

UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Name:	Rutgers University World Wide Web Accessibility Policy				
Section #:	70.1.5	Section Title:	Information Technology	Formerly Book:	
Approval Authority:	Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer	Adopted:	3/18/2016	Reviewed:	3/18/2016 01/17/2018
Responsible Executive:	Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer	Revised:	01/17/2018		
Responsible Office:	Office of Information Technology (OIT), Office of Disability Services, and Office of Employment Equity	Contact:	oir@rutgers.edu and dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu		

1. Policy Statement

This policy establishes standards for the accessibility and usability of web-based information and services to ensure compliance with applicable local, state and federal regulations and laws.

2. Reason for Policy

Rutgers University is committed to ensuring equal access to information, programs, and activities through its technologies, web pages, services and resources for all its constituencies.

3. Who Should Read this Policy

All University Administrative Councils and their representatives who support university business and academic activities through their web sites.

4. Resources

Rutgers has identified helpful hints, resources and trainings for faculty, staff and students that will assist in adhering to this policy: accessibility.rutgers.edu.

5. Definitions

I. **Assistive Technologies:** Assistive Technology includes but is not limited to any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

II. **University business and academic activities:** University business and academic activities refer to those activities that students, employees, faculty or visitors must access in order to effectively participate in a program, service, or activity offered by the university.

III. **Equally Effective: Equally effective means that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled**

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peers. Access is considered equally effective under this Policy where it communicates the same information and provides equivalent functions in as timely a fashion as does the web page or resource and affords persons with disabilities equal opportunity to achieve the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs. Providing equally effective access does not require that the alternate means provides the identical result or level of achievement for persons with and without disabilities.

- IV. **Information Technology Accessibility Council (ITAC):** The ITAC will be established to coordinate efforts to improve the accessibility of Rutgers Information Technology. The ITAC will be made up of IT and Web Technology Managers from departments and schools across Rutgers University. The Manager of Accessible Technology will be the Chair of the ITAC. ~~group and work with the chairs of each practice group proposed.~~
- V. **University Website:** Any website hosted by or for university units, organizations, faculty, students or staff that provides content related to university business or academic activities.
- VI. **Web Accessibility:** The practice of making web content *accessible* by applying specific principles for web design and programming that enable *assistive technologies* to function properly.

6. The Policy

All web pages newly created, redesigned, **or modified** by the University, any of its units, or any of its faculty on or after the establishment of this policy must be in compliance with the latest version of the World Wide Web Consortium's standard: [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Version 2.0 AA](#) conformance level. This policy applies to all University websites **and web content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through third-party vendors or open sources, except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden.**

Each University website, including legacy pages, must indicate, in plain text a method of contact for users having trouble accessing content within the site, using the following language: "Rutgers University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. If you have trouble accessing this page because of a disability, please contact [insert job title] at [insert phone number and email address]."

Each University web page must include the following statement, in plain text:

"Rutgers is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to direct suggestions, comments, or complaints concerning any accessibility issues with Rutgers web sites to: accessibility@rutgers.edu or complete the [Report Accessibility Barrier or Provide Feedback Form](#).

Web pages created or modified before the establishment of this policy are considered legacy web pages. Each University academic unit, department, or program, must establish priorities and timetables for updating legacy web pages. Priority must be given to creating accessible web pages for university business and academic activities - those activities that students, employees, faculty or visitors must access in order to effectively participate in a program, service, or activity offered by the university.

Web pages or resources 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 and provides the equivalent functions in as timely a fashion as does the web page or resource.~~

I. ~~Undue Burden:~~

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~~Where compliance is not technically possible or may require extraordinary measures due to the nature of the information and intent of the web page, a request for exception from this policy can be made. Units seeking an exception must submit a written request to the Manager of Accessible Technology with final approval by the Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer and the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. The written request should detail why compliance is not feasible and how the unit will make information from its web pages available to individuals with a disability in an equally effective manner.~~

I. **Requests for Exception to Requirement of Compliance with World Wide Web Consortium Standard:**

Rutgers units may request an exception to the Policy on the basis that compliance with the latest version of the World Wide Web Consortium's standard: (a) would result in a fundamental alteration to the content or functionality of the website, (b) would result in an undue burden (including financial or administrative burden), and/or (c) is not technically feasible. Such exception requests are subject to final approval by the Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Units seeking an exception must submit an [Exception Form](https://accessibility.rutgers.edu/) found at <https://accessibility.rutgers.edu/>. The written request should detail why the policy exception is being sought and how, if the requested exception is granted, the unit will:

- **Provide equally effective alternative access, and**
- **Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that individuals with disabilities will receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled peers.**

If an exception to this policy is granted, the University must still provide equally effective alternate access, to the maximum extent possible, to individuals with disabilities so that they receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled peers.

II. **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Status reports of progress related to this policy will be submitted at least annually to the ITAC by each college, school, department, program or unit of Rutgers University. The ITAC will determine appropriate reporting methods and the Administrative Council member will determine responsible parties for the report from their respective units. A summary of all reports will be submitted to the Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs by the ITAC members.

III. **Not covered by policy**

Individual web pages published by students, faculty, staff, or non-university organizations that are hosted by the university and do not conduct university-related business are encouraged to adopt the university's policy and standards but fall outside the jurisdiction of this policy.