

Policy 1211

Information Technology Accessibility

Date of Current Revision: April 2021

Primary Responsible Officer: Assistant Vice President for Information Technology and CIO

1. PURPOSE

This policy is established to support the James Madison University community in promoting equal access opportunity to information technology by the application of accessibility standards, guidelines, training, tools, and methods consistent with higher education. The aim is to provide this opportunity in a setting that fosters independence and meets the guidelines of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This policy sets forth accessibility standards and guidelines that reflect best practices for achieving the accessibility of information technology for use by persons with disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Virginia Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005 grants institutions additional authority over financial and administrative operations, on condition that certain commitments to the Commonwealth are met. Chapters 124 and 125 of the 2019 Virginia Acts of the Assembly and JMU's Management Agreement with the Commonwealth provide full delegated responsibility for management of the institution's information technology (IT) architecture, infrastructure, and ongoing operations, of which IT accessibility is a part. This delegation includes the authority to conduct these activities in accordance with industry best practices appropriately tailored for the specific circumstances of the university, in lieu of following Commonwealth-determined specifications. This policy documents the industry best practices with which the university will align its IT accessibility activities.

2. AUTHORITY

The Board of Visitors has been authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia to govern James Madison University. See Code of Virginia § 23.1-1600; § 23.1-1301. The Board has delegated the authority to manage the university to the president.

STATE OR FEDERAL STATUTE AND /OR REGULATION

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 USC § 701 et seq.), particularly Sections 504 and 508; The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq).

3. DEFINITIONS

Accessibility

The university objective that everyone within the university community, regardless of physical or technological readiness, will have the opportunity for appropriate access to information technology.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to colleges, departments, auxiliaries, research, and administrative entities with the Information Technology organization supporting the programs or services of the university.

5. POLICY

The procurement, development, and/or maintenance of information technology and user support services for persons with disabilities will be aligned with accessibility standards specified [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) and the most current "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), appropriately tailored to the specific circumstances of the university.

Accessibility standards must be designed to evolve and change, as newer technologies are introduced and user needs change. At the same time, the standards will maintain a consistent framework for accessibility training and support services. University information technology development, maintenance, training, and support personnel who are responsible for information technology procurement, programs, and services will possess professional credentials and/or an appropriate level of technical knowledge and experience related to accessibility standards for persons with disabilities.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 An overview of the university accessibility standards, guidelines, training, tools, and methods is available at <http://www.jmu.edu/computing/policy/>.

6.2 To learn more about accessibility issues related to this policy, please refer to the following:

- U.S. Government - [Americans with Disability Act](#) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504.
- U.S. Government - the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 508 standards (<http://www.section508.gov>).
- The **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)** (<http://www.w3.org>) is an international organization that develops inter-operable technologies (technologies that can communicate with each other), e.g., specifications, guidelines, software, and tools, to lead the Web to its full potential. W3C is a forum of information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding. Of particular relevance are the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0** (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10>) Copyright © 1999 W3C (MIT, INRIA, Keio) and the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0** (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20>) Copyright © 2005 W3C © (MIT, ERCIM, Keio), All Rights Reserved. W3C liability, trademark and document use rules apply.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Information Technology is responsible for the oversight of technology accessibility on campus.

All departments, offices, and employees that generate, receive, or maintain public records under the terms of this policy are also responsible for compliance with [Policy 1109 - Records Management](#).

8. SANCTIONS

None.

9. EXCLUSIONS

None.

10 INTERPRETATION

Authority to interpret this policy rests with the president and is generally delegated to the assistant vice president for information technology and CIO.

Previous version: March 2019

Approved by the President: September 2008