# Creating Learning Materials for All Students

ACU staff are encouraged to create a learning environment that is engaging, relevant and rigorously stimulates critical thinking. One of the ways to ensure that all students can engage and think critically is to provide an accessible environment regardless of their health condition or disability.

There will always be students who have [adjustments](https://staff.acu.edu.au/tools_and_services/services/disability-support/reasonable-adjustments) to ensure access to physical and online environments; however, it can be challenging to meet the needs of a diverse and often unknown group of learners. Following the principles of [Universal Design for Learning](https://staff.acu.edu.au/tools_and_services/services/disability-support/universal-design-for-learning), preparing early and asking for assistance, enables the development of material that enhances the accessibility and usability for all learners.

The expectation for the modern tertiary learning environment is that we meet our legal ([Disability Discrimination Act 1992](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00125) and [Disability Standards for Education 2005](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2005L00767)) and ethical obligations to create a fully accessible environment wherever it is possible to do so. If you are preparing materials or presenting to students in any capacity, the following suggestions can ensure that your learning materials are accessible to as many students as possible.

## Online materials:

* Format as original [accessible PDFs](http://www.adobe.com/accessibility.html) or [Word documents](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-Word-documents-accessible-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d) (rather than photocopied or scanned copies of articles which are often difficult to read). This will ensure documents can be read by screen readers, text to speech software or enlarged for vision impairments and print disabilities.
* Follow the formatting rules for screen readers, such as embedding URLs in descriptive hyperlinked words and using the Styles in Word to indicate titles and/or emphasis. Accessible formatting definitions and directions for Word can be found [here.](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-Word-documents-accessible-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d)
* Videos should be captioned. Further information can be found via [ADCET](https://www.adcet.edu.au/disability-practitioner/your-role/captions-and-online-video/)
* Images should have [text alternatives or image captions.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/)

## Hard Copy Materials:

* Where possible, hard copy materials should also be made available on LEO (in an accessible format).
* Create a clean look with plenty of white space.
* Use a plain font such as Verdana, Arial or Calibri in a size that is large enough to read easily.
* Provide [text alternatives](https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/) for images.
* Use colours that provide enough contrast to see clearly.

## Presentations:

* Use the same principles for online and hard copy materials to create an accessible presentation.
* For a series of guidelines and how to adjust your PowerPoint presentation, see [here.](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-PowerPoint-presentations-accessible-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25)
* In a live or recorded format, verbalise anything you want to emphasise from your slides. This should include describing pictures, stopping a video that has a section of non-verbal description to make evident what is going on, or verbally underlining (through pauses and/or restating) an important point.
* Do not rely on verbal descriptions or instructions. Instead, have multiple means of conveying information. Using images, or other modes of communicating information to get your point across helps all students, including those with disabilities, better understand and remember key concepts.
* For details on making your presentations more accessible to all students, refer to the [Universal Design for Learning](https://staff.acu.edu.au/tools_and_services/services/disability-support/universal-design-for-learning) page.

## Other Suggestions:

* Ensure your software is updated regularly, as updates can improve or add accessibility features.
* For more information on ensuring your course content is accessible, please see the [Guidelines to enhance the use of LEO.](https://staff.acu.edu.au/our_university/learning_and_teaching/technology_enhanced_learning/leo_guides)

Note:Costs incurred in making materials accessible are the responsibility of the department or faculty for whom the materials are intended.