Accessibility Tips for Assessments

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While assessments are always a challenging time for students around the world, there are a few things that JIBC can do to reduce barriers. At JIBC, we focus on reducing the cognitive, motor, and physical load for students and provide an equivalent experience to all learners.

Making assignments more accessible

Creating assignments that are accessible is crucial. While Blackboard Learn does most of the job of making assignments accessible, you can still take these additional steps if you are creating assignments in word and uploading it as pdf. Here is a checklist for you to follow when creating assignments in word. It's always a good idea to give a downloadable version for students to download and work on it offline.

Accessibility Checklist[1] for Word

- Create content structure: Use styles for headings and subheadings.
- Add enough contrast to the text for readability. Use the contrast checker to ensure your text has enough contrast.
- If inserting images, create a descriptive alt text that provides equivalent experiences to students using alternate formats.
- Use descriptive text for hyperlinks: If your assignment guides students to read from an external link, add descriptive text. For example, "read the passage on communication skills" instead of using generic text like "click here."
- Use a 12-point (or higher) font size for body text in Word documents. Use accessible fonts such as Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Times New Roman, Tahoma, and Verdana.
- Support audio and video with transcripts or closed captioning. If the assignment requires the student to listen to audio or watch video, remember to support it with a transcript and/or closed captioning.

Suggestions for Assignments and Self-Reflections in Blackboard

- Provide assignments in alternate formats. To ensure accessibility, follow the checklist for Word documents above.
- Then check your assignment's Accessibility Score using Blackboard Ally. Watch a 2-minute intro video on Blackboard Ally.
- Use simple and easy-to-understand language when creating quizzes or assignments.

- Develop assignments throughout the term and pace them to allow sufficient time for student reflection.
- Include the rubric with the assignment to provide clear grading criteria.
- Consider breaking down large assignments and building upon them over the course of the term.
- Avoid rigid due dates and allow for flexible submission.
- Specify word count requirements in the assignments so students know what is expected.
- Consider adding due dates to the course calendar to help students track their deliverables.
- Recognizing human limitations in short-term memory, include additional details upfront, such as:
  - Due date
  - Expected word count to clarify the scope (e.g., "Essay should be approximately 500 words")
  - Points possible
  - Weightage

Assignment #3 – Case Study

Poster assignment

We suggest you view the required presentation style on assignment education tutorial before completing the assignment. Your final assignments for this course involve creating and presenting three of these:

- a structured abstract (a "Research Brief" with a maximum of 2000 words to be submitted as PDF),
- an academic poster (A4 size pdf in maximum of 1MB),
- and a three-minute presentation.

These will be based on the article/paper you are producing in your Capstone course.
Due Date:
Points possible = 50
Weightage total = 20%

General suggestions for exams

Ahead of Online Exams:

- Provide students with details regarding technological requirements in advance.
- Allow students to perform a browser check before the exam. Alternatively set up a practice exam beforehand to familiarize students with the format.
- Permit the use of JIBC-approved read-aloud plugins/software, which students can download before the exam.
- If using a proctoring tool, communicate all external requirements ahead of time.

During the Exam:

- Provide contact information for technical support on exam day if students encounter any technical difficulties.
- Students report use of screen readers help with exam anxiety. For in person exam plan for a Reader who also acts as an invigilator. For online exam, consider making provisions that allow students to use Chrome extension screen readers.
- Allocate sufficient time for students to complete the exam.
- Allow students to review their test and retain the option to backtrack or review previous questions.
- When including a timer in an online exam, explain to students upfront how it will operate and allow them to manually submit their answers instead of a force submission.
- For essay and short answer questions, inform students about the expected word count to clarify the scope.
- Grant extra time accordingly for student that needs accommodation.

Resources

[1] *This checklist adapted from [Checklist for Accessibility](#), [Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition](#) by BCcampus, CC BY 4.0.*