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## Section 508 Rules and Regulations

### Accessibility

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, signed into law on August 7, 1998, updates the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 508 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requires all United States Federal Agencies with web sites to make them accessible to individuals with disabilities within 24 months of the inaction of this law: precisely on August 7, 2000. However, all states that receive federal funding under certain government acts are required to comply with these standards as well. Not all colleges and universities are required to follow these rules, but considering they also provide information access to the widest spectrum of the population, it has become standard for them to do so. Following are the basic provisions of Section 508.

#### A. Rules Applying to HTML

1. Text equivalents for every non-text element shall be provided.
2. Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
3. Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
4. Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
5. Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
6. Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.
7. Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
8. Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
9. Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
10. Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
11. A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.

12. When pages utilize scripting languages to display content or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
13. When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).
14. When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the forms shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the forms, including all directions and cues.
15. A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
16. When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

**B. Rules Applying to JavaScript and Other Plug-Ins**

1. When software is designed to run on a system that has a keyboard, product functions shall be executable from a keyboard where the function itself or the result of performing a function can be discerned textually.
2. Applications shall not disrupt or disable activated features of other products that are identified as accessibility features, where those features are developed and documented according to industry standards. Applications also shall not disrupt or disable activated features of any operating system that are identified as accessibility features where the application programming interface for those accessibility features has been documented by the manufacturer of the operating system and is available to the product developer.
3. A well-defined, on-screen indication of the current focus shall be provided that moves among interactive interface elements as the input focus changes. The focus shall be programmatically exposed so that assistive technology can track focus and focus changes.
4. Sufficient information about a user interface element including the identity, operation and state of the element shall be available to assistive technology. When an image represents a program element, the information conveyed by the image must also be available in text.
5. When bitmap images are used to identify controls, status indicators, or other programmatic elements, the meaning assigned to those images shall be consistent throughout an application's performance.

6. Textual information shall be provided through operating system functions for displaying text. The minimum information that shall be made available is text content, text input caret location, and text attributes.
7. Applications shall not override user selected contrast and color selections and other individual display attributes.
8. When animation is displayed, the information shall be displayable in at least one non-animated presentation mode at the option of the user.
9. Color-coding shall not be used as the only means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.
10. When a product permits a user to adjust color and contrast settings, a variety of color selections capable of producing a range of contrast levels shall be provided.
11. Software shall not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements having a flash or blink frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
12. When electronic forms are used, the forms shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the forms, including all directions and cues.