VLE Accessibility statement

This statement applies to content published on the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment (https://online.manchester.ac.uk/). Other websites that also belong to The University of Manchester and use manchester.ac.uk sub-domains are managed locally and will publish separate statements with information relevant to them. These include websites of our academic Schools and research institutes, among others.

We want as many people as possible to be able to use our website and we are continually working towards improving its accessibility. We follow general principles of usability and universal design, and endeavour to meet level 2 (AA) of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.

Our website will allow you to:
- zoom in up to 200% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate most of the website using just a keyboard or speech recognition tools
- listen to most of the website using a screen reader
- view essential audiovisual information (captions or transcriptions are provided in most cases)
- use browser settings to change font and background colours to allow high contrast

Blackboard Inc provide detailed information about the Blackboard Learn software application and its accessibility along with a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) on their website.

Detailed Blackboard Learn accessibility information

How accessible this website is

We know that some parts of the Blackboard application are not fully accessible, such as:

- Increase in magnification of text beyond 200% gives some layout issues with the global navigation menu disappearing
- The use of italics in some parts of the application
- In small text entry boxes, the browser spell check doesn't work
- One button which, in mobile responsive mode, doesn't have a text alternative
- The calendar tool uses colour to indicate information (with no alternative provided) and the date picker is not operable via keyboard
- Colour contrasts may not always meet recommended WCAG guidance
- Some older PDF documents may not be fully accessible to screen reader software
- Some videos added to Learn may not have subtitles

This statement refers to core Blackboard functionality. The service is used to share content between staff and students which means that staff (and sometimes students) can inadvertently make changes to the system which make it less accessible. They may also upload documents and other content which isn't accessible.

Please see the Technical Information section below for more detailed information on known accessibility issues.

Making changes to your device

AbilityNet has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

Also, the University's Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) website offers up-to-date information for prospective students and staff with specific learning difficulties, disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health difficulties and medical conditions.

Reporting accessibility problems with this website

Please contact us if you require information on this website in a different format, have an accessibility query (including about content not within the scope of the accessibility regulation), identify any problems not listed on this page or think we're not meeting accessibility requirements. Please provide the web address (URL) of the page(s) in which you find the problem, a description of the issue and your name. We will consider your request and get back to you within ten working days.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations'). If you're not happy with how we respond to a complaint about accessibility please let us know. If you remain unsatisfied, contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).

Technical information about this website's accessibility

We are committed to making our website accessible, in accordance with the accessibility regulations.

This website is partially compliant with the WCAG 2.1 AA standard, due to the instances of non-compliance and exceptions listed below.

Non-accessible content
The content listed below is non-accessible for the following reasons:

Non-compliance with the accessibility regulations
The Blackboard Learn application fails to meet the following WCAG 2.1 AA Success Criteria:

Issues with navigation, text and images:
- There is some use of italics on key user information (Not success criteria specific)
- User-validation is inconsistent and often uses pop-up error messages to highlight an issue. (Not success criteria specific)
- Some images do not have a text alternative, so people using a screen reader cannot access the information. (WCAG: 1.1.1).

- Some semantics are missing (some headings not marked up as such, some lists not marked up as such, some tables not marked up as such). Tables are used for layout purposes on some pages. (WCAG: 1.3.1)
- The current day on the calendar is highlighted by colour-alone. (WCAG: 1.4.1)
- The application has a single page title across all pages – different pages are not distinguishable from each other using the page title. (WCAG: 2.4.2)
- Text is resizable to 200% throughout the Blackboard Learn 9.1 web application without a loss of content or functionality, however, any further increase in size causes formatting and usability issues. (WCAG: 1.4.4)
- Some fields and checkboxes do not have labels. (WCAG: 3.3.2)
- The browser's spell check doesn't always work with text fields (although it works on text areas). (WCAG: 3.3.5)

We are working to resolve the issues above as soon as possible.

Issues with video and audio:
- Not all audios or videos with audio have captions or transcriptions. We aim to offer an alternate version of all videos and audios published on or after September 2020. However, older videos and audios may not have an alternate version. (WCAG: 1.2.2)
- Some videos without audio that ideally should have audio descriptions do not have this (WCAG: 1.2.5).

We are working to develop transcripts or other alternative versions of all our videos and audios published on or after September 2020.

Content that's not within the scope of the accessibility regulations

PDFs and other documents
Some non-essential PDF documents that were published before 23 September 2018 may not be fully accessible. All subsequent PDF documents will comply with accessibility regulations.

Third party-content
Our site uses third-party content which may not be fully accessible. This includes content we publish on social media channels such as Twitter or You Tube, or documents hosted on the digital platform Issuu. We are responsible for ensuring the accessibility of the content we produce, however we have no control over the accessibility of these platforms.

Live video
Our live videos don't have captions.

How we tested this website

The Blackboard Learn 9.1 website platform was tested by Blackboard Inc. and results are available in the VPAT for Blackboard Learn Original experience dated 5 September 2018.

[Detailed Blackboard Learn accessibility information](#)

This publicly-accessible VPAT shows conformance with WCAG 2.0. Blackboard have provided an interim VPAT for Blackboard Learn dated August 12th 2019 which shows conformance with WCAG 2.1.

In addition, staff in the University's e Learning teams carry out regular monitoring of the accessibility of files uploaded to Blackboard, using the Blackboard Ally institutional report. Reports are produced on a monthly basis, and issues identified are used to target staff development activities.

What we're doing to improve accessibility

We have an ongoing programme of work to address any accessibility issues that are highlighted by our local testing. We are continually working on our content and site structure, and finding ways to make the site more intuitive and easy to navigate. We are developing guidelines on how to create accessible content to help those colleagues working on our websites.

This statement was prepared on 22/09/2020.