



## Accessibility Guidance

### Introduction

The UK's [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#) requires that resources and systems used within the public sector, including education, must be accessible to all users by design. The legislation requires that any content you add to NOW or any software you use with your students meets accessibility standards.

At NTU, **15%** of students disclose that they have a registered disability, learning impairment or suffer from a mental health condition. NTU's Student Services team estimates that this figure is likely to be more than **twice** that amount when accounting for students who choose not to disclose. In an average NTU module containing 55 students, up to 17 may require reasonable adjustments to resources.

Under accessibility legislation, you must make reasonable adjustments to your teaching to account for your students' additional learning needs. This guide provides simple advice to assist you in making your resources accessible. Specific guidance can be found in the [NOW Accessibility Statement](#).

### Accessibility Statements

The NTU [NOW Accessibility Statement](#) is a legal requirement and is published on NOW's login page. The statement highlights:

- The overall compliance level of NOW and related systems
- Links to the Accessibility Statements for each of the core platforms within NOW
- A roadmap for fixing non-compliant features
- A reporting mechanism for users to highlight accessibility issues
- Guidance to support the creation of accessible resources.

From 2021/22 Module-level Accessibility Statements are also required and have been added to all Module Learning Rooms. These are required to ensure we capture additional software or varying practices that could not be represented in a university-wide statement. It is the responsibility of each module team to update their Module Learning Room Statement, as required, to support their students' accessibility needs (see section below).

### Blackboard Ally

[Blackboard Ally](#) was introduced at NTU in July 2020 and provides you with a tool that increases awareness of the compliance levels of your materials hosted on NOW and offers detailed insight and guidance on how to improve the accessibility of your content. Step-by-

step instructions are available to fix most accessibility issues, whilst reports are available at the system and Learning Room level to identify common problems and resources that require attention. The Blackboard Ally report is accessed via a Learning Rooms 'More' dropdown menu and full training is available in [NOW Central](#).

Students can also benefit directly from Blackboard Ally through the ability to download the resources made available in a range of **alternative formats**, to add choice and flexibility to how they use this content. Alternative formats not only cater for the differing needs those users have but also to their **preferences**.

## How to be Compliant with Accessibility Regulations

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1. **Module Accessibility Statements should be completed before teaching on that module starts.** Statements should cover all software you use in the delivery of the module that is not already included in the NOW Accessibility Statement, the Module Learning Room's current Blackboard Ally score, any outstanding accessibility adjustments that need to be made, the reason why they have not been made, and if this will be changed in the future.
2. **Module Accessibility Statements must include any software used to deliver the module not listed in the NOW Accessibility Statement.** Youtube.com and other web-based tools count as software. If in doubt, check the NOW Accessibility statement to see if the software you are using is included. Software such as the Mentimeter, Kahoot, and Padlet applications are not fully supported by the University and so are not listed in the NOW Accessibility Statement; if used, they must be included in the Module Accessibility Statement.
3. **An 'acceptable' Blackboard Ally score is 90%.** You should aim to achieve this by the end of the modules third delivery week where possible.
4. **Module Accessibility statements should be updated when a significant change to the accessibility of the module occurs.** New content, digital activities, and software used in delivering a module will affect its accessibility. A significant change is classed as a 5% or greater difference in the Blackboard Ally score or the use of a new piece of unsupported software.
5. **Aggregated Blackboard Ally scores are reported on termly.** Best efforts should be made to maximise the Module Learning Room's accessibility score by week three of teaching and by three weeks before the end of each term, representing the busiest periods for NOW usage.
6. **Best efforts should be made to make content accessible before students have access to it.** Hidden content copied from previous years should be made accessible before they are made visible to students. It is not possible to separate the Blackboard Ally scores of visible and hidden content, so the score should be used with a line added to inform students that this number is artificially low and best efforts have been made to make all visible content accessible.

## **Making resources accessible**

A complete step by step guide for achieving compliance with accessibility regulations can be found in the 'Guidance for users on creating accessible content' section of the [NOW accessibility Statement](#).

[NOW Central](#) has expanded resources in the accessibility section with detailed step by step guides supported by screenshots.

If you would like to speak to someone about the content of this guide or compliance with the accessibility regulations, please contact Organisational Development at [Sharedserviceadmin@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Sharedserviceadmin@ntu.ac.uk).