# Building a Procurement Process around Accessibility

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# Common Issues of Accessibility

- Services or products are a daily use within Higher Education and thus impact various areas:
  - Inaccessible LMS', University Wide Applications and teaching supplemental applications
  - Alternative texts (textbooks)
  - Document accessibility (Word, PPT, PDFs)
  - Captioning for videos
  - Inaccessible library resources (databases, search, print resources)
  - Additional classroom resources (e.g., iClicker, podiums)
  - Inaccessible university websites/web resources
  - ATMs
  - Access to auxiliary offices (financial aid, registrar)

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# Challenges around Procurement

- Complexity of procurement related workflows (how many different ways can something be purchased?
- Magnitude of purchase requests and authorized individuals to make purchases.
- Lack of awareness about accessibility and how it plays into procurement.
- Lack of resources for assessing accessibility of services and goods.

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# Open Source Contracting

Problem: Many institutions use open source software. Unfortunately, the procurement process usually restricts collaboration and participation. By adding these elements to boiler-plate contracts we hope to encourage better practices. Supporting more effective engagement will allow us to build / maintain the code better.

A great resource to walk through theories, ideas and suggestions:
– Compliments of Mike Gillford: https://github.com/mgifford/open-source-contracting

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## The Basics

- Do you have higher authority support?

- Is there Policy in place around accessibility?

- Do you have access to the proper stakeholder groups? (Legal counsel, procurement, IT, etc.)

- Do you have or consider yourself an accessibility specialist?

- Does the accessibility specialist have a business mindset?

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Higher authority: (Higher Education this could be Provost, President, VPs, etc. In Corporate or Government this could be CIO's, Directors, VPs, etc.)

Policy: (i.e. accessibility specific or procurement with accessibility mentioned)

Accessibility Specialist: (Someone who has worked in the field for 3-5 years minimum to gain understanding from various areas around your place of employment?)

Business Mindset: It is important to understand the overall business case of various areas of your company in order to accurately incorporate accessibility in a successful way

**Next Steps**

- Start defining what an accessible procurement process would entail.
  - Often this can consist of creating contract language around accessibility, requesting Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs) from a vendor, and/or an accessibility road-map where the vendor shows a timeline of future improvements to be made for accessibility.

- Other options may be to run an automated and/or manual test for accessibility on a product demo.

- Provide documentation around receiving, reviewing and reporting findings of the accessible procurement process.
  - Be sure to include possible alternative action plans for accommodations when a product may not be fully accessible. Reviewing the possibility for exceptions that may apply such as fundamental alternation, national security, back office, etc. is also important. Please refer to your policy or standard in which your policy applies to in order to accurately reflect these exceptions.

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If you have covered all of the basics you have a good foundation to build a successful accessibility procurement process.

# Procurement Policies and Processes

Recommendations for Procurement processes and policies.

- State the organization's commitment to include accessibility in the procurement process.

- Set out basic provisions, such as asking vendors for Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) or to highlight accessibility features when reviewing possible products.

- Determine where best to seek advice in relation to accessible procurement.

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# Procurement Policy

**Mason:**

**SCOPE**

- This policy applies to all George Mason University faculty and staff who may authorize the purchase or development of administrative systems/applications on behalf of the university.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

- This policy provides for the review of all proposed additions of administrative systems/applications in advance of procurement or development so the university may verify compliance with federal, state, and university policies, eliminate duplication, and ensure compatibility with existing systems.  All procurement and/or development of administrative systems/applications must be reviewed and approved by the Architecture Standards Committee (ASC) in advance of purchase or development. The forms and instructions can be found at: http://ascreview.emu.edu/.
- Proposed additions of administrative systems/applications that are not deemed appropriate by the ASC will not be approved for purchase, development, or implementation by any university unit.

**COMPLIANCE**

- Any administrative systems/applications found to be installed and operating without the approval of the ASC, as of July 2013, is in violation of this policy and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including deactivation and potential removal from the university's systems and network.

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**Miami Accessible Technology Policy:**

**Purpose:**

- Miami University is committed to providing equal opportunity for qualified individuals with disabilities to participate in, and benefit from, Miami's services, programs, and activities. The purpose of this Policy is to acknowledge that Miami's commitment to equal opportunity for qualified individuals with disabilities includes services, programs, and activities that Miami delivers through web-based, digital, and emerging technologies.

**Policy Topics:**

- Web Content
- Textbook and Course Material Accessibility
- Student Lifecycle Critical Transactions
- Student Organization Websites
- **Procurement**
- All web technology or software that Miami procures for use by its students shall conform to the relevant accessibility standards (a listing of relevant standards can be found at the AccessMU website) as long as the technology is commercially available and its purchase does not result in undue financial and administrative burdens or a fundamental alteration. If a product is available and meets some, but not all, of the relevant accessibility standards, Miami will procure the product that best meets the standard, unless its purchase would result in undue financial and administrative burdens or a fundamental alteration, or unless an exception applies pursuant to Miami's Accessible Technology Procurement Policy.  The AccessMU website contains a listing of exceptions. Exceptions can only be granted by the Procurement Review Committee.

# Sample Documents

## Policy

- Example Policies in Higher Education
- George Mason University
- Miami Accessibility Policy

## Procurement Language (Contract/Addendum/RFP)

- George Mason University
- Accessibility for IT Solutions Contract Language
- Missouri Sample Contract Language

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Policies

# Compliance

- Not only do you need to have the standards set within policy you need the level of compliance.

- Expectations for all areas of study, administration, etc.

- Consequences, Repercussions and finally

- Remediation

- Support Letter from President, VPs, Provost, etc.

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# Procurement Start-Up Plans

- Create an Accessibility Committee (someone to discuss accessibility and how it can be included into procurement)
- Work with the Procurement Department and incorporate accessibility into the policy.
- Create a Purchasing Review Committee (this could be from an Architectural Standard that could include Security, Accessibility, Infrastructure Compatibility, etc.)

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# Assessing the Accessibility Issues

- Include accessibility from the start.
- Maintain accessibility review throughout the life of the contract (renewals, addendums, etc.)
- Involve users with disabilities to test applications.
- Train all those with the ability to purchase and educate vendors on the process and accessibility requirement.
- Provide or create an individual or group with the responsibility to oversee purchase approvals.
- Have a sound exceptions qualification (security, fundamental alteration, etc.) along with steps of how this is determined.

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# Automatic Exceptions

Web technology or software in the following categories below are automatically excepted from the requirements of this Policy:

- Web technology or software that Miami procures for use in courses whose enrollment is fewer than 400 students, based upon the prior academic year's enrollment; or
- Web technology or software whose cost is $1,000 or less. The above automatic exceptions are not applicable to LMSs, standalone instructional support applications, or web technology or software that is used for critical or important transactions (e.g., websites used for campus housing, campus dining, registering for classes, paying bills, obtaining transcripts) or to complete required training (e.g., AlcoholEDU).

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# Exceptions Requiring Review

- For all web technology or software not subject to the automatic exceptions, that Miami procures for use by students, the Procurement Review Committee may grant an exception only for:

  – Web technology or software for which, after consultation with the Accessible Technology Coordinator, the person or entity requesting the exception can show that no equivalent accessible option is available; or

  – Web technology or software that is used as a standard or common practice in a field of study, industry, or profession.

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# Best Practices

- Establish **Accessibility Policy that includes Electronic and Information Technology (EIT)**

- Establish/update **EIT Grievance/Remediation Process**

- Establish/update **Procedures for Procurement**

- Establish **EIT Accessibility Training**

- Establish/update **Accessibility Web Portal/Website**

- Hire **EIT Accessibility Staff**

- Establish **Process for Monitoring EIT Issues**

- Search and Complete **vendor for EIT Accessibility Audit**

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# Remember You Can't Catch Everything!

- Purchasing and Procurement
  - Prioritize!
    - E.g., monitor all purchases of X value or over $xxxx
    - E.g., Include accessibility contract language as backstop for all EIT purchases
    - E.g., Establish risk levels (purchases above a certain risk level get reviewed)
  - Testing process
  - Reporting
  - Vendor Response (Timelines and Road Maps)
  - Risk Statements

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## What Can You Do or Where Do You Start?

- Do you have an automated testing application?
- Do you have students you could ask to test?
- Do you have a testing process?
- Do you test Websites or do you also look at 3rd party applications purchased?
- Minimum – ask for a VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template)

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http://ati.gmu.edu/testing-tools/
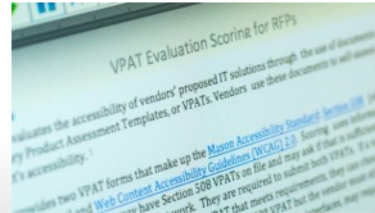
All are Chrome Plug Ins
Webaim wave also has color contrast checker
Siteimprove
Deque AXE
Tota11y Plugin
OpenWax

Notes

This is an example of a VPAT based on the Sect. 508 standards...they are also
VPATs based on WCAG 2.0

This is filled out by the vendor, it lists the criteria, whether or not the application
supports the criteria, and any additional remarks from the vendor. The
takeaway from this is if you ask a vendor for a VPAT and they have no clue
what you are talking about, there is a good chance they have no clue what
accessibility is.

E.g., VPAT Matrix

| Hardware | Software (Standalone/Web) | Websites | Telecom | Developed Components |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Section 508** Standards: 1194.25, 1194.26, 1194.31, 1194.41 | **Section 508** Standards: 1194.21, 1194.22, 1194.31, 1194.41 Do you have video? If so, include 1194.24 **Otherwise complete the full WCAG 2.0 VPAT** | **Section 508** Standards: 1194.21, 1194.22, 1194.31, 1194.41 Do you have video? If so, include 1194.24 **Otherwise complete the full WCAG 2.0 VPAT** | **Section 508** Standard: 1194.23 Do you use VOIP? Refer to "Software" | **WCAG 2.0** Standards as checklist during development Use additional language (ATS must test the developed product for accessibility prior to going live.) |

Guidance documents: Miami University

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Notes

At our institution, we do ask vendors to fill out VPATs during the procurement process and these are the specific standards that we ask them to focus on, depending on the technology that is being purchased.

On our website, we have guidance documents to help both the vendor and the GMU purchaser with answering VPAT-related questions.

## Making the Purchase

Once you have a well rounded process defined for accessibility, begin meeting with the stakeholder groups to gain understanding of the various areas or ways of procurement and the processes around them. Determining ways to track purchases is key to developing a good process around accessibility. Detailed information to track will usually require a database or project management tool. A few examples of possible ways to purchase include:

- Purchase Order (PO)
- License agreement
- Contract or contract addendum and renewal
- Request for Proposal (RFP) or any other documents within the family of RFP such as RFQ, RFI, etc.
- Credit card purchase

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Contract addendum's and renewals are difficult because you need to define what would be considered a significant change to warrant an accessibility review based upon the process you defined above. Sometimes this will vary based upon the industry, procurement environment, etc. Work with your stakeholders to run through the process and apply the accessibility processes to the various types to ensure you have a good working review and/or tweak as necessary. Having a process, communicating it to all that are involved is key. Once you have a strong process in place, education and awareness to those who purchase or review products for procurement is needed. Determine options such as building into already created training initiatives, new hire statements around accessibility, credit card authority contracts, etc. Training can vary based upon the environment or industry. It could become a topic all on its own and could become a part II in the future.
Ideally after a year and a half of the time a process is in place you will have incorporated accessibility review and/or contract language in the majority of products purchased or renewed within that time unless there are multi-year contracts in place.

# Contract Language

- [Vendor] acknowledges that it submitted the voluntary product accessibility template, which indicated the degree to which the [software] complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, level AA (the "Accessibility Requirements").

- If you performed testing, apply the report to the contract as Exhibit X
- If vendor provided a response to report or VPAT, attach that road map and timeline as Exhibit Y
- Vendor agrees to correct issues within the timeframe.
- School reserves the right to perform additional testing during agreement.  If errors are found vendor will resolve at their expense in an agreed timeline.
- Vendor acknowledges and agrees if accessibility fails to meet requirements, school can terminate the agreement without further liability or obligation to vendor.
- Vendor agrees that it will indemnify and hold harmless the school due to accessibility.
- Hold final payment or certain percentage until final change is made in roadmap.

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# Documenting and Managing

- We have a form that can be completed to begin a review. This allows the requester to follow along, and us to track our testing.

Service Catalog / Accessibility / Accessibility: Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review

## Accessibility: Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review

⊕ Get Started

### Introduction

What is accessibility? Accessibility is ensuring electronic and information technology, such as our websites, applications and user interface hardware are usable by everyone, including individuals with disabilities.

When you are reviewing potential vendors to decide what to purchase, ready to purchase, renew a contract, or make significant changes to any end-user facing technology assessing the accessibility of that technology is required. This form puts you in contact with the accessible technology team. **The earlier you bring them in to review your plans, the smoother the process may be when procuring.**

When does accessibility apply? Accessibility applies when you can see that there is a user interface (hardware, software or web-based). Accessibility can be at a new purchase, contract renewal or when any significant change is made in an existing product/service. When you purchase, renew a contract, or make significant changes to any end-user facing technology assessing the accessibility of that technology is required.

For questions contact Kara Zirkle, Accessible Technology Specialist or AccessMU@miamioh.edu

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# Tracking and Data

- Requester and Vendor Contacts
- Business Case
- Who is the Audience
- Size of Audience
- Deadline for purchase renewal

Service Catalog / Accessibility / Accessibility: Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review

## Accessibility: Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review

+ Show Help   − Hide He

When you are reviewing potential vendors to decide what to purchase, ready to purchase, renew a contract, or make significant changes to any end-user facing technology assessing the accessibility of that technology is required. This form puts you in contact with the accessible technology team. The earlier you bring them in to review your plans, the smoother the process may be when procuring.

Requestor *
This is an individual that is listed as the person asking for assistance.

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What kind of request are you making? *

What's a good phone number where we can reach you if we have questions? *

Sponsor
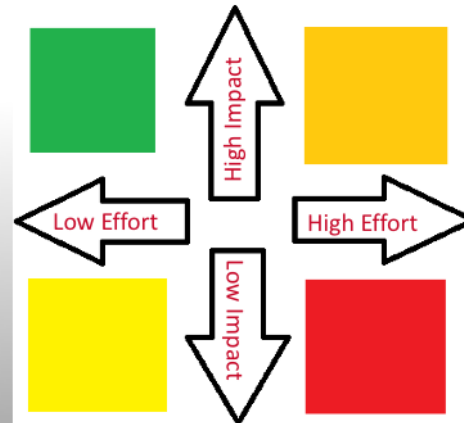Office at Miami University that is overseeing this request

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# How to Prioritize?

The higher the impact the higher the priority.

**High Impact/High Priority:**

Learn what priorities you
have as an institution.
For example, number of
users vs audience vs use, etc.

High Impact

Low Effort

High Effort

Low Impact

# Miami current Workflow

1. All requests to purchase originate in Miami Buyway as a requisition for purchase order.
2. A requisition is routed through work flow and approved first by funding source
3. Any IT related software is designated by account code and auto forwarded to IT Department staff for review prior to ordering.
4. Accessibility review is conducted by IT staff
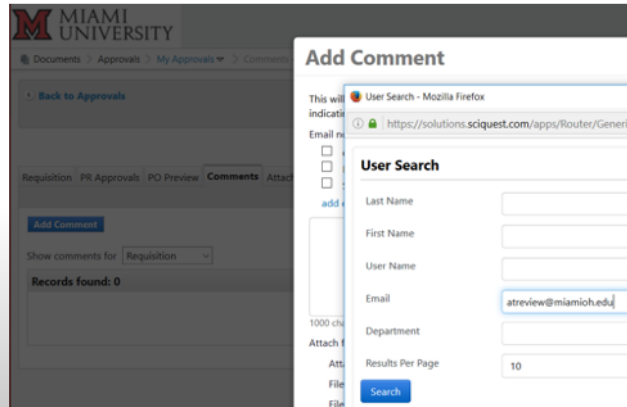
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For the purposes of this presentation, I have reordered the high-impact/high priority recommendations under what we specifically implemented to address communication/collaboration gaps, EIT policy updates, training resources, structural improvements, and workflow updates.

# Miami Workflow Continued …

5. Considerations; classroom, business functions for students, student organization/campus life….

6. In instances where a request for proposal is published the following specification is included and the vendor response will be evaluated accordingly;

| ID | Title | Product | Type | Accessibility RequestType | Status | ATS Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4954496 | Accessibility: Document/Website Review or Training | | Document/Website Review or Training | Website Accessibility Review | Open | Testing, |
| 5378742 | Banner Student Advisor Self-Service Current Application Review | Banner Student Advisor Self-Service | Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review | | Open | Waiting on Client/Vendor, |
| 5330554 | ANSYS Academic teaching license requisition 88836481 | Academic teaching license | Accessible Technology Ticket Generated by Email | | Open | |
| 5400480 | StarRez Procurement Request/Review | Student Housing Management System | Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review | | Open | Testing, |
| 5405801 | Banner HR Employee Self Service Current Application Review | Banner HR Self Service | Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review | | Open | Waiting on Client/Vendor, |
| 5388007 | Student Self Service Current Application Review | Student Self Service | Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review | | Open | Waiting on Client/Vendor, |
| 3285436 | Faculty180 Current Application Review | Faculty180 | Client/Vendor Engagement, Procurement Request, or Current Application Review | | Open | Client Engagement, |

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# Internal Testing and Project Management
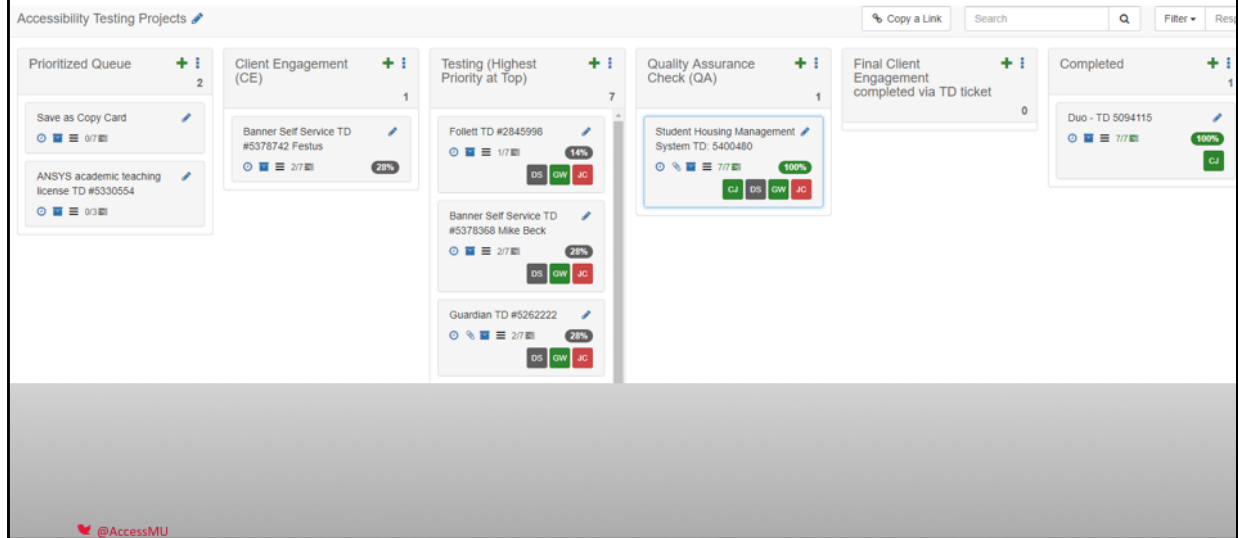
# Tracking of Time Spent

- Miami uses Ticket tracking for all projects. We also keep track of our hours spent on each project.

**Time Type**

Client/Vendor Engagement
Support
Testing

**Hours**

ake comments privat

**Details**

**Last Modified**
Fri 9/29/17 12:27 PM by Mark Boyce

**Estimated Hours**
0.00

**Actual Hours**
124.02

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# Take Aways

- It takes a village ..... you can't do it alone, nor should you.

- You will never catch everything, but you have to start somewhere.

- Accessibility is a very fluid environment, not everything will have a black and white answer. Being flexible and knowing the process may constantly change is a given.

- Technology is only as good as those that can use it.



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## Resources

- Tech Check
- SSB Bart Digital Accessibility Maturity Model
- NCDAE Goals Benchmarking and Planning Tool
- CSU Professional Development for Accessible Technology
- Policy Driven Adoption for Accessibility (PDAA)

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Many schools and government agencies are trying to work towards building accessibility into procurement.  A great resource is:

Policy Driven Adoption for Accessibility (PDAA) - The State of Minnesota is partnering with other states to pilot Policy Driven Adoption for Accessibility (PDAA), with the goal of increasing the accessibility of vendors' products and services. This page answers questions for government organizations and agencies.

# Contact Information – Kara Zirkle

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