# Accessible Course Design Checklist

CITL’s Accessible Course Design Checklist is adapted from the Quality Matters rubric and structured around the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2) **POUR** principles: **P**erceivable, **O**perable, **U**nderstandable, and **R**obust**.**

## 1. Course navigation facilitates ease of use. (Operable)

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|  | Consistent layout and design are employed throughout, making content, instructional materials, tools, and media easy to locate from anywhere in the course. |
|  | Design elements, like icons and titles of recurring activities, are used repetitively, increasing predictability and intuitiveness. |
|  | Hyperlinks use self-describing and meaningful names; for example, [CITL Website](https://citl.illinois.edu/), rather than “click here,” “more,” etc. |
|  | [Icons used as links (see Example 4)](https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/#functional) have alt text or an accompanying text link. |
|  | [Underlining](https://webaim.org/techniques/hypertext/link_text#underlining) is used only for hyperlinks. |
|  | Course links, external and internal, are working properly. There are no broken links. |
|  | The course provides clear navigation instructions when a third-party platform is inconsistent with course navigation. |
|  | Project segments are numbered and interlinked; (e.g., part 1 of a three-part assignment links directly to parts 2 and 3 so learners don’t need to navigate back to a main page or view). |
|  | A table of contents is included in a long document to allow learners to move easily throughout the file. See [Table of Contents in Word](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/insert-a-table-of-contents-882e8564-0edb-435e-84b5-1d8552ccf0c0#:~:text=Put%20your%20cursor%20where%20you,contents%20and%20choosing%20Update%20Field.) and [Table of Contents in Canvas](https://www.howtocanvas.com/create-amazing-pages-in-canvas/toc). |

## 2. Course design facilitates readability. (Understandable)

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|  | Related content is grouped using [headings](https://webaim.org/techniques/semanticstructure/#headings), [lists](https://webaim.org/techniques/semanticstructure/#lists), and [tables](https://webaim.org/techniques/tables/data). |
|  | Heading and body styles are consistent throughout the course. |
|  | [White space](https://webaim.org/techniques/textlayout/#whitespace) is used around content to help increase comprehension and reduce eye fatigue that occurs with large blocks of text, multiple images, or embedded media. |
|  | Learning activity and assessment instructions are presented in a consistent manner (e.g., common headings pattern of "instructions," "grading information," and "submission instructions"). |
|  | Naming conventions are consistent across the course (e.g., all references to Midterm 2 are "Midterm 2" rather than "Exam #2"). |
|  | [Font style and size](https://webaim.org/techniques/fonts/#readability) maximize on-screen legibility; simpler fonts used over more ornate. |
|  | Text is clearly distinguished from background and meets WCAG Accessibility guidelines. See WebAIM’s [Color Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/). |
|  | [Underlined text](https://webaim.org/techniques/hypertext/link_text#underlining) is only used for hyperlinks. |
|  | [Colors are not used arbitrarily](https://webaim.org/articles/contrast/), creating distraction and a lack of readability. |
|  | [Color alone](https://webaim.org/articles/contrast/#sc141) is not used to convey meaning. |

## 3. Text in the course is accessible. (Perceivable)

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|  | [Text is discoverable as text (PDF)](https://qualitymatters.org/sites/default/files/presentations/8tipsstandard8-qmconference2015-handout-detailed.pdf) instead of as images. |
|  | [Heading styles](https://webaim.org/techniques/semanticstructure/#headings) (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) are used and are placed in an order that communicates the hierarchy of information on a page or in a document. |
|  | [Text colors alone](https://webaim.org/articles/contrast/#sc141) are not relied on to convey meaning. |
|  | [Tables](https://webaim.org/techniques/tables/data) are used to organize information or data, rather than for layout. |
|  | Tables in documents are set up as text and not embedded as images. |
|  | [Tables are set up with headers](https://webaim.org/techniques/tables/data#th) for columns and, where appropriate, for rows. (See also [Inserting Tables in Canvas](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-insert-a-table-using-the-Rich-Content-Editor-as-an/ta-p/982), [Accessible PDF Tables](https://digitalaccessibility.uoregon.edu/guidelines/pdftables)). |
|  | [Tables have captions](https://webaim.org/techniques/tables/data#caption) and use alt text for complex table structure that require explanation. |
|  | Merged cells are avoided; they cannot be matched with relevant row and column headers. |
|  | PDFs should not be image scans; any [text contained in PDFs should be selectable and searchable](https://qualitymatters.org/sites/default/files/presentations/8tipsstandard8-qmconference2015-handout-detailed.pdf). (See Tip #4 on page 7.) |

## 4. Images in the course are accessible. (Perceivable)

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|  | [An infographic has alt text](https://www.csun.edu/universal-design-center/accessible-infographics-and-flyers-checklist) describing the basic parts of the infographic, moving from more general to more detailed. |
|  | The [decorative border](https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/#decorative) images in an assignment description indicate in the alt text that they are decorative and are bypassed by screen readers. ([Marking decorative images in Word](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/everything-you-need-to-know-to-write-effective-alt-text-df98f884-ca3d-456c-807b-1a1fa82f5dc2#:~:text=Decorative%20visual%20objects&text=People%20using%20screen%20readers%20hear,entry%20field%20becomes%20grayed%20out.) and [decorative images in PDF](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/PDF4.html)). |
|  | Figure captions provide descriptive context for images. Good captions are concise, accurate, and convey the essential information needed to grasp the image's relevance (e.g, Figure 1: Diagram of an Internal Combustion Engine). See ([Figure Captions in Word,](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/add-format-or-delete-captions-in-word-82fa82a4-f0f3-438f-a422-34bb5cef9c81#:~:text=Add%20captions,-Tip%3A%20If%20you&text=On%20the%20References%20tab%2C%20in,box%2C%20and%20then%20click%20OK.) [Figure Captions in HTML](https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTML/Element/figure)).  Note: Figure Caption and the image alt text should be distinct from one another and not merely a repetition of the same information. |

## 5. Video and Audio content in the course are accessible. (Perceivable)

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|  | [Video and audio content](https://webaim.org/techniques/captions/) includes alternative means of access for learners through the addition of captions or transcripts with equivalent information. |

## 6. Multimedia in the course is easy to use. (Operable)

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|  | Interactive elements integral to the content are cross-platform (PC, Mac) and cross-browser, or guidance is provided about the best browser to use. |
|  | Visual content that can be resized without loss of details and audio that can be clearly distinguished from background noise. |
|  | Audio or video players include controls such as pause, forward, rewind, resize, etc. and are operable by keyboard, not just by mouse. |

## 7. Technologies used in the course are accessible. (Robust)

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|  | 1. Technologies used in the course have been evaluated for accessibility. 2. Course includes links to accessibility information for technology used in the course (e.g., Canvas, Moodle, Zoom, Kaltura Mediaspace, etc.). Here are links to accessibility information for some of the most common technologies used on our campus:  * [Canvas Accessibility](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/What-are-the-Canvas-accessibility-standards/ta-p/1564) * [Zoom: Language and Accessibility Features](https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/category?id=kb_category&kb_category=f3a2be128720391089a37408dabb3588) * [Kaltura Mediaspace Accessibility Information](https://knowledge.kaltura.com/help/accessibility-in-kaltura-products) * [Turnitin Accessibility Guide](https://guides.turnitin.com/hc/en-us/articles/25790189900941-Accessibility) |

## 8. Accommodation and Inclusion statements are provided. (Robust)

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|  | [DRES Examples of Syllabus Accommodation Statements](https://dres.illinois.edu/faculty-staff-resources/instructor-information/3888-2/) |
|  | Faculty have the discretion to include a syllabus Statement of Inclusion they feel is relevant to their pedagogy. The current [Faculty Senate Resolution on Diversity Values Statement](https://diversity.illinois.edu/about/senate-diversity-resolution/) is a good starting point for that language. |
|  | Syllabus or technical support page in the course provides a link to Canvas guidance on how students can edit their [Feature Options for user-specific settings](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Observer-Guide/What-feature-options-can-I-enable-in-my-user-account-as-an/ta-p/391290) (such as high contrast mode, autoshow closed captions, link underlining, disabling keyboard shortcuts that may interfere with other keyboard commands for some assistive technology, etc.). |