



**THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY**  
WASHINGTON, DC

**Responsible University Official:** Assistant Vice President for Ethics, Compliance and Risk (as Interim)

**Responsible Office:** Office of Ethics, Compliance and Risk (as Interim)

**Policy Origination Date/Last Revised Date:** February 13, 2019

## **WEB AND DIGITAL CONTENT ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

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### **Policy Statement**

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To provide individuals with disabilities equal access to the university's programs, activities and services, all Digital Content and functionality, including University Website(s), developed, purchased, or used, will either conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines or be made available to users on request in an Equally Effective and Accessible Alternative manner.

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### **Reason for Policy**

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The George Washington University is committed to supporting an information technology environment that provides individuals with disabilities equal access to Digital Content and functionality, including University Website(s), that support the university's programs, activities and services.

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### **Who is Governed by this Policy**

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Faculty, staff, students, visitors, and university academic and administrative units and third-party vendors that create, procure and maintain Digital Content, including University Website(s), and functionality used in the programs, activities and services of the university.

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### **Policy**

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The George Washington University is committed to providing all Digital Content and functionality, including University Website(s), necessary for participating in university programs, services or activities in an accessible manner to all users,

including persons with disabilities pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

All existing university Digital Content and functionality, including University Website(s), must be made accessible to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, unless an Undue Financial or Administrative Burden or Fundamental Alteration is demonstrated. All new Digital Content and functionality developed for the university and all purchases of third party products with Digital Content and functionality are required to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. All hardware, software, programs, or other information technology procured to support access to university programs, services or activities also must conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Conformity with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines may create an Undue Financial or Administrative Burden or Fundamental Alteration due to the nature of the content, the purpose of the resource, the lack of accessible solutions, or an unreasonably high administrative or financial cost necessary to make the resource meet that goal. These difficulties do not necessarily relieve university programs or activities from meeting applicable legal obligations to provide reasonable accommodations to users in regard to access to the content and services provided. In the event of an established Undue Financial or Administrative Burden or a Fundamental Alteration, university academic and administrative units and other owners of Digital Content related to university programs, services and activities must be prepared to provide Equally Effective Alternative Access in a suitable alternative format or manner upon request. An Undue Financial or Administrative Burden and a Fundamental Alteration will be assessed and established by an administrative review conducted by the Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy.

Reports or Questions Concerning an Accessibility Issue: Individuals who are unable to access Digital Content related to university programs, services or activities, should contact the university's Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy at [comply@gwu.edu](mailto:comply@gwu.edu) or 202-994-3386 or through the Accessibility Feedback Form. That office will work with the appropriate university academic and administrative unit or other content owner to provide access to the content in question and to resolve the accessibility issue.

When a university academic and administrative units or other content owner receives notice of a complaint about the accessibility of Digital Content under their control or content is determined to be inaccessible, the unit or individual has thirty (30) days to address the issue. If the accessibility issue is not addressed within thirty (30) days of the notice, the university reserves the right to take the content offline until the issue is resolved.

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## Definitions

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**Digital Content:** Digital content or media is information available for download or distribution on electronic media and includes many forms, from text and audio and video files, to graphic, animations, and images.

**Equally Effective Alternative Access:** An alternative format or medium that communicates the same information in as timely and effective a fashion as does the original format or medium.

**Fundamental Alteration:** A change so significant that it affects the essential nature of the instruction, program or activity provided.

**Undue Financial or Administrative Burden:** A significant disruption, expense, or difficulty that may result by the provision of accessible information technology.

**University Website(s):** Websites and other online and social media platforms that are hosted on university servers or otherwise associated with the George Washington University.

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines:** A series of standards for digital accessibility, developed by the W3C, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Conformance Level AA, that promotes usability and best practices for web access to individuals with disabilities.

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## Related Information

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[Accessibility at GW](#)

[Disability Support Services](#)

[Disabilities Policy](#)

[Web Content Policy](#)

[GW Identity Standards & Guidelines](#)

[Website Terms of Use](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[GW Style Guide](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#)

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## Contacts

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Contact	Telephone	Email
Office of Ethics, Compliance and Privacy	(202) 994-3386	comply@gwu.edu

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## Document History

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- **Last Revised Date:** February 13, 2019
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## Who Approved This Policy

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Mark Diaz, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Forrest Maltzman, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Lorraine Voles, Vice President for External Relations

Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

*This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Ethics, Compliance and Privacy](#) homepage.*