

University of California

Guidelines for Purchasing Accessible IT Products or Services

June 1, 2015

A. Introduction

The University of California [IT Accessibility](#) policy establishes that electronic products or services purchased by the University will be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

It is important that everyone involved in a UC procurement process ensure policy compliance. If a purchased product/service turns out to have significant accessibility problems, some members of the staff, student body, faculty, and the public may find the product/service difficult or impossible to use. Such a situation exposes the University to risk, increases costs, and undermines the University's commitment to accessibility.

These guidelines were developed by the University of California [Electronic Accessibility Leadership Team](#) (EALT). They are intended to help IT accessibility and procurement staff conduct RFP or other procurement processes that address IT accessibility requirements.

B. Accessible Procurement Checklist

The following sections provide detail about addressing accessibility in each step of the procurement process. A quick checklist is provided here for easy reference.

- ✓ Contact the [local EALT member](#) for assistance with finding an IT accessibility expert to participate on the procurement team.
- ✓ Include text in the RFP or other procurement process that requires the supplier to submit information about the accessibility of the IT product or service.
- ✓ Require the supplier to demonstrate the accessibility of the product, perhaps by having a member of a disabled community use the product in the demonstration.
- ✓ Use the standard UC Terms and Conditions for Goods and Services, which require accessibility.
- ✓ Have an IT accessibility expert review IT accessibility requirements and expectations with the selected supplier *before* installation or project initiation.
- ✓ Establish procedures to test software updates for accessibility, submit complaints about the product or service via procurement, and ensure issues are remedied.
- ✓ Provide feedback to the EALT about addressing accessibility through the procurement process.

C. The Procurement/Accessibility Team

Planning for accessibility early in the procurement process will help the University avoid time-consuming and costly retrofit work.

If a proposed purchase involves web interfaces or electronic capabilities, an IT accessibility expert must participate on the team to help ensure that IT accessibility is addressed meaningfully in the procurement process. The local EALT member can help identify an expert to serve on the team.

Checklist

- ✓ Contact the [local EALT member](#) for assistance with finding an IT accessibility expert to participate on the procurement team.

D. IT Accessibility Standards

Depending on the product/service being purchased, suppliers must demonstrate compliance with one of two standards:

1. Required by UC policy: [WCAG 2.0](#) level AA for products/services with web or Internet access.
2. Strongly recommended: [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) for telecommunications products; video and multi-media products; self-contained, closed products; and desktop and portable computers.

Sample Text for RFPs or Other Procurement Processes

Text should be included in RFP or other procurement processes to request detailed information from suppliers about the accessibility of their IT products or services. The language should be developed with the procurement team. The following paragraphs are provided as examples.

a. For Web-Based Products/Services (WCAG 2.0 level AA)

Bids to the University of California for web-based products or related services must include the “UC Web Accessibility Requirements Questionnaire” (available to Procurement staff in the library). The questionnaire may be completed by the supplier as a self-assessment or by a UC approved web accessibility evaluator. (Include 3rd party evaluation reports as attachments.) Bids for services to develop web-related products should include a description of how each requirement will be implemented. When requested, suppliers must also provide evaluation products for additional UC validation testing.

For each area of noncompliance, suppliers are strongly encouraged to describe any planned remediation roadmaps, including timelines and steps that will be taken to achieve full compliance, as well as interim workarounds to enable access by individuals with disabilities.

In addition, provide the following information:

- Provide your company’s policy or commitment statement regarding electronic accessibility.
- Who in your company is responsible for the electronic accessibility policy and compliance (provide contact information)?
- Do you have an accessibility function or team responsible for technical development? Describe its role in your organization.

- How does your company achieve compliance with IT accessibility standards?
- Describe the testing protocols you use to assess the accessibility of your product/service.
- Can you provide live or pre-recorded demonstrations of the accessibility of your product?
- How do you assure that you keep your product current with changing legal requirements and accessibility best practices?

b. For Other IT Products (Section 508)

Bids to the University of California for [insert product type] must include a response to applicable sections of the [Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#) in order to describe product compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. [Information about the VPAT](#) is available from the Information Technology Industry Council.

[Specify the applicable sections to be completed or include the relevant questions directly in the RFP: 1194.31 - Functional Performance Criteria; 1194.41 - Information, Documentation and Support; 1194.23 –Telecommunications Products; 1194.24 - Video and Multi-Media Products; 1194.25 - Self-contained, Closed Products; and 1194.26 - Desktop and Portable Computers]

In addition, provide the following information:

- Provide your company’s policy or commitment statement regarding electronic accessibility.
- Who in your company is responsible for the electronic accessibility policy and compliance (provide contact information)?
- Do you have an accessibility function or team responsible for technical development? Describe its role in your organization.
- How does your company achieve compliance with IT accessibility standards?
- Describe the testing protocols you use to assess the accessibility of your product/service.
- Can you provide live or pre-recorded demonstrations of the accessibility of your product?
- How do you assure that you keep your product current with changing legal requirements and accessibility best practices?

Checklist

- ✓ Include text in the RFP or other procurement process that requires the supplier to submit information about the accessibility of the IT product or service.

E. Supplier Demo and Tests

Supplier finalists should be required to provide demonstrations during the bidder’s conference or other venue to support their statements about the accessibility of their products or services.

At a minimum, the supplier should show how blind or low-vision users would access the product using a screen reader. The supplier also may be asked to include members of other disabled communities to demonstrate different types of accessibility compliance. The EALT team member can help identify an assistive technology user to participate in the demonstration.

Checklist

- ✓ Require the supplier to demonstrate the accessibility of the product, perhaps by having a member of a disabled community use the product in the demonstration.

F. The Contract

All purchases must use the standard [University of California Terms and Conditions for Goods and Services](#), which require accessibility (see the Warranties section). The current version is posted on the Procurement website at the University of California Office of the President.

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G. Post Purchase

Once the product or service has been purchased, it is important for IT accessibility experts to meet with the supplier, before installation or project initiation, to review accessibility requirements and expectations.

It also is important to clarify how product/service accessibility will be maintained throughout the life of the contract. This includes establishing procedures to

- Re-test new versions/updates.
- Evaluate and duplicate any complaints.
- Communicate complaints to the supplier via the procurement team.
- Verify that issues have been remedied.
- Alert the EALT if there are significant accessibility problems with products widely used at UC.
- Provide feedback to the EALT about suppliers, products, and the purchase process to help improve these guidelines.

Checklist

- ✓ Have an IT accessibility expert review IT accessibility requirements and expectations with the selected supplier *before* installation or project initiation.
- ✓ Establish procedures to test software updates for accessibility, submit complaints about the product or service via procurement, and ensure issues are remedied.
- ✓ Provide feedback to the EALT about addressing accessibility through the procurement process.