University of Reading
Blackboard Learn VLE
accessibility statement

This accessibility statement applies to Blackboard Learn, the Virtual Learning Environment for the University of Reading, and should be read in conjunction with the University's general accessibility statement.

The University of Reading is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment which offers all of our learners the opportunity to maximise their academic potential. This commitment is set out in the Policy on Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, and applies equally to the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

Accessibility statement for Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is the centrally supported Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at the University of Reading.

Blackboard Learn is a commercial product, which is now being designed and developed in accordance with the internationally recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA as well as the US Section 508 standards.

Blackboard provides information about the company's approach to accessibility at https://help.blackboard.com/Accessibility.
How accessible is the Blackboard Learn platform?

On the Blackboard Learn login page, you can choose to enable a high contrast setting. This ensures the system uses the contrast settings you already defined in your operating system to display text, menus, and other navigation controls within the Blackboard Learn environment.

See [Accessibility Features in Blackboard Learn](#) for help with this.

When using Blackboard Learn you should be able to

- Resize text up to 200% without a loss of content or functionality.
- Navigate the website using a screen reader.
- Navigate the website using just a keyboard.

We know some parts of the Blackboard VLE are not fully accessible. For example

- Pinch zoom is disabled for touch screen.
- Date picker controls cannot be operated using the keyboard in dialogs on the calendar screen.
- Some buttons cannot be operated using the spacebar.
- Some parts of the application lack semantic information
  - Some headings are not marked up as headings.
  - Some lists are not marked up as lists.
  - Some data tables are not marked up as tables.
  - Tables are used for layout purposes on some screens.
• Blackboard has a single generic page title that does not identify individual pages within the website.

• The current day on the Calendar is displayed visually by colour alone.

• Blackboard sessions time out without warning the user, or offering a chance to extend the session.

Information on accessibility in Blackboard Learn can be found at https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Administrator/Hosting/Accessibility

This includes links to information on

• Accessibility compliance of Blackboard Learn
• The structure of Blackboard Learn pages
• Landmarks
• Keyboard navigation in Blackboard Learn
• Using screen readers with Blackboard Learn
• Quick links
• Content editor math formulas
• Interactive tools
• Accessibility training resources for staff

Information on specific accessibility features in Blackboard Learn can be found at https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Accessibility/Accessibility_Features
This includes links to information on

- Using Blackboard Learn with a hearing impairment
- Using Blackboard Learn with a visual impairment
- Using Blackboard Learn with a mobility impairment
- Using Blackboard Learn with a learning disability
- Accessibility features in Blackboard Learn
- Display options and content folders

Blackboard Learn makes use of some additional Blackboard tools which have a separate accessibility statement:

- **Blackboard Ally**
  [https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Student/Accessibilit y](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Student/Accessibility)
  Blackboard Ally is currently tested for conformance against WCAG 2.0.

- **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**
  [https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Administrator/Access ibility](https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Administrator/Accessibility)

Some Blackboard functionality is also available via mobile apps, for which there are separate accessibility statements. These are

- **Blackboard** (for students)
  [https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_App/Accessibility](https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_App/Accessibility)

- **Blackboard Instructor** (for staff)
  [https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_Instructor/Accessibility](https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_Instructor/Accessibility)
The mobile apps are currently tested for conformance against WCAG 2.0.

How accessible is the content available on the Blackboard Learn platform?

While specific statements can be made about the accessibility of the Blackboard VLE platform itself, content stored within the Blackboard Learn VLE will have been created and uploaded by a wide variety of academic and administrative support staff, and the accessibility of this content may vary accordingly.

In view of its commitment to making website content as accessible as possible, the University has purchased Blackboard Ally, which enables all users to access content uploaded to Blackboard courses and organisations in a range of alternative formats.

The alternative formats available depend on the nature of the original file in Blackboard. See https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Student/Alternative_Formats for details.

General hints on using accessibility features in your web browser

The University Library has produced an Inclusive technology guide which includes details of assistive technologies and free features in Browsers, Windows, and Microsoft Office applications that can support you working online.
AbilityNet has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

**Third party tools**

Certain third party tools, content and/or functionality are integrated into our Blackboard VLE, and these have their own accessibility statements.

These tools include

- **Turnitin**
  Accessibility information can be found at [https://www.turnitin.com/about/accessibility](https://www.turnitin.com/about/accessibility)
  This includes VPAT documents for
    - Student Feedback Studio and Online Grading Interface
    - Student Feedback Studio Text Only Similarity Report
    - Student PeerMark Interface

- **Campus Pack**
  There is currently no VPAT for Campus Pack, but the product is covered by the Cengage accessibility and usability commitment. at [https://www.cengage.com/accessibility](https://www.cengage.com/accessibility)

- **Maple TA**
  VPAT at [https://digitaled.com/support/vpatmobius](https://digitaled.com/support/vpatmobius)

- **Mediasite**
  VPAT documents at [https://support.sonicfoundry.com/knowledge/article/000003971](https://support.sonicfoundry.com/knowledge/article/000003971)

- **Qwickly**
  VPAT documents at [https://www.goqwickly.com/accessibility](https://www.goqwickly.com/accessibility)
  Currently tested for conformance against WCAG 2.0.
Where we choose to feature third party content or functionality on the Blackboard Learn VLE, we are responsible for ensuring it meets accessibility standards.

Where we are legally required to feature third party content or functionality, we cannot reasonably accept responsibility for ensuring it meets accessibility standards.

**What to do if you are experiencing accessibility issues**

If you have any problems accessing Blackboard, or tools such as Turnitin which are integrated into Blackboard, please contact the IT Service Desk:

- email it@reading.ac.uk
- call 0118 378 6262
- self service portal https://uor.topdesk.net/tas/public/login/form
- You can expect a response within 2 working days.

If you need content featured on the Blackboard Learn VLE in a different format, and you are having problems accessing the necessary format(s) facilitated via Blackboard Ally (such as tagged PDFs, large print, easy read, audio recording or electronic braille), please contact the web accessibility team at WebAccessibilityTeam@reading.ac.uk.

You can expect a response within 2 working days.

If you find any problems that aren’t listed in this statement, or think we’re not meeting the requirements of the accessibility regulations, please contact: legalservices@reading.ac.uk.
Enforcement procedure

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the accessibility regulations. If you’re not happy with how we respond to your complaint, contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).

Technical information about this website’s accessibility

The University of Reading is committed to making its VLE accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The Blackboard VLE is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard, due to the non-compliances listed below.

Non accessible content

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

Non compliance with the accessibility regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Remarks and explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1.1 Non-text Content</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>The menu button in mobile responsive mode is created using CSS without a text alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **1.3.1 Info and Relationships** (Level A) | The Blackboard Learn 9.1 web application does not define some semantics. Examples include:  
  - Some headings are not marked up as headings.  
  - Some lists are not marked up as lists.  
  - Some data tables are not marked up as tables.  
  - Tables are used for layout purposes on some screens. |
| **1.3.2 Meaningful Sequence** (Level A) | The correct reading sequence is not programmatically determinable for tabular data that has not been marked up as a data table. |
| **1.4.1 Use of Colour** (Level A) | The current day on the calendar is displayed visually by colour-alone. |
| **2.1.1 Keyboard** (Level A) | Date picker controls cannot be operated using the keyboard in dialogs on the calendar screen.  
  Some buttons cannot be operated using the spacebar. |
<p>| <strong>2.2.1 Timing Adjustable</strong> (Level A) | The Blackboard Learn 9.1 web application session times out without warning the user or offering a chance to extend the session. |
| <strong>2.4.1 Bypass Blocks</strong> (Level A) | Blackboard Learn 9.1 uses landmark regions to assist navigation, but the majority of the content is not contained within a landmark region. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.4.2 Page Titled</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>Blackboard Learn 9.1 has a single generic page title that does not identify individual pages within the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.4.3 Focus Order</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>Blackboard Learn 9.1 has a meaningful focus order, with some exceptions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus goes to items in the hamburger menu when it is closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The focus order does not match the screen order in some places, such as the general header.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Non-interface elements, such as headings, are included in the keyboard tab order on some screens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.4.4 Link Purpose (In Context)</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>Social media links do not adequately describe the target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.5.3 Label in Name</strong> (Level A 2.1 only)</td>
<td>Some form fields in quizzes have additional text descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.2.2 On Input</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>Expanding a disclosure button in the accordion moves focus to the list in the associated panel in the Global Navigation panel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3.2 Labels or Instructions</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>Some edit fields do not have a label.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some checkboxes do not have a label.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
<td>Remarks and explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1.1 Parsing</strong> (Level A)</td>
<td>Blackboard Learn 9.1 has minor parsing issues on some pages. Some pages contain duplicate id attribute values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **4.1.2 Name, Role, Value** (Level A) | Blackboard Learn 9.1 provides the correct name, role, state, and other important accessibility information for most form controls, but there are some issues that may prevent people using assistive technologies from completing their task:  
  - There are several instances throughout the application where regions are given an application role, which suppresses native HTML semantics in those regions.  
  - Disclosure buttons do not have a button role, or other relevant properties for a disclosure button.  
  - The hamburger menu does not have a button role, and accessible name, or other relevant properties for a menu button.  
  - Dialogs do not have a dialog role, or other relevant properties for a dialog.  
  - Some form controls do not have an accessible name, and the required and error state is not conveyed.  
  - Some elements have incorrect roles. The main content area has a role of list but contains regular content that is not a list. |
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</table>
| **1.3.5 Identify Input Purpose**<br>(Level AA 2.1 only) | The data entry format is identified for most form fields, with the following exceptions:<br>  
  - Password field<br>  
  - Date and Time fields<br>  
  - Numeric fields                                                                                                                                 |
| **1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum)**<br>(Level AA)        | Light grey text on some screens has insufficient contrast.<br>Checkbox labels on the updates screen have insufficient contrast.                             |
| **1.4.4 Resize text**<br>(Level AA)              | Pinch zoom is disabled for touch screen.                                                                                                                                 |
| **1.4.11 Non-text Contrast**<br>(Level AA 2.1 only) | Most images and other non-text content in Blackboard Learn 9.1 have at least a 3:1 colour contrast ratio, with the following exceptions:<br>  
  - Icons in the left navigation on a course page<br>  
  - Reorder content icon<br>  
  - Settings icon<br>  
  - Some disclosure buttons                                                                                                                        |
| **2.4.6 Headings and Labels**<br>(Level AA)       | Visually hidden headings in the top navigation panel have heading text that does not match the content that follows.                                        |
| **2.4.7 Focus Visible**<br>(Level AA)            | Focus goes to hidden links when the hamburger menu is collapsed.<br>A hidden link receives keyboard focus on the Add Module screen.                        |
The majority of content in Blackboard is created and maintained by University academics and professional support staff. As a result, the accessibility of such content may vary greatly. We are aware that

- Older PDFs may not be accessible to screen reader software.
- Word documents and other files may not be fully accessible, for instance because they lack headings, or contain images that are missing a description.
- Videos may lack captions or transcripts.

In some cases, uploaded content may have accessibility defects which mean that the alternative formats provided by Blackboard Ally are not able to significantly improve the accessibility of that content. For instance, where text files lack proper structure, or where no alternative description has been provided for images.

The University is working to raise awareness of the importance of accessibility, and to help staff improve the accessibility of their teaching and learning materials.

Ally also alerts University staff to content with accessibility issues, and helps them to improve the accessibility of this content. For more information on Blackboard Ally please see these help pages:

- Students

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**Criterion** | **Remarks and explanations**
---|---
Some focusable items have no visual indication of focus.
Content delivered via School portal tabs within Blackboard is the responsibility of the relevant School. This content is not currently covered by Blackboard Ally. Schools are working towards moving such content to areas within Blackboard which are supported by Blackboard Ally.

**Disproportionate burden**

**Content that is not within the scope of the accessibility regulations**

**PDFs and other documents**

Many of our older PDFs and Word documents do not meet accessibility standards - for example, they may not be structured so they’re accessible to a screen reader. This does not meet WCAG 2.1 success criterion 4.1.2 (name, role value).

The accessibility regulations do not require us to fix PDFs or other documents published before 23 September 2018 if they’re not essential to providing our services. We will not be attempting to improve the accessibility of files uploaded to Blackboard courses for any academic year prior to 2019-20.

The University will work to ensure that content uploaded for use in 2019-20 and beyond is fully accessible.

• Staff
  
  https://sites.reading.ac.uk/tel-support/2018/08/15/getting-started-with-blackboard-ally/
How we tested this website

The Blackboard Learn website platform at https://www.bb.reading.ac.uk was tested by Blackboard Inc. and results are available in the VPAT for Blackboard Learn Original experience dated 5 September 2018.

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 (University login required).

In addition, staff in the University’s Technology Enhanced 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.

This statement was prepared on 23rd September 2019. It was last updated on 28th November 2019.