
 - If more accessible alternatives were not evaluated, or did not exist, a plan must be created to ensure that a search for a more accessible alternative occurs when the contract ends or the exception expires.
- Making the information or service accessible would require extraordinary measures that constitute an undue burden to the university.

Determination of undue burden is based on the impact on WSU Tech as a whole and not on the department requesting the exception.

Equally Effective Access Accommodation Plan (EEAAP)

This plan should address:

- How access barriers in the instruction or service will be addressed
- How the benefits of the information or service will be provided, in a timely manner for eligible individuals who are unable to effectively use or interact with the information or service
 - Timeliness may depend on the nature of the information, but should generally not exceed 10 (ten) business days.
- How the requesting department will ensure that extra time taken to provide the accommodation will not negatively impact the individual.
 - For example, deadlines imposed by the information or service that are not met due to the use of an accommodation must be waived, so the plan must detail how the departments will ensure this is being done.

Depending on the nature of the information or service, examples of an accommodation might include:

- Providing an alternative that effectively provides an equivalent result e.g. an alternative software that performs the same or similar function.
- Providing assistance to the eligible individual either in-person or over the phone.
- Providing the information in a format that meets our accessibility standards.

Communication Plan

The request must also document a plan to ensure that eligible individuals are made aware of the availability of the EEAAP and the steps they must take to request access.

This should be communicated in the same place that other information about the course materials is communicated, certainly in the syllabus and likely reiterated in the Start Here Module of the course. This section should also address whether communication about the availability of the EEAAP should be included in the pre-enrollment information.

Compliance Plan

Exceptions are designed to be temporary in nature and are intended only to serve as a bridge to provide effective access. Requestors should document their plan to bring the information into compliance with our accessibility standards within 3 (three) years. These plans might include:

- Contract language obligating the vendor of third-party information or services to bring their software or content into compliance within a period of time.
- For internally developed information or services, a timeline for making them accessible and compliant with our accessibility standards.
- Detailed collaboration with the vendor to bring their information or service into compliance.

Submitting Exceptions & Process Expectations

The exception request form will be an online tool with a workflow that includes several steps.

- Step 1. Requestor completes the form
- Step 2. Requesting department lead approves request
- Step 3. Accessibility Committee members review/recommend request
- Step 4. Dean Approves Request
- Step 5. Vice President Approves Request

If at any stage the exception is not approved, it will be returned to the Requestor for revision.

Step 1: Requestor completes the form

Using the form in Etrieve, the Requestor will work with their Accessibility Committee member and lead faculty member to complete all of the sections laid out above.

Step 2. Department Lead

The Department Lead becomes the owner and will review the submissions and either approve them or return them to the requestor for revision.

This stage should look closely at the rationale. If, for example, the instructor of a course is claiming that more accessible textbooks lack other qualities that make the chosen textbook a better choice for the class despite accessibility challenges, the department lead and other department colleagues are the best subject matter experts to determine the validity of the rationale.

It is also important for the department to be aware of the number of exceptions being requested by their department, and to understand the challenges and possible expenses that those exceptions pose if an accommodation must be arranged.

Step 3. Accessibility Committee Review

Members of the Accessibility Committee, including the member for the requesting department, will review the submissions as they come in and prepare recommendations for the Deans or suggest revision for the Requestor.

Step 4. Dean Approval

The Dean will review the submissions and approve them or send them back to the Requestor for revision.

At this level, the approval is an opportunity for the Dean to be aware of the number and scope of exceptions being requested before they are passed along to the appropriate Vice President.

Step 5. Vice President Approval

The Vice President will provide the final approval for the exceptions.

Once the exceptions have been approved, the Requestor will be notified. Stakeholders at all levels will be able to review the workflow and status of all of their exceptions through the web site.