

29.01.99.S1 Web Accessibility and Usability



Revised [July 10, 2023](#)

Next Scheduled Review: July 10, 2028

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Rule Summary

The Texas A&M University System Offices (SO) is committed to making its websites accessible and usable. The accessibility goal for all new or redesigned web pages or content is that they are designed and created to be accessible to, and usable by, all users. SO must comply with Texas Administrative Code that implements the access standards of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The intended audience for this rule is personnel who develop and maintain SO web pages.

Definitions

Unless stated otherwise, all terms used in this rule have the meaning assigned by System Policy 29.01, *Information Resources*.

Rule

1. Applicability

- 1.1 The standards referenced in Texas Administrative Code, Title 1, Section 206.70 (TAC 206.70) and Chapter 213 (TAC 213) apply to all electronic content and functionality.
 - 1.1.1 Content must at a minimum meet the standards and requirements imposed at the time of publication to TAMUS.EDU.
 - 1.1.2 Content includes HTML web pages, web applications, and any of the following posted, embedded, or linked to from SO websites; for example, TAMU.EDU, TAMUS.ORG, and IT.TAMUS.EDU, etc. Attached documents (Word, PDF, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.); electronic forms (includes HTML and PDF forms); video and video players, audio files (including podcasts); interactive content; and live or recorded web events (webinars, webcasts, online presentations, etc.).
- 1.2 Inaccessible content posted by SO departments to third party websites (including social media or other cloud computing websites) must have an accessible alternative posted from SO websites; for example, TAMU.EDU, TAMUS.ORG, and IT.TAMUS.EDU, etc.

A link to mirrored content located on TAMUS.EDU must be visible on the third-party site.

- 1.3 General Exception: Compliance with Sections 1.1 and 1.2 is not required if both Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 are met. When using this exception, content owners must provide a disclaimer that states the following: “The following content was not authored, procured, or commissioned by The Texas A&M University System Offices. SO cannot make any assurances as to the level of accessibility of this content.”

1.3.1 The content is not essential for accomplishing the mission of The Texas A&M University System.

1.3.2 The content comes from a party that is not another entity and not procured through a formal contract, inter-agency agreement, or other formal agreement.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 The SO’s electronic and information resources (EIR) accessibility coordinator (EIRAC) also supports the web accessibility (WA) coordinator. Responsibilities of the WA coordinator are as follows:

2.1.1 Develop and maintain a web accessibility plan including metrics to measure progress and plan implementation;

2.1.2 Monitor compliance in achieving accessibility through reports generated with the use of automated accessibility validation software, applications, manual testing, and other tools as appropriate;

2.1.3 Request access to web accessibility reports from the website content owners and/or web page content owners that indicate the accessibility level of web pages and overall progress towards accessibility in their respective areas;

2.1.4 Coordinate with the system chief information officer, or designee, in approving or disapproving an exception for web accessibility;

2.1.5 Serve as a contact for technical questions and provide informational and tutorial/instructional resources (e.g., links) for website content owners; and

2.1.6 Set deadlines for remediation.

- 2.2 The responsibilities for website owners include:

2.2.1 Review and assess web accessibility reports for progress.

2.2.2 Communicate and reinforce the achievement of web accessibility goals.

- If website owners (and web page owners) do not have the expertise to author accessible content, they must arrange for services to be provided, either by contacting the SO’s EIRAC or other webmasters with the appropriate expertise. Content owners must initiate these services with sufficient time to develop and validate accessible content.

- If it is not possible for the website owner to obtain an accessible version of electronic content before publication, the content owner must request, and the webmaster may grant, a two-week grace period.
- If accessible content is not submitted by the end of the grace period, the webmaster must notify SO's EIRAC immediately to determine what action should be taken.

3. Web Pages and Web Applications

All new or redesigned web pages or content must comply with the requirements of 1 Texas Administrative Code Chapters 206 and 213, unless the chancellor or designee has approved the exception through the Exception Request Process, pursuant to Texas Government Code § 2054.460.

4. Exception

- 4.1 An exception must be based on a determination that compliance would impose significant difficulty or expense for SO. At a minimum, an exception must include a date of expiration, a plan for an alternate means of access for persons with disabilities, a justification for the exception, and documentation of how SO considered all resources available for the purpose for which the EIR is being developed, procured, maintained, or used. Examples include, but are not limited to, budgets, grants, and alternative vendor or product selections.
- 4.2 Any request for an exception to Texas Department of Information Resources accessibility rules must be submitted to the SO's EIRAC for review and processing.
- 4.3 New, redesigned, and modified web pages are to be tested by the web page owners using one or more Section 508, or equivalent, validation tools in conjunction with manual procedures to validate compliance with 1 TAC § 206.70 and federal requirements unless an exception is approved through the Exception Request Process, pursuant to Texas Gov't. Code § 2054.460.

5. Web Pages

- 5.1 All SO homepages and key public entry points must include an "Accessibility" link or a "Site Policies" link to a web page that contains the SO's accessibility policy; a site validation standard (i.e., § 508); contact information for the SO's WA coordinator; and a link to the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities website.
- 5.2 All web pages must avoid vendor-specific, "non-standard" extensions and comply with applicable internet standards. For example, use the Internet Engineering Task Force for internetworking technology or methodology (e.g., SSL) and the W3C for markup/style sheet languages (HTML, XML, CSS, etc.).
- 5.3 All web pages must implement the following metadata, following the TRAIL meta-tagging standards. The descriptors of TRAIL meta tags must describe the specific web

page or publication in which they are included. Use of a generic set of descriptors for every publication is not acceptable. The following meta tags must be implemented:

- (a) DC.Subject.Keyword
- (b) DC.Description
- (c) DC.Subject
- (d) DC.Type
- (e) The HTML TITLE Tag

5.4 SO public-facing homepages must contain the following:

- (a) Links to the following state of Texas resources:
 - (1) State of Texas homepage;
 - (2) Texas Homeland Security website;
 - (3) Statewide search website; and
 - (4) State link policy or an SO link/site policy page.
- (b) Individual links to the following or to a site policies page with links to the following:
 - (1) Privacy and security policy;
 - (2) Accessibility policy;
 - (3) SO contact information;
 - (4) Description of policy/procedures related to the Open Records/Public Information Act; and
 - (5) Compact with Texans.

5.5 Key public entry points must provide links to the following:

- (a) The system homepage; and
- (b) Individual links to the following or to a site policies page containing links to the following:
 - (1) SO Contact Information;
 - (2) Accessibility Policy; and
 - (3) Privacy and Security Policy.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[Tex. Admin. Code § 206.70, Accessibility](#)

[Tex. Admin. Code 213, Subchapter C, Accessibility Standards for Institutions of Higher Education](#)

[Tex. Gov't. Code § 2054.456, Access to Electronic and Information Resources by State Employees with Disabilities](#)

[Tex. Gov't. Code § 2054.457, Access to Electronic and Information Resources by Other Individuals with Disabilities](#)

[Tex. Gov't. Code § 2054.460, Exception for Significant Difficulty or Expense; Alternate Methods](#)

[System Policy 29.01, Information Resources](#)

[System Regulation 29.01.03, Information Security](#)

[System Regulation 29.01.04, Accessibility of Electronic and Information Resources](#)

This rule was previously published as System Offices Procedure 29.01.99.S0.01.

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