CREATING ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS

Blackboard Learn

To ensure that students of any age or ability can access documents that you have made available for download in Blackboard, it is recommended that you follow these guidelines.

CREATING ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS

The Blackboard Learn platform conforms to accessibility standards, such as Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that students of any age or ability can access educational content without barriers. To ensure that your course's *content* also complies with accessibility standards, please review these resources when developing your materials:

- Blackboard Accessibility Matters (Recorded Webinar)
- Universal Design for Learning Guidelines
- Tutorials for Creating Accessible Documents
- Using YouTube to Host Videos and Provide Closed Captions

MAKE SURE THAT FILES HAVE FILE EXTENSIONS

A file extension is a part of a file's name that tells a computer what type of file it is and what program to open it with. It consists of a period and 3-4 letters that designate the file's type or format. Missing file extensions cause problems when attempting to upload and download files, or open files in software programs. If a file is missing its extension, it can be added by *renaming the file*.

Common File Extensions
- For Word files - doc, .docx
- For PowerPoint files - .ppt, .pptx
- For Adobe PDF files - .pdf
- For Excel files - .xls, .xlsx
- For image files - .jpg, .gif, .png
- For movie files - .mov, .mp4, .wmv
- For audio files - .mp3
- For web pages - .htm, .html

FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES IN NAMING FILES

Follow best practices for naming files to ensure that files will upload properly and prevent access errors.

- File names must be under 72 characters in length.

- File names must NOT include any special characters, such as the following:

- Back slashes, forward slashes, brackets or pipe symbols (/ \ < > { } [ ] |)
- Colons, semi-colons, question marks, exclamation marks, or asterisks (; : ? ! *)
- Percent, pound, dollar, or ampersand symbols (% # $ &)

- Avoid leading spaces and blank spaces in file names. Instead, use dashes (john-smith-homework.docx), underscores (john_smith_homework.docx), or use camel case (jSmithHomework.docx).

KEEP DOCUMENT FILE SIZES SMALL – STRIVE FOR 50 MB OR LESS

The larger a file is, the longer the file take to download and view on a computer or mobile device. To ensure generally quick download speeds for students accessing course materials, please consider compressing or optimizing your files for the web. Refer to these resources to learn more:

- Windows Guide to Compressing Files
- Reducing Word, PowerPoint, or Excel File Size
- Using Google Drive to Host Files and sharing files by link

Although the *maximum* file size that can be uploaded or downloaded from Blackboard is **250 MB**, uploading large files may result in error messages and technical difficulties for your students. For this reason, we advise against uploading large files, such as videos and podcasts, directly into your course. Instead, please use your MATC Google Drive to host the large files and share the files by link in your course. Simple links take up very little file space and can be added to your course through Blackboard's web links content type.

OFFER ALTERNATE FORMATS OF THE SAME FILE

Consider offering different file formats of the same file to allow students to view documents in a format that their computer or mobile device will support. For example, you could save your syllabus in PDF format and Word format to allow students to view the document within a web browser or within MS Word.