

Accessibility in assessment

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Accessibility versus Accommodation

- **Accessibility** is a proactive process to remove and eliminate barriers during the design stage of an event, program, [lesson], or service.
- **Accommodation** is reactive and strives to remove barriers caused by inaccessible design. It is a process for ensuring people with disabilities have the same access as people without disabilities.

Verbiage and image on next slide taken from "[Accessibility @ UW-Madison](#)"

Considerations for creating accessible assessments

- Formative or summative assessment?
- Synchronous or asynchronous execution window?
- Media?
- Technology requirements for assessment media?
- Is the assessment material your own that you can freely manipulate, or is it sourced from other places such as question banks for instructors?

Information to develop and distribute in support of accessible assessments

- Borrowing from materials I received in 2017 as a new instructor at UNLV, “Decod[e] the assignment.”
 - What **purpose** does an assignment serve in support of a learning goal for the course material?
 - What **task** are the students expected to complete?
 - What **criteria** will be used to evaluate the quality of the task’s execution?
 - Rubrics
 - Samples of different levels of achievement

Special considerations for formative assessment

- Quality formative assessment requires feedback and feedback loops
 - How **timely** is the feedback you provide to your students?
 - How **accessible** is the feedback you provide to your students?
 - See Lori Delaney Johnson's presentation for more about how to make the quality of feedback more accessible to first generation law students.
 - Is the feedback structured so that it **invites questions** from the student to clarify and resolve confusion about the process or the substance?

Quick guidelines for print-based assessments

- Make the assessment context consistent with learning context
 - See Sandra Simpson's presentation on Ensuring Equitable Evaluation
- Items are amenable to accommodations
- Simple, clear, and intuitive directions
- Practice using inclusive language in the content of the assessment
 - See Allison Martin's presentation on inclusive language
- Maximize legibility by avoiding grey scale and shading; use a 14-point font size; use standard and bold typefaces rather than all caps or italics; avoid decorative or cursive fonts
- Text shouldn't be contained within an image (this negates the utility of screen readers).

Useful resources

- Metropolitan State University of Denver’s “[Instructional Accessibility Guides and Resources.](#)”
- [Universal Design for Learning](#) guidelines
- Joanna Cheetham & Dr Kate Evans, Centre for Innovation in Education, University of Liverpool, “[Designing inclusive and accessible assessments: A step-by-step guide](#)”
- “[Guidelines for Accessible Information](#)” ICT for information accessibility in learning
- “[How To & Tools](#)” at usability.gov