



MiraCosta College Web Accessibility Policy

The internet is a major source of information for many people. Acknowledging that MiraCosta College is engaged in Web page and Web site development for all its constituencies, this policy establishes minimum standards for Web page accessibility.

Web accessibility is an ongoing effort to make the Web more accessible to people with vision, hearing, and other disabilities. MiraCosta College policy is based on the guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), May 5, 1999.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that campus web pages adhere to the standards that have been adopted by the federal government. Consistency with Section 508 standards allows campus Web developers to benefit from the clear guidelines and extensive supporting materials developed in response to federal standards.

Local responsibility for adhering to the standards is prescribed by the federal government. Pivotal campus committees will bring together a variety of perspectives and concerns from computing staff, faculty, administrators, and student services. This team works with the MiraCosta College community to establish feasible guidelines for updating legacy or pre-existing Web pages, develop policy updates, and assure that ongoing training and support is provided to Web developers' campus-wide.

Following is the policy governing Web accessibility at MiraCosta College.

1. MiraCosta College endorses the Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which is composed of over 400 member organizations worldwide developing common protocols to promote the evolution of the World Wide Web and ensure its interoperability.

The standards of Section 508 are consistent with the W3C Guidelines and provide achievable, well-documented guidelines for implementation. Effective upon approval of this policy, all new or revised Web pages published or hosted by the college must be in compliance with the W3C standards defined in Section 508, specifically subsections 1194.1 through 1194.22 and subsection 1194.31. A revised Web page is a Web page where significant redesign of a page or a major revision of the content of a page takes place.

1.A. Reasonable effort must be taken to ensure that legacy Web pages are in compliance with these subsections of Section 508 no later than November 1, 2003. That effort will/must be documented. Legacy Web pages are considered those pages published prior to November 1, 2001.

1.B. Upon specific request and reasonable notification, information on legacy Web pages is to be made available to any individual needing access to such Web content, revision or otherwise. The department responsible for the creation of the information on the Web page will be responsible for providing access, with the assistance from the Access Specialist.

1.C. Upon specific request and reasonable notification, information on Web sites and Web pages in archive status (e.g. no longer in use but subject to records retention plans) containing core administrative or academic information, official records, and similar information) is to be made available/accessible to any individual needing access to such Web content, by revision or otherwise.

1.D. For items 1.A., 1.B. and 1.C. undue administrative or financial burdens may contribute to a determination that alternative formats be used to provide the information to individuals requiring use of the information.

2. Priority should be given to creating accessible Web pages for core institutional information such as course work, registration, advising, admission, catalogs, and student services information. Departments with large Web sites containing core institutional information should establish priorities for ensuring access to these pages according to the pages being used or requested most often. For setting priorities to make legacy Web pages accessible, the following guidance is suggested:

2.A. The top 20% of Web pages most frequently used (e.g. that get the largest number of hits) should be first priority for the department.

2.B. Pages required for participation, funding, disability-related services and other key pages needed by people with disabilities, not already in the top 20%, should also be first priority for the department.

2.C. Each department or college entity is responsible for determining the top 20% of Web pages used and other high priority Web pages.

2.D. Web pages specifically requested to be made accessible as part of a formal accommodation request shall be made accessible as soon as possible, or an equally effective alternative shall be provided. Equally effective means that it communicates the same information in as timely a fashion as does the Web page. Undue administrative or financial burdens may contribute to a determination that alternative formats be used to provide the information to individuals requiring use of the information.

3. Each college Web site must contain an accessible link or a person to contact if users have trouble accessing content within the site. This would usually be the Web page developer or department designee. Web pages should also contain the dates they are published and the dates they are updated.

Note: The addition of a contact person is not sufficient, in and of itself, in meeting accessibility guidelines.

4. It is recommended that a variety of Web browsing software (including text-only browsers), different workstations, and evaluation tools be used to test access to Web pages. For example, Cast's Bobby, A-Prompt, and WAVE might be used. Also, the page should be tested with a screen reader to ensure accessibility.

5. Faculty shall make known to Academic Information Services (AIS) if a course uses Web sites requiring graphical user interfaces, interactive screens, visualization tools, or use of audio material to demonstrate or explain key instructional material. In these cases, it is recommended that individuals with disabilities consult with faculty for academic guidance.

6. Text-only Web sites can be offered in cases where extraordinary measures would be necessary to make a Web site compliant.

7. Where compliance is not possible or may require extraordinary measures, exceptions to this policy may be granted by the (name of appropriate authority).