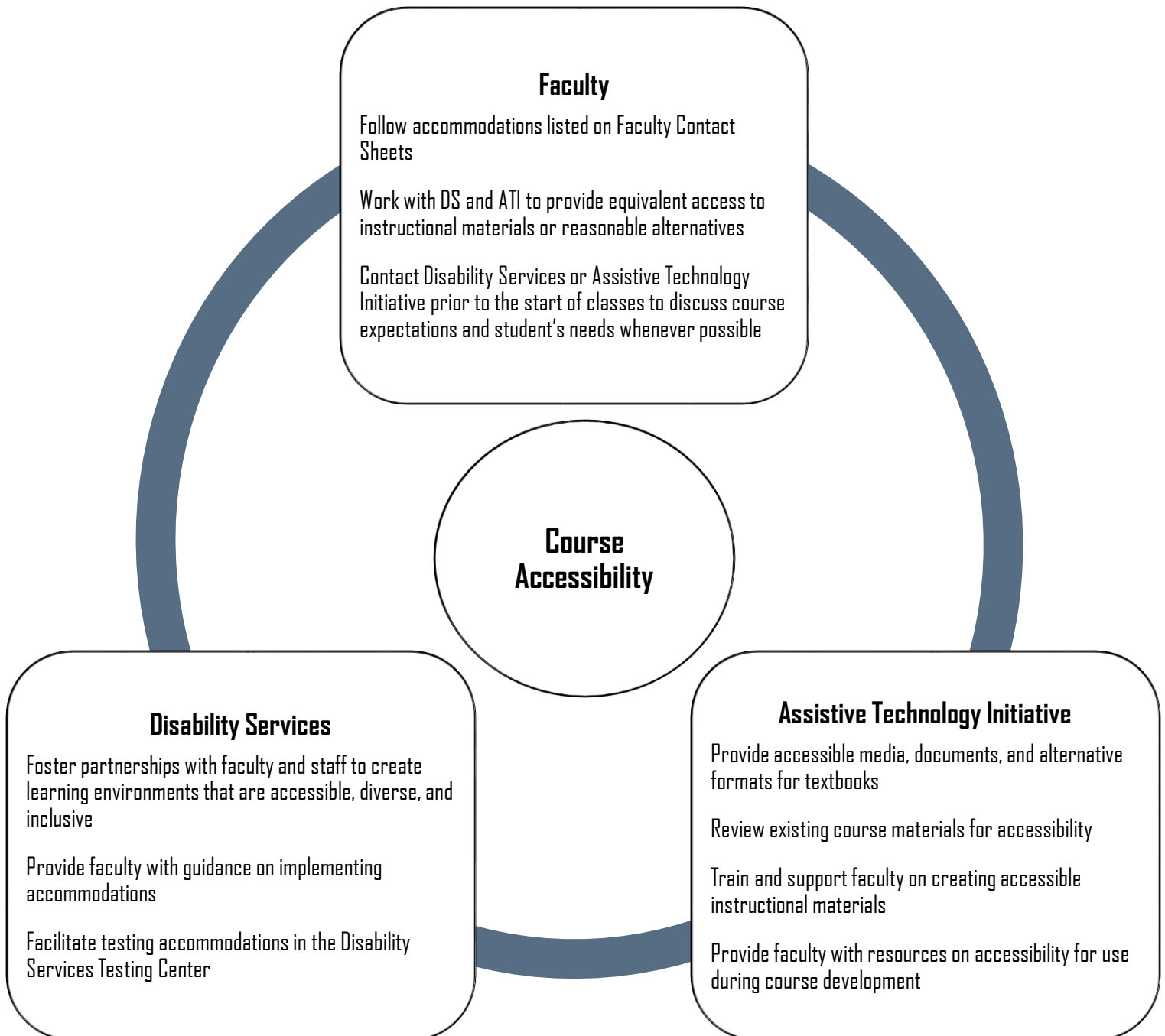# Accessibility Matters

George Mason University is committed to maintaining a diverse and inclusive academic community, where all students are afforded the opportunity for a transformational learning experience. Should you encounter a student connected with Disability Services seeking accessible materials (e.g., blind/low vision, deaf/hard-of-hearing), you will need to work with Disability Services (DS) and the Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI) to ensure equivalent access to the instructional materials/content. This guide is meant to assist faculty in ensuring accessible design of course content based on University Policies 1203 & 1308.

Course Accessibility

Faculty

Follow accommodations listed on Faculty Contact Sheets

Work with DS and ATI to provide equivalent access to instructional materials or reasonable alternatives

Contact Disability Services or Assistive Technology Initiative prior to the start of classes to discuss course expectations and student's needs whenever possible

Disability Services

Foster partnerships with faculty and staff to create learning environments that are accessible, diverse, and inclusive

Provide faculty with guidance on implementing accommodations

Facilitate testing accommodations in the Disability Services Testing Center

Assistive Technology Initiative

Provide accessible media, documents, and alternative formats for textbooks

Review existing course materials for accessibility

Train and support faculty on creating accessible instructional materials

Provide faculty with resources on accessibility for use during course development

DISABILITY SERVICES
An Office of University Life

Revised 10.25.2022

Digital Accessibility Guide

Please reach out to us for assistance in the accessible design of your course content—we are here to support you!

ds.gmu.edu – full accessibility guide, faculty guide, and suggested syllabus statements
Phone: 703-993-2474 | Email: ods@gmu.edu

ati.gmu.edu – accessibility resources, document accessibility guidelines, and assistive technology resources
Phone: 703-993-4329 | Email: ati@gmu.edu

stearnscenter.gmu.edu – ideas and instruction in course design
Phone: 703-993-6200 | Email: stearns@gmu.edu

Format	How to Design for Accessibility	How to Check for Accessibility
Word	• Follow a linear, logical layout • Use built-in bullet and numbering tools • Use built-in headings and styles to group content • Align text to the left and avoid using columns when possible • Include meaningful alternative text descriptions for complex images, charts, graphs, etc. • Do not use color alone to convey important information	• Run Microsoft's built in Accessibility Checker: • Mac: Click Review tab>Check Accessibility. • PC: Click File>Info>Check for Issues>Check Accessibility
CC	• Include synchronized, accurate captions for all video. • Include transcripts for all audio-only content • Use an accessible media player (i.e., Kaltura, YouTube, OzPlayer)	• Use TAB key to navigate through the video player controls (e.g., play/pause) • Check that captions are accurate (including punctuation) and synchronized with the audio
PowerPoint	• Use built-in slide layouts • Give each slide a unique title • Ensure color is not the only means of conveying important information • Include meaningful alternative text descriptions for complex images, charts, graphs, etc. • Include text transcripts for any audio content in the Notes section of each slide	• Run Microsoft's built in Accessibility Checker: • Mac: Click Review tab>Check Accessibility. • PC: Click File>Info>Check for Issues>Check Accessibility
Excel	• Use a simple table structure and specify column header information • Name unique sheet tabs and remove blank sheets • Include meaningful alternative text descriptions for complex images, charts, graphs, etc.	• Run Microsoft's built in Accessibility Checker: • Mac: Click Review tab>Check Accessibility. • PC: Click File>Info>Check for Issues>Check Accessibility
PDF	• Set reading order of the content appropriately • Use tags to indicate heading structure • Include meaningful alternative text descriptions for complex images, charts, graphs, etc.	• Can use mouse to highlight text • Use Read Out Loud to read document. Click View>Read Out Loud>Activate Read Out Loud.
HTML & CSS	• Use headings to group content and improve navigation • Use meaningful hyperlink text • Use sufficient contrasts for text and background colors • Include meaningful alternative text descriptions for complex images, charts, graphs, etc. • Make large, clickable actions where appropriate	• Run an accessibility checker, such as ANDI or WAVE through each page • See https://ati.gmu.edu/web-accessibility-testing/ for additional information.