

CANVAS ACCESSIBILITY CHEAT SHEET

Thank you so much for referencing this guide as you build your Canvas site. This is designed to live by your side as a *reminder* of the common and critical elements of digital accessibility. This cheat sheet is not a substitute for training and indeed assumes you have taken the training.

General Tips

- *Automated checking is not sufficient either in review or during editing.*
- *Don't be fancy.* If you stick to the template, use Cidilabs for everything, avoid any unnecessary images and other decoration, avoid use of tables, and keep content succinct, clear, and well structured, you will easily be able to maintain accessibility standards.
- Use "Import Select Content" when rolling over sites and choose only what you absolutely need.

Headings

- All text that has the purpose of a heading needs to have an associated HTML heading tag.
- All text and images that do **not** have the purpose of a heading should **not** have a heading tag.
- Avoid using images as headings.
- Headings should be fully descriptive.
- Heading tags need to be tiered appropriately.
 - o Canvas provides an H1 automatically. The first heading on a Canvas page should be an H2; subsequent headings should follow a H2 -> H3 -> H4 structure.

How to test

- On each page, look at your content for any text that is behaving as a heading. Compare this to the heading list provided by Cidilabs accessibility checker. Remove/add tags where appropriate.

Lists and Tables

- All lists should have the appropriate HTML tags.
- Do not use tables to structure content; only ever use for appropriately tabular data and avoid where possible.
- If tables exist, they must be given full attention to ensure header column and rows have the right HTML tags.

How to test

- Check each page for tables and if they exist, check they have headers, and review and resolve any alerts prompted by the Canvas accessibility checker.

Accordions/Expanders/Tabs

- These are fine to use and preferable to tables. Use expanders instead of accordions.
- Cidilabs will set a heading tag on the panel headings – always review.
 - o Depending on the context, you may need to remove the heading tag entirely, or adjust the tier.

Use of Color

- Color must have sufficient contrast; consult our [color palette](#) from brand approved suggested combos.
- Color should not be the sole indicator of information (e.g. red being wrong).

How to test

- Review each page for the use of color and resolve any contrast issues raised by Canvas accessibility checker.

Text Style

- Do not use underline for emphasis; do not use all caps; do not change default font size; use left-aligned text; do not change styling for links.

Links

- Links should be descriptive out of context.
- If links are to files, note the file type in the link text (e.g. 2024-25 A123 Syllabus [PDF]).

How to test

- Cidilabs accessibility checker provides a list of the links on a page – review for sufficient description.

Images

- Provide context sensitive alt text for all images, max 120 characters; set as “decorative” where appropriate.
- Provide additional descriptive text if images include a lot of key information (e.g. a flowchart, infographic, images with a lot of text).
- Do not put text on top of images.

How to test

- Cidilabs accessibility checker provides list of images and their alt-text – review for completion and appropriate description.

Video

- Upload all videos to Panopto (unless externally created and hosted).
 - o Contract professional captioning for critical content videos that will be used widely and/or into the future.
 - o Other videos such as classroom recordings and optional course content can be left with auto-captioning unless an accommodation is required.
 - o Ideally, provide links to a transcript and audio file.

Navigation

- Use Modules to organize content.
- Page titles should be fully descriptive.
- Do not indicate place by direction (e.g. “links to the left”, “button in the top right”).

How to test

- Look at your list of pages (Pages -> “View all pages”) and check their titling.
- Look at your Modules and check titles of all items, including files and external links, are sufficiently descriptive when taken outside of their context within the Module.

Documents (including Handouts / Slides)

- Any documents shared on the Canvas site should be accessible.
- Same principles of digital accessibility apply.

Tools and Plugins

- Use of non-supported tools such as whiteboarding tools may require special accommodations.
 - o Contact OSA where necessary.
- All supported tools are vetted for accessibility.

Final Checking

- Remember, automated checking only captures 25% of possible errors. You must manually review each page.
- Check the Accessibility Dashboard app on the sidebar – click “Rescan” and assess the results.
 - o Address all errors and assess alerts.
- Ensure accessibility info block is visible on Homepage and “Report an Access Barrier” is on the sidebar.