

Information sheet concerning e-accessibility

1 What is always useful

Before we list some technical information concerning e-accessibility, here are some points which we would like to ask you to observe as a faculty member at all times. If you do, you will already be making a great contribution, particularly for the benefit of people with disabilities.

- Please always speak directly into the microphone and look at the camera. Eye contact helps people to understand the language. Please ensure that the lighting is good, i.e. good light on the speaker, among other things.
- Please pay attention to the various structural levels to ensure that screen readers can distinguish between individual levels.
- If possible, teaching materials should always be available before the course. This enables students with a visual or acoustic disability to follow the lecture as well as possible.
- If possible, films and video material should be subtitled (this can be set accordingly – for instance in Teams).
- It helps if at the beginning of a course, you indicate that it will be possible for the students concerned to contact you directly.

2 Definition

E-accessibility refers to the simple use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the internet, mobile apps and digital documents by people with disabilities. Websites must be developed in such a way as to enable users with disabilities to access the information. For example,

- for blind people, websites must be capable of being interpreted by programs which read out texts and describe visuals;
- for people with motor disabilities, all the contents and functionalities must be accessible and operable through the keyboard or other input devices;
- for people with impaired vision, websites require fonts with adjustable sizes and strongly contrasting colours; and
- for people who are deaf or whose hearing is impaired, audio contents should be accompanied by text versions of the dialogue. Videos in sign language can also contribute to making audio material more accessible.

3 Universal Design

The fundamental idea of e-accessibility is based on that of Universal Design. In this case, the aim is to compose user surfaces in such a way that they can be used by as many people as possible without any special measures, also by people with special needs. Where this is not feasible, Universal Design calls for adaptability to customary assistive technologies such as screen readers and screen voiceover programs for blind people. One important aspect of Universal Design is the demand for highly adaptable solutions for everyone. This is in contrast to various separate solutions for people with different needs.

4 Basis: Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) provides the elimination of and desistance from discrimination against people who avail themselves of services. If services are provided by the state, there is a ban on discrimination. People with disabilities are entitled to use government services such as public schools, libraries, swimming baths and official publications. In particular, the government's obligation to eliminate or desist from discrimination is also applicable to internet services provided by the political communities (Confederation, cantons and municipalities).

Cf. <https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20002658/>

5 E-accessibility standard eCH 0059 of June 2020

Version 3; status: approved; published on 25 June 2020; Federal Office for Equality of People with Disabilities

Digitally available information and services simplify disabled people's communication with public bodies and thus compensate for limitations to social and political participation.

In Switzerland, Art. 8(2) of the Federal Constitution demands non-discrimination against people with physical, mental or psychological disability (Swiss Confederation, 2018). The Disability Discrimination Act commits public authorities and licensed companies to taking measures to prevent, reduce or eliminate discrimination (DDA, 2017). Equal accessibility to information and services for the general public is also explicitly guaranteed in Art. 9 of the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (FDHA, 2018b).

This present eCH standard is primarily applied to all the information and services provided by public authorities and licensed companies. It provides public institutions and licensed companies in general, as well as further providers of online information and services, with the possibility of implementing their information and services in the internet, intranet and extranet according to standardised criteria while fulfilling their statutory mission at the same time.

This new version 3.0 replaces the standard eCH-0059 Version 2.0. The present version, eCH-0059 Version 3.0, is based on the internationally recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium W3C and makes additional use of instruments for the promotion of e-accessibility that is inspired by the e-accessibility directive of the EU.

The implementation of the present standard promotes the use of information and services that are on offer on websites and mobile apps and accordingly enables users access regardless of existing limitations or disabilities.

Cf. <https://www.ech.ch/de/standards/53932>

6 Guideline

This is where you can find information and procedures concerning

- barrier-free documents,
- barrier-free PDF documents,
- audio description and subtitling.

<https://www.edi.admin.ch/edi/de/home/fachstellen/ebgb/themen-der-gleichstellung/e-accessibility-/communicationnumeriqueaccessible2.html>

7 Barrier-free PDFs

Barrier-free PDFs are important for visually impaired people because digital text documents can be read out loud with the corresponding software. However, this only works well with PDF documents which are tagged accordingly, i.e. have the necessary metadata embedded, which is frequently not the case, though. This widespread problem has now been solved in a simple manner: make your PDF documents barrier-free directly in PAVE.

[PAVE – PDF-Barrierfreiheit Überprüfen und Verbessern \(pave-pdf.org\)](https://pave-pdf.org/)

8 Barrier-free websites

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are the international standard for barrier-free web contents.

The Swiss accessibilities checklist and explanations reveal the necessary technical, design-related and editorial measures for the creation of barrier-free websites.

People with disabilities make use of the internet with above-average frequency since barrier-free websites and apps allow for autonomy in everyday life. Elderly people use the internet, too. Therefore websites and apps have to be conceptualised as barrier-free as possible. Digital information and services are generally more user-friendly and less dependent on specific devices if they are barrier-free. The update accessibility checklist will help you check your website with regard to accessibility.

- The accessibility checklist will be available at [Accessibility-Checkliste 2.1](#) from December 2021.
- The beta version (in German) is already available through the following link: [Beta-Version Accessibility-Checkliste](#)
- Cf. also <https://www.access-for-all.ch/ch/richtlinien-barrierefreiheit.html>

9 StudyNet/Canvas

All the information about accessibility is directly available from Canvas.

<https://universitaetstgallen.sharepoint.com/:u:/s/teachinginnovationlab/EeWkimN6o6hAoyrQEujqMNwB-RZ8ozjkDy9MFGhMoWSOqA?e=O6auAx>

10 Teams

Teams offers numerous operating aids to make its use more barrier-free and simpler. For instance, live subtitling can be activated for Teams meetings. For this purpose, go to the control elements for meetings, select “More options” and then “Turn on live captions”.

- [Accessibility support for Microsoft Teams](#)

11 Helpful links

Insight in e-accessibility

- <https://einclusion.digitaldialog.swiss/de/2020>.
- [Schweizer Accessibility-Studie Online Shops](#) of the “Zugang für alle” foundation

Download options for barrier-free icons or players

- <https://www.edi.admin.ch/edi/de/home/fachstellen/ebgb/medien/download-icons-fuer-die-internet-barrierefreiheit.html>
- [Barrierefreier Player](#) of SwissTXT

E-accessibility at the Confederation

- <https://www.edi.admin.ch/edi/de/home/fachstellen/ebgb/themen-der-gleichstellung/e-accessibility-.html>

Comprehensive information

- <http://www.swissuniability.ch/de/Barrierefreiheit/Inklusionssensible-Hochschullehre>

Specially for events

- [Leitfaden Barrierefreiheit – Barrierefreie Kommunikation bei Veranstaltungen \(gpii.eu\)](#)

12 Sources

- <https://www.e-accessibility.ch/eaccessibility.html>
- <https://www.access-for-all.ch/ch/stiftung/geschaeftsleitung-und-team.html>
- [EBGB: E-Accessibility \(admin.ch\)](#)

If you have any questions and concerns, please contact the Special Needs Advice Center of the University of St.Gallen: specialneeds@unsig.ch.