# **Web accessibility auditing**

There is increasing awareness of the social, economic and legislative need to make online information, goods and services accessible to people with disabilities. To know how to improve the accessibility of a website you must establish its current level of accessibility a web accessibility audit measures the accessibility level of your website against accessibility standards. It should lead to a list of actions to make your site more accessible to all users.

## **How to use this resource**

This guidance aims to:

* Inform you about good practice in web accessibility auditing;
* Demystify the auditing process;
* Assist you in commissioning an accessibility audit;
* Help you to identify the actions that need to be taken to improve non-accessible elements of the site;
* Provide guidance on how to get the most out of the auditing process.

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## **Who is this guidance for?**

This guidance is intended for managers who are responsible for the development and maintenance of websites. Typically, these managers will work in communications, it departments, corporate affairs, change management or customer services. Such managers may already have websites and need to check and improve their accessibility. Some sections of this guidance may also be useful to managers preparing to develop or redevelop websites.

If you are such a manager, this guidance will help you to:

* Understand web accessibility;
* Make a decision on whether to audit your site or sites;
* Get maximum value and benefit from a web accessibility audit.

The guidance may also be of value to:

* Information technology managers or webmasters (alongside more technically detailed material on accessibility);
* Information officers;
* Potential suppliers of auditing services or tools;
* Anyone interested in accessibility.

# **Introduction to accessibility auditing**

## **What is covered**

Accessibility auditing means using a number of standardised tests to establish what elements of the website are accessible and which elements need to be modified and improved.

This guidance is intended to help you conduct an accessibility audit successfully and gain maximum benefit from it. It is written in non-technical language for managers who are responsible for websites but who may not have a technical background.

It introduces the most widely used accessibility standards, the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)](http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/) of the World Wide Web Consortium. Irish Government policy recommends conformance rating Double A with the WCAG as the standard that all public sector website should aim to achieve.

The WCAG are the internationally recognised web accessibility benchmark. The following guidance will help you to improve the accessibility of your website by showing you how to audit it for accessibility against these guidelines. This process will:

* Show where your website stands in conforming with the WCAG;
* Indicate how it can be improved;
* Give you an implementation plan to better accessibility;
* Give you a basis for deciding whether to fix the identified accessibility issues or redevelop the site.

You probably need to have a web accessibility audit carried out if:

* Your organisation is in the public sector or is otherwise obliged or committed to achieving accessibility (for example, because of corporate policy);

And

* You do not have independent proof that it meets WCAG Level Double-A accessibility;

Or

* You know that the site is not compliant with WCAG Double-A (or whatever other level it is obliged to meet).

Other sections of this document deal with different types of accessibility audits, when to audit and how to organise an audit. There is also information on interpreting an audit report, what to do after an audit and sources of further information.

Web accessibility audits are very useful first steps on the road to accessibility.  However, it is important to remember that a web accessibility audit is not a goal in itself. Quality cannot be inspected into a product.  Carrying out an audit, in many cases, will be the first step towards achieving the real goal of a more accessible website and improving capacity within your organisation so as to maintain this level of accessibility.

# **What is web accessibility auditing**

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	+ W[eb Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) from the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/what-is-a-web-accessibility-audit-/#content-guidelines)
	+ [NDA IT Accessibility Guidelines](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/what-is-a-web-accessibility-audit-/#it-accessibility-guidelines)
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A web accessibility audit measures your website's level of accessibility in a systematic way against a specific set of accessibility checkpoints as noted earlier. The internationally recognised benchmark for web accessibility is the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). To gain maximum benefit and value from an audit it should result in a list of actions to improve accessibility.

The individual components of this definition are:

* **measure**– the audit should, as far as possible, deal in measurable quantities, not in estimates or opinion.  The vast majority of accessibility checks are measurable;
* **level of accessibility**– accessibility is not a matter of yes or no. An audit will place your site somewhere on a curve between very low accessibility and excellent accessibility;
* **systematic** – the measurement of accessibility has to be done in a planned and organised way;
* **accessibility checkpoints** –  accepted checkpoints, usually international ones, are the basis on which the audit should be conducted;
* **actions**– an audit must do more than highlight accessibility breaches. It must provide a roadmap for improvement.

An accessibility audit is also sometimes referred to as a conformance evaluation to determine if a website meets accessibility standards.

An accessibility audit can be used to facilitate the decision-making process around whether to attempt to fix the non-accessible elements of the website or to redesign the entire site.  This decision will also depend on the resources (financial and human) available.

A web accessibility audit typically results in a report that details:

* the overall conformance rating of the website with WCAG;
* a prioritised list of issues that need to be addressed;
* details on the website's conformance with each of the accessibility checkpoints.

Carrying out a web accessibility audit also presents a good opportunity to increase capacity and technical skills within the organisation around accessibility.  It is a good time to enhance skills of in-house staff through specialised training and/or skills transfer from external consultants.

### **Accessibility guidelines**

### **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) from the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)**

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international body that aims to lead the web to its full potential. It develops technologies, including specifications, guidelines, software and tools. The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) promotes accessibility by developing guidelines, support materials and resources.

The WAI published Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are regarded as the international standard for accessibility. First published (version 1.0) as a recommendation in 1999, they are very widely accepted not only by disability organisations and governments around the world but also by the European Union.

WCAG 1.0 consists of 14 **guidelines**. Each one is a general principle of accessible design.  For example, WCAG Guideline 1 states: "Provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content."

Each of the WCAG guidelines gives rise to one or more **checkpoints**. A checkpoint is an explanation of how a guideline applies in practice. For example, Checkpoint 1.1, which arises from Guideline 1, begins: "Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element¦ This includes: images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations."

Most guidelines have more than one checkpoint. The checkpoints are assigned to one of three priority levels depending on how vital they are for accessibility of content.

Priority 1: A web content developer **must**satisfy this checkpoint. It is a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use web documents.

Priority 2: A web content developer **should**satisfy this checkpoint. This will remove significant barriers to accessing web documents.

Priority 3: A Web content developer **may** address this checkpoint. Satisfying this checkpoint will improve access to web documents.

Most guidelines with more than one checkpoint have checkpoints at different priority levels. For example, Guideline 1 has 5 checkpoints; 4 are Priority 1 but the fifth is Priority 3.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ITEM** | **NATURE** | **EXAMPLE** |
| **GUIDELINE** | States a broad accessibility principle | Guideline 1: Provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content. |
| **CHECKPOINT** | Explains how a guideline applies in practice | Checkpoint 1.1 (extract): Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element. This includes images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations. |
| **PRIORITY** | Sets how important a checkpoint is to accessibility of content | Checkpoint 1.1 is Priority 1 – a basic requirement that must be satisfied |
| **CONFORMANCE LEVEL** | What checkpoints must be satisfied | With all Priority 1 checkpoints satisfied, content is at conformance level A |

The WCAG defines three levels of conformance. These may be claimed on a page-by-page basis, so different pages on a single website can have different claimed levels of conformance. Alternatively, a single conformance claim can refer to a defined collection of pages (a section of a website) or to a complete site.

Although the word "page" is used here, accessibility requirements apply to all **resources**on the website, including documents, interfaces, images, audio and video.

Many other guideline sets are based on WCAG. The WAI is due to complete work on a new version, WCAG 2.0, in 2007. The WAI says WCAG 2.0 will be much more robust, technology-independent, testable and with more supporting information than WCAG 1.0

Double-A conformity – satisfying all Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints is the minimum standard expected of public sector websites in Ireland. Many departments and agencies aim for Triple-A conformity, which requires conformance with a further 19 checkpoints.

### **NDA IT Accessibility Guidelines**

The National Disability Authority [IT Accessibility Guidelines](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/archive-irish-national-it-accessibility-guidelines/) cover a number of ITchannels including the web, public access terminals, telecoms, smart cards and application software.  The web component of these guidelines comprises of:

* a set of guidelines and checkpoints based on WCAG 1.0 but easier to read and understand;
* a range of best practice guidance for  web developers, designers and content creators;
* an introduction to web accessibility for managers.   This provides high-level information on issues of legal obligations, business benefits and processes to improve the accessibility of your organisation's website;
* an IT Procurement Toolkit that provides guidance to buyers of IT products and services to include meaningful, measurable and accurate criteria on accessibility in Request for Tenders.

### **Other bodies**

[The Equality Authority](http://www.equality.ie/) works towards the elimination of discrimination in employment, the provision of goods and services, education, property and other opportunities to which the public generally have access.  It does so on 9 distinct grounds, one of which is disability.

In addition to research, it oversees the implementation of anti-discrimination policy and law. Subject to certain criteria, it provides legal representation to those who believe that they have been discriminated against.

If you have queries about your obligations in relation to your website, the Equality Authority may be able to assist you.

You may also be able to get advice about accessibility related to specific disability from the advocacy and support group for people with that disability. For example, the National Council for the Blind of Ireland has a Centre for Inclusive Technology. The centre provides consultancy in inclusive design and offers independent verification of accessibility through auditing and user testing.

# **Take a quick look at your site**

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* [Take a quick look at your site](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/take-a-quick-look-at-your-site/#take-a-quick-look)
* [Check 1 - Alternative text](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/take-a-quick-look-at-your-site/#alternative-text)
* [Check 2 - Navigate using the keyboard](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/take-a-quick-look-at-your-site/#navigate-using-the-keyboard)
* [Check 3 - Enlarge the text](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/take-a-quick-look-at-your-site/#enlarge-the-text)
* [Wave Accessibility Tool](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/take-a-quick-look-at-your-site/#Wave-accessibility-tool)

The following section outlines a number of quick exercises you can carry out to learn a little about accessibility and try to identify if your site contains some of the more common accessibility issues. These simple checks do not require any specialist knowledge. Neither do they give a reliable indication as to the accessibility level of your website. Instead, they aim to help you understand a few of the obstacles that people with disabilities can encounter when accessing content or services on your website.

You can do these checks using a number of methods:

### **Check 1 - Alternative text**

The most important and revealing check is to test for the presence and appropriateness of alternative text on images. This alternative text is the functional explanation of each image that is supplied to people who cannot see the image itself. Hover your mouse pointer over each important image and see if any text pops up (works in Internet Explorer only). If the text is meaningless or not an equivalent explanation of the image, this could present an obstacle to someone using a screen reader.

### **Check 2 -- Navigate using the keyboard**

Use the Tab key on your keyboard instead of the mouse to navigate your way around the site. If you cannot access content or carry out functions using the keyboard alone, this could present an obstacle to some people with a vision or motor impairment who do not use a mouse.

### **Check 3 -- Enlarge the text**

Enlarge the text on the page by using your browser settings. If the text does not enlarge or layout begins to degrade, this could present an obstacle to people with a vision impairment who need to enlarge the text.

### **Wave Accessibility Tool**

There are a number of tools that can be used to investigate various accessibility issues with your site. A useful non-technical visualisation of some aspects of the accessibility of your site can be gained by submitting your site's address to the [Wave Accessibility Tool](http://www.wave.webaim.org/index.Jsp)This checks other things as well as alternative text (help and explanations are provided on the site).

For checking the alternative text, look out for the following icons:
ICON this indicates missing alternative text -- a clear failure.
ICON this indicates where alternative text is supplied. Check that the text provides equivalent information to the image.

Understanding some of the basic issues with respect to how a site is built and maintained will help you get the most from your audit.

# **Types of accessibility audit**

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* [Automated auditing tools](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/types-of-accessibility-audit/#automated-auditing)

There are a number of ways to carry out the key elements of a web accessibility audit (measuring a website's level of accessibility in a systematic way against accessibility standards to create a list of actions to improve accessibility).

An accessibility audit can, for example, be carried out in-house or can use external consultants. It can be entirely manual or, more likely, use automated tools to assist the manual audit. (An automated accessibility check is not a full audit. Passing such a check does not mean that a site is accessible.)

An audit can involve every page on your website or a sample of pages.

### **Choosing type of audit**

The choice of audit type that is right for your site depends on many factors. There is no single "correct" web accessibility audit that meets all requirements. Factors that affect what sort of audit is right for your website include:

* How much expertise is available in-house;
* The size of the website; and
* The nature of the publishing system.

We are going to discuss two types of accessibility audit:

* External expert audit; and
* Self-audit.

### **External expert audit**

The preferred approach to web accessibility auditing is to buy in outside expertise. This approach has some strong advantages, such as:

* Access to specialist expertise in web accessibility;
* An independent, external point of view;
* Status of report enhanced by external, expert viewpoint.

In many cases, selecting external expertise for a web accessibility audit will be part of a tendering process. Running a tender for web accessibility auditing is described in more detail in section 9.  However, among the attributes that would recommend an external resource are:

* A track record of conducting accurate web accessibility audits;
* References available from existing clients;
* Web accessibility as a core offering;
* Suitable methodology and tools for conducting audits.

### **Self-audit**

Self-auditing means that the site is tested by your own in-house staff. The advantages of this approach include the low cost and the fact that the staff are already familiar with the website. Self-audit can be included in quality management processes and carried out regularly.

However, it has disadvantages, including:

* It is difficult to find staff with the required skills;
* If skilled staff are available, they may be involved in managing your website and, therefore, may find it difficult to look at it afresh;
* An audit which uses in-house staff who are not accessibility specialists lacks the status of external, independent audit;

Self-audit alone is not recommended unless your organisation is large enough to provide skilled staff who have not been involved in operating the website and can maintain full objectivity in looking at it.

Self-audit is most useful as new content is being published to the website. It may not be practical to have new content audited externally on an on-going basis. Staff with responsibility for ensuring the accessibility of new content being published to the website should receive training in web accessibility and have access to appropriate tools and expert advice as required.

### **Automated auditing tools**

Software can be very useful in testing website accessibility, but only up to a point. Most accessibility checkpoints cannot be verified by software alone. Of the 16 priority 1 checkpoints in WCAG 1.0, only one (12.1) can be verified automatically. All 15 others require human judgement.

For example, one of the WCAG checkpoints is to ensure that information does not rely on colour perception. Suppose you have an online appointment booking system on your site and it shows a calendar with available slots marked in green and unavailable slots in red. Some people with colour blindness cannot distinguish red from green so, unless it also shows the words "Available" and "Unavailable" or some suitable symbols, those people will not be able to tell which is which. An automated test might be able to tell that the colours red and green are used but not whether they are used for information purposes or whether additional methods are employed to give the same information. This requires human intelligence.

Automated auditing tools are best used by experts who can interpret their results accurately. In particular, auditors need to be able to quickly identify false positive and false negative results from the tools.

Software tools are more reliable in checking that a website is valid - that it conforms to standards for page markup- than for checking accessibility. Since valid markup is an important component of accessibility, software tools are useful for auditing this.

The WAI provides guidance on selecting web accessibility evaluation tools and also [maintains an extensive list of such tools.](http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/existingtools.Html)

# **Other steps to accessibility**

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* [User-centred design process](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/other-steps-to-accessibility/#user-centred-design)
* [Live user testing](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/other-steps-to-accessibility/#live-user-testing)
* [Consultation](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/other-steps-to-accessibility/#consultation)
* [Essential elements for consulting people with disabilities](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/other-steps-to-accessibility/#essential-elements)
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* [Learning from the experience of others](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/other-steps-to-accessibility/#learning-from-others)

Other steps to ensuring a website is accessible include adopting a user-centric design process, carrying out live user testing and consulting with people with disabilities. Involving a range of people with disabilities in this way has some substantial advantages such as:

* Gaining more understanding of accessibility issues;
* Providing more effective solutions for accessibility;
* Learning how people with disabilities operate on the web and with Assistive Technologies;
* A motivation boost when those working on a web project know that people with disabilities will be using and testing their website.

Users with disabilities can be involved in many ways. For example, they may be given a consultative role, asked to review the output from an accessibility audit, asked to carry out extensive testing or asked to spot-check key functionality.

Involving users at the earlier stages of a website redevelopment will allow feedback to be incorporated with a minimum of cost.  It is easier to change a prototype site than a site nearing completion.

### **User-centred design process**

A user-centred design process is one that puts an emphasis on users and the tasks they want to perform using the service. It involves user consultation from the onset and throughout the project. It generally proceeds through rapid iterations of design, testing and redesign. This will require the participation of users who are representative of the target audience. To ensure the accessibility requirements are met, you should include people with a range of impairments.

This process will not only deliver a more usable product, it will also save time and money in the long run. It is significantly more costly and time consuming to fix a product in order to make it accessible than to develop an accessible product from scratch. Changes made late in the development process are far more costly than changes made early on. The majority of these costs are not due to bugs but to unforeseen or unmet user requirements.

### Live user testing

Live user testing is a service offered by many accessibility consultants.  It is a formal way of consulting with users and learning from their experience of using the site.  Consultants observe a range of users carrying out tasks typical of your site users and note any obstacles that they encounter.  It can be carried out at the user's location or in a special user testing lab.  By including users with a range of disabilities, you can learn a lot about your site.  Live user testing complements accessibility auditing very well.  It can highlight problems not already recognised or confirm if improvements to the site design are actually working.

### **Consultation**

A more general consultation process, where a range of people of people with disabilities or disability groups is invited to provide feedback on a website, is also a useful way to check the accessibility of the website.

Be careful not to set expectations too high in the consultation process and then fail to live up to these.  Be realistic about what can be achieved and communicate that to those involved in giving feedback.

Whatever the level of involvement, it is important to observe proper processes when involving people with disabilities in web accessibility testing. The National Disability Authority has produced the Ask Me guidelines to provide advice and set out the steps that organisations should take when embarking on a consultation process. Practical information on whom to approach and how to seek support and assistance is also included. Remember that users with disabilities are just as diverse as any group of users. Take care not to generalise unduly from the feedback obtained.

### **Essential elements for consulting people with disabilities**

1. Decide the who, what and why of your consultation process;
2. Choose the most appropriate method for consulting with particular groups;
3. Train staff and facilitators in disability awareness;
4. Identify the groups with whom you want to consult;
5. Ask people with disabilities what their needs are so that the consultation works for them as well as you;
6. Check that all elements of the consultation process itself are accessible;
7. Allow time for those consulted to fully consider the issues;
8. Review your practices and policies;
9. Contact representative organisations for advice and assistance if needed

### Consultation fatigue

There are other disability groups that may be delighted to be asked but may not be able to meet your requirements. For example, some might have limited institutional or analytical capacities, making it difficult for them to participate in large numbers of consultations.

Where the complexity and volume of consultations on a particular issue prevents a stakeholder from participating as fully as the stakeholder would wish, this is known as consultation fatigue. Consulting bodies should, in planning and designing consultation processes, have regard for the capacities of organisations and individuals to participate effectively in consultations.

Organisations similar to yours can also be excellent sources of advice. Those closest in size and scale of operations are likely to have experience that is a good fit for your organisation.

Organisations that are very different in scale may still have valuable insights to assist you in planning your accessibility audit. Larger organisations may also be better able to assist you with resources and materials that their scale has allowed them to develop.

### **Learning from the experiences of others**

Talking to other managers who have carried out web accessibility audits is an excellent way to learn about the whole auditing process. In particular, you may want to ask others about:

* What learnings they will apply to their next audit;
* Suggestions for specifying an audit;
* The need to sell an audit to staff who may already feel that the website is a drain on their time;
* Any recommendations they may have for consultants they have found to produce good work;
* Positive feedback arising from their audit.

# **When to audit**

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### **Site life cycle**

Websites "and the projects to produce them" have life cycles (a series of steps that they progress through). Typical steps are:

Plan > Specify > Design > Develop > Test > Deploy > Operate > Review

The final pair, Operate and Review, are likely to be repeated many times. Eventually, a review may raise the need for extension or redevelopment of the site and this begins a new cycle at Plan.

On many sites, however, content is constantly being added, removed and updated. For this reason, even though the structure may remain static between reviews, the majority of changes that affect accessibility may take place during the Operate phase. Therefore, organisations need to adopt a process that will guarantee that accessibility is maintained between Review and redevelopment cycles.

### **New websites**

Achieving and maintaining excellent web accessibility is easiest if this accessibility is a requirement from the outset. At every stage of the life cycle, accessibility can be audited against the planned level. While the website is being created, changes for accessibility are relatively easy and cheap to include. If accessibility has been specified from the outset in the contract, such changes should cost the site owner nothing as the developer is obliged to carry them out.

### **Existing websites**

Accessibility is not just a set of features that can easily be added to an existing website. If you wait until you have built the site before considering its accessibility, you may find that some of the design choices you have made are fundamentally at odds with accessibility.

For example, you may have adopted a content management system that makes it difficult or impossible to produce valid code or to make certain aspects of your site accessible. You may have implemented a content creation process that fails to retain important semantic information (information related to meaning) that is required to make the content accessible. Changing these fundamental features at a late stage in site development may be difficult, expensive and time consuming.

Faced with an existing website, you cannot build accessibility into the whole life cycle. Therefore, the natural point for an accessibility audit is during a review of the website. If there is no planned review (and for almost all sites there should be), you may have to call for a special accessibility review of the site.

### **How often should I audit?**

A website is more like a process than a project. Although the term project is frequently applied to site development, operating a site effectively means an ongoing editorial process. This is particularly true of web accessibility. Maintaining your target accessibility level means building accessibility into your site operations, including regular checks by managers.

No matter how rigorously accessibility is tested and achieved in the first build of a site, and regardless of how strongly it is emphasised during staff training, it constantly needs to be considered.  Many issues can affect the accessibility of a newly developed or redeveloped website, degrading its accessibility over time, such as:

* Staff turnover leading to those without accessibility skills working on the site;
* Pressure of work leading staff to take shortcuts with accessibility;
* Inclusion of external content that is not accessible;
* Applying accessibility measures in a mechanical fashion that does not achieve the required accessibility.

Therefore, it is important to regularly check that your site continues to meet your target accessibility level.

A large and diverse site that has a high turnover of content and/or staff and a wide variety of content types is prone, over time, to accessibility decline. If your site is like this, you may need to consider quarterly accessibility audits. These need not be equal in depth. A major annual audit could be followed by 3 mini-audits before the next major audit.

At the other extreme would be a site that changes little, is built from a small number of accessible templates and is managed long-term by a small and highly trained team. This may need a full accessibility audit once every 12 months or so.

For sites that fall between these two extremes, consider an accessibility audit every 6 to 12 months.

# **Organising an audit**

## **Contents**

* [specifying an audit](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#specifying-an-audit)
* [accessibility level](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#accesibility-level)
* [sample pages or whole site?](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#sample-pages)
* [training and on-going support](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#training-and-on-going-support)
* [writing requests for tenders for audits](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#writing-requests)
* [evaluating tenders or proposals for audit](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#evaluating-tenders)
* [preparing for an audit](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/organising-an-audit/#preparing-for-an-audit)

### **Specifying an audit**

To get the audit that suits your organisation and your website, you need to clearly set out your requirements. Among the factors to consider are:

* What budget is available;
* What wcag accessibility level to audit to;
* Whether to audit the entire site or a sample of pages;
* What sampling scheme to use;
* The need for an implementation plan as output;
* How to procure the audit.

You will also need a clear statement of the intended functions and purposes of your site. This is important because the auditors will often need to weigh up the relative impact of different accessibility barriers on the overall use of a site - in general, they can only do that if they know what the intended uses are.

The details of the audit specification for inclusion in the request for tender and contract are probably best drafted by someone with technical skills. However, as the manager responsible, you need to be involved.

Taking an informed interest in specifying the audit will help you to get the best results. We recommend that you write the high-level outline of requirements, give it to a web accessibility specialist to draft the technical requirements and then check the final specification. This will:

* Involve you in the choices being made;
* Allow you to ensure value for money;
* Be a first step towards understanding and acting on the finished audit report.

The [IT Procurement Toolkit](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/web-and-mobile-app-accessibility/it-procurement-toolkit/) contains additional advice on how to include accessibility as a criterion in request for tenders (rfts).

### **Accessibility level**

While conformance rating double-a under wcag is the minimum required of a public-sector website in Ireland, it represents good value for money to have the audit check the website's conformance rating against  all wcag priority 1, 2 and 3 checkpoints, also called conformance rating triple-a.This will give you an indication of the current level of accessibility of the site and how far it is from reaching conformance with the next accessibility level.

### **Sample pages or whole site?**

The scope of the audit will be affected by several factors, including the budget available. An accessibility audit that reviews every page on a website against every relevant wcag checkpoint is certainly the most thorough audit. It may be feasible only to carry out such an audit on relatively small sites.

With many public sector and commercial sites now running to thousands of pages, a full audit of every page is often not practical.Although some automated web auditing tools can spider an entire site and give some useful information about its accessibility, a certain sample of pages must still be selected for an in-depth audit. It is important that this sample is representative of pages that contain content on the site and of any interactive functionality that the site provides. At the very least the sample should include:

* Pages most frequently accessed by site users, e.g. homepage, "contact us" page etc;
* A variety of page types;
* Pages with forms or tables;
* Pages that are generated by the publishing system in response to user input (e.g. search results);
* Information graphics, such as charts or diagrams;
* Interactive pages that use scripts or programs to process user input, e.g. forms;
* Any pages you feel there may be a problem with.

Pages that are generated by a content management system (cms) usually consist of two parts and a template that holds the content and the content that is drawn from a database to populate the template and create the page. When auditing these dynamic pages, it is important that the template and content, as well as the generated page, are audited.

**template structure:** most websites use some form of template for the header, footer and navigation bars of the site. How these templates are handled depends on the technology used (such as a cms). If an individual or third party is solely responsible for a template, the audit should treat compliance issues relating to templates separately from compliance issues that relate to content. For example, if server side includes are used for a header, the include should be treated as a separate document and checked against the relevant waiwcag checkpoints.

**document content:** the content of the site can refer to text, images, tables and other elements. Document content refers to information that can typically be edited (and thus fixed) by everyday web editing tools such as wysiwyg editors, cmss and graphics applications.

Before conducting an audit, it is important to confirm what approach is to be undertaken by the auditor. Questions to ask include:

* If the site uses a cms or technology that uses templates, will templates be audited separately from document content?
* If not, how will the audit identify instances of non-compliance that occur throughout the site as opposed to unique instances of non-compliance?
* What approach will be taken by the auditor when testing document content?

### **Training and on-going support**

Building capacity within your organisation around accessibility should be one of the primary goals of your audit.When writing a request for tender (RFT) for auditing services, you should consider requesting additional support from the consultant after the audit is completed, to include:

A presentation by the auditor on the full audit report, including a question and answer session; mentoring and providing additional feedback to staff as they attempt to improve the accessibility of the site to help ensure any changes recommended in the audit report are in line with best practice; training and it may be necessary to carry out some formal classroom-based training in web accessibility for staff to ensure they understand fully the issues raised in the audit report.

Your RFT should also emphasise the need for knowledge transfer to your staff after the audit itself and ask those submitting tenders to specify how this will be achieved.

### **Writing requests for tenders for audits**

Depending on the budget of your web accessibility audit and your organisation's procurement rules, you may need to go to tender for your web accessibility audit. The audit specification is the key component of the rft.

Another important element of the RFT is the qualifications and experience of the successful tenderer. Ensure that you include clear and verifiable requirements for establishing these, such as:

* Summary of experience of web accessibility auditing;
* Examples of work in the area;
* Client references, with names and contact details;
* Professional qualifications of audit staff;
* Any specific expertise required to evaluate content on your site that is specialised because of its subject matter, technology or language.

To avoid conflicts of interest, it is advisable that the audit is carried out by a company that is independent of any company that is or has been involved in the development of the website or any its components, such as the cms.

Your RFT will also need to define some other key points, such as the criteria for evaluating tenders. Your technical and procurement staff can probably create the remainder of the rft.

### **Evaluating tenders or proposals for audit**

Evaluation of tenders should follow your normal procurement processes. When you have arrived at a shortlist, it is advisable to contact the referees supplied to confirm key elements of the tenders that form part of your scoring criteria for evaluating tenders.

The [it procurement toolkit](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/it-procurement-toolkit/stages-of-procurement/stages-of-procurement.html) contains additional advice on how to evaluate accessibility as a criterion in rfts.

### **Preparing for an audit**

Having specified an audit and selected an auditor, it is important to prepare for the audit. The following steps should figure in your preparation:

* Brief your staff about the audit and its importance to the organisation;
* Present the audit in a non-threatening way, that it is a valuable chance to improve your website rather than an exercise in blame-attribution;
* Assign responsibility for audit preparation and liaison with auditors with one member of staff;
* Assemble all relevant documentation for the auditor;
* Arrange an initiation session for the audit, well before the audit itself, to ensure that the auditor has all the required information about your site, your organisation and your requirements.

# **Contents of the audit report**

## **Contents**

* [Audit report format](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/contents-of-the-audit-report/#audit-report-format)
* [Summary](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/contents-of-the-audit-report/#summary)
* [Background and methodology](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/contents-of-the-audit-report/#background-and-methodology)
* [Findings](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/contents-of-the-audit-report/#findings)
* [Prioritised action list](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/contents-of-the-audit-report/#prioritised-action-list)
* [Audit detail - appendix](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/contents-of-the-audit-report/#audit-detail)

### **Audit report format**

The key deliverable from your web accessibility audit will be a report. The report should record the findings of the audit and recommend actions to improve accessibility.

There is no set format for such reports but a report should contain enough detail for your technical staff to act to improve accessibility where required.

At the same time, other sections of the report should be written for non-technical staff if they are the intended audience. (For example, required changes to content should be written for the content team.)

The report should not be any longer than it has to be to accommodate the key information:

* Summary;
* Background and methodology;
* Findings;
* Prioritised action list, with suggested fixes and timeline;
* Appendix of audit detail.

Any report longer than 15 pages should contain a table of contents.

### **Summary**

The report summary (sometimes called an executive summary) should contain the key points of the report in very condensed form. It should contain about 400 words, summarising all sections of the report but with most emphasis on the report's findings and what should happen in response.

The summary should be written in plain, non-technical language as far as possible. Its intended audience is anyone involved in or interested in the website.

### **Background and methodology**

The background and methodology section should contain the what, where, who detail of the audit, including:

* The goals of the site;
* The reason for the audit;
* A summary of the audit requirements;
* Who carried out the audit and when;
* What methodology the audit used;
* What the page sample was;
* The WCAG level for which the site was audited.

### **Findings**

Each report should contain a section containing the findings of the audit. You will probably want to know straight away if your website achieves conformance rating Single-A, Double-A or Triple-A with the WCAG. It should also give a high-level description of some of the main issues. For example, it may report that the site contains a substantial number of images that did not have alternative text. It should not, however, list every image without alternative text. This information should be presented in a detailed appendix.

This section should be longer than the summary but not a page-by-page description of every accessibility check.

### **Prioritised action list**

To help you to remedy accessibility problems uncovered in the audit, a key component of the report is an action list. This should contain enough detail to rectify the problems identified.

In some cases, this may be an exact fix. For example, where absolute font sizes are used on the site it should suggest a fix such as: "Replace absolute font size of 12pt for the body style in file mysite.CSS with a relative size of 80%." In other cases, the action may be more generic, e.g. "Ensure that all staff handling images are aware of the need for appropriate alt text and have the skills to create it."

In either event, the action should be clear and unambiguous. Carrying out the action, as described, should be enough to deal with the accessibility problem identified.

The accessibility auditors should also prioritise the actions recommended. This should be done primarily on the basis of gravity: a Level A breach is more significant than a Level Double-A breach, even if the target is to have none of either.

The prioritisation can also take account of how easy or otherwise it is to rectify a breach. "Quick wins" that improve accessibility in the short term should not be deferred just because there are more grave breaches that will take longer to rectify.

The action list should also contain a timeline or roadmap giving an outline of the timescale involved. Timescale is, of course, highly dependent on the budget and other resources available. However, it is still worthwhile to have accessibility specialists set out their view on a realistic timescale to deliver fixes.

### **Audit detail - appendix**

There will probably be further detail arising from the audit. This might include the results from automated tools. The findings of these tools and the actions arising from those findings should be covered in the body of the report.

The results from the tools do not belong in the body of an action-oriented report but it can be included in an appendix. An example of an audit template taken from the WAI website is included for reference in the appendix of this document. Likewise, the completed audit template for each page should be included in an appendix. In this way, supporting detail is available for future reference without cluttering the main report text.

The organisation of detailed appendices may vary. The essential requirement is a full listing of:

* Audit checkpoints;
* Pages checked;
* Conformance of the pages checked with the audit checkpoints.

# **Maintaining Web Accessibility**

## **Contents**

* [Accessibility Policy Document](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/maintaining-web-accessibility/#accessibility-policy-document)
* [Upskilling and training](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/maintaining-web-accessibility/#upskilling-and-training)
* [Publishing new content to the site](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/maintaining-web-accessibility/#publishing-new-content)
	+ [Content management systems](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/maintaining-web-accessibility/#content-management-systems)
	+ [Publication process](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/maintaining-web-accessibility/#publication-process)
	+ [Other issues to consider](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/maintaining-web-accessibility/#other-issues-to-consider)

There are a number of issues to be considered when maintaining the accessibility of a newly designed or upgraded website including policy, buy-in from staff, staff training, and processes for creating and publishing content to the site. The following sections provide guidance on each of these issues.

It is important that any accessibility specific policies, publication procedures and staff guides or training are incorporated into any existing general web governance policies and procedures.

### **Accessibility Policy Document**

Accessibility should be explicitly identified as a key feature of your organisation's IT strategy and should be expressed in the appropriate policy documents. Your accessibility policy should cover:

* Accessibility targets for the website(s) to include the required conformance rating withWAI WCAG;
* The use of inclusive, user-centred design processes;
* Methods to be used to consult with and involve people with disabilities;
* Policy on maintaining accessibility to include procedures on how new content is checked for accessibility before being published to the site;
* Awareness raising and skills building amongst staff; and
* Policy on dealing with suggestions, comments or complaints regarding the accessibility of your ITIT-based products and services.

To foster a culture of inclusion, all staff should be made aware of the accessibility policy.

### **Upskilling and training**

You should consider carefully what kind of training would be best for your staff. For example, although classroom-based training "courses" often fit more easily into corporate training and continuous professional development policies, this type of training is costly to organise and may not be the most effective approach for accessibility.

The knowledge transfer your staff gained from the auditors during the auditing process is a good start to upskilling staff. People who are informed and have a new awareness of accessibility are more likely to be able to maintain it.

Classroom-based training can be a good approach for general accessibility awareness raising or in-depth training specific to a person's task. For ongoing development, however, a mentoring or technical support approach may work best. This can be organised as a consultancy contract to supply a certain amount of assistance over a period of time on an as-needed basis - for example, a half day here and a half day there, to discuss "issues that have arisen since we last met". A fast-response help-desk service may also work.

### **Publishing new content to the site**

It may arise during the audit that the content management system used on the website does not always produce accessible content. It may also arise that long-established protocols and processes in place within the organisation mean that inaccessible content is sometimes published to the site. After an audit is the best time to address both of these issues.

### **Content management systems**

If you have a content management system (CMS) in place that does not always produce accessible content, you may need to look at customising the CMS further to improve the accessibility of its output. You may need to contact the CMS vendor to assist you with this.

If this does not lead to a satisfactory result, you may need to consider moving to a CMS that fully supports accessibility.

No matter how technically proficient a CMS may be at producing accessible HTML, it is only a tool that can be used to aid the accessibility of content. Ultimately, all users of the CMS must have some knowledge of accessibility. Without this knowledge, no CMS can ensure that only accessible content is published to the site. For example, a CMS may be capable of producing code that conforms to the latest HTML/XHTML standard. However, if a content creator uses link phrases such as "Click here" in content being published to the site, this will present an accessibility barrier to some users. This also means the content will not conform to one or more of the WAI WCAG checkpoints. Therefore, staff using a CMS must have the necessary training and supports, such as style and accessibility guides, to enable them to produce and publish accessible content.

A note on Microsoft Word. MS Word is the most commonly used word processor. There are a number of things that can be done when writing content in Word that will assist in the conversion to accessible HTML later on. Issues include the use of correct headings and including alt text for images. More detailed advice on this is available on the [WebAim website.](http://www.webaim.org/techniques/word/%22%20%5Co%20%22)

### **Publication process**

A CMS may be part of a larger and long-established publication process within your organisation. Such publication processes may also present obstacles to ensuring new content published to the website is checked for accessibility. For example, the webmaster or other personnel involved in publishing content to the site may be given content in formats such as MS Word and Adobe PDF and instructed to publish this as is to the site. In order to avoid such scenarios, a clear accessibility policy that provides direction on such matters is required and this must be communicated to all staff.

There is no "one size fits all solution" for ensuring a publication process facilitates accessibility. However, there are a number of issues to consider when reviewing a publication process:

* Do the technologies used (word processors, CMSs etc) enable users to create accessible content? For commonly used applications such as MS Word, look at ways of supporting staff to create content that can lend itself to being converted later to accessible HTML;
* If content is commissioned externally, can anything be done to ensure that it is created in a reasonably accessible way?
* Where content such as reports, information leaflets and factsheets are sent out for print publication, is a master copy of the content maintained? There are 2 issues here:
	+ It is much easier to produce accessible HTML from MS Word than it is from the PDFs typically created by print and design houses;
	+ Often revisions are made to the PDF version of the content before it is finalised. If the MS Word version is used to create the accessible HTML for the website then issues of version control may arise. Ensure that a master copy of the MS Word version is kept and used for creating the HTML for the website.

### **Other issues to consider**

Other steps to safeguard gains and build on the audit may include:

* Creating accessibility guidelines and checklists for internal use, specific to your organisation;
* Building accessibility into processes for managing the website and periodically checking that these are being followed;
* Including accessibility awareness in induction training for new staff;
* Scheduling a follow-up web accessibility audit;
* Joining accessibility initiatives such as the NDA's Excellence through Accessibility Award.

# **After an audit**

## **Contents**

* [Key goals of audit](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/after-an-audit/#key-goals)
* [Knowledge transfer](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/after-an-audit/#knowledge-transfer)
* [Interpreting the audit report](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/after-an-audit/#interpreting-the-audit-report)
* [Acting on the report](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/after-an-audit/#acting-on-the-report)
* [Fix problems or redevelop site?](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/after-an-audit/#fix-problems)
* [Accessibility conformance claims - accessibility statements](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/after-an-audit/#accessibility-conformance)

### **Key goals of audit**

A web accessibility audit is not an aim in itself. It is a tool to make your website more accessible and to improve your organisation's capacity to operate an accessible website. These are the outcomes that really matter.

As a manager, it is your responsibility to ensure that these goals are achieved.

Some of the process of a web accessibility audit is technically oriented and may be outside of your experience and skill range. However, ensuring that the audit results in a more accessible website and improved capacity to publish accessibly is certainly part of your job as a manager.

Ensuring that you can achieve the core goals of the audit is the reason for your involvement throughout the process. As with so many activities, and particularly those related to technology, the interest and involvement of senior management is a key success factor in working to improve accessibility.

### **Knowledge transfer**

Use the auditing process to increase capacity within your organisation around web accessibility. Commissioning a website accessibility audit is an opportunity to not only up-skill staff on the technical issues involved in web accessibility but also to raise their awareness of how people with disabilities use the web. This will lead to a deeper understanding of the issues involved in web accessibility. This increased awareness and capacity will also help to ensure that future developments on the website will result in more accessibility. It may reduce your reliance on expensive consultancy in the future. The best consultants, after all, are those that effectively make themselves redundant by enabling staff to learn as much as possible during the auditing process.

Therefore, it is important to have clear sight of the goals of knowledge transfer and increased capability in your organisation during the auditing process. Ensuring that these goals are achieved requires planning.

Facilitate relevant staff to learn from the process so that future developments on the website will result in more accessible outputs. During the auditing process you can maximise the knowledge transfer opportunities for your staff in a number of ways:

Involve all relevant staff in the auditing process and, in particular, at the presentation of the findings by the consultant;Mentoring - have the consultant review changes made by staff to the site on foot of the auditing report. This will help to ensure that the issues identified in the report are fixed correctly and according to best practice. It will also ensure that staff understand the nature of the issues identified in the audit report and learn from the process; Training - have the consultant provide additional training to staff as necessary.

### **Interpreting the audit report**

When you receive the report on the web accessibility audit, try to get a full understanding of it. Measures to do so include:

* Taking time to read it fully;
* Comparing the report to the specification to check for gaps;
* Reviewing the major findings and action plan to ensure that the prioritised action points are attainable.

If there is anything in the report that is unclear to you, ask the auditor, your own technical staff or both. Make sure that relevant members of your staff understand the report as it relates to them, including:

* Technical staff;
* Content staff;
* Operational staff.

If they have questions about the report, encourage them to discuss these with the auditor. A report that is fully understood is easier for people to accept as the basis for action to improve accessibility.

Some people or sections may be defensive about the report's findings. You need to overcome this if they are to accept the report and move forward with it. Emphasise again the value of the accessibility audit as a technique for moving forward and improving the website.

### **Acting on the report**

Once the report has been clarified, understood and accepted in your organisation, you can move to act on it. How quickly this can be done depends on various factors, including the scale of the website and the number and nature of accessibility problems identified in the report.

You also need to consider the other pressures on the organisation and its resources, availability of budgets, and other technical and communications initiatives that may be taking place.

When a web accessibility audit is scheduled, it is most important to ensure that its output is built into site operation from that point.

For example, an audit may highlight problems where links to downloadable documents do not state the document type and size. This is important because:

* Such links may confuse users by unexpectedly opening a new window;
* The resulting document format may be inaccessible to some users; and
* It may take a long time to download the document over a dial-up connection, with no information given to the user about how long they should expect to wait.

Therefore, it is important to clearly inform users about what they are getting if they click on the link. Finding such problems should result in several actions such as:

* Fixing those document links during or just after the audit;
* Creating guidelines on linking to documents;
* Delivering guidelines and training to site operations staff; and
* Ongoing monitoring of links to documents.

### **Fix problems or redevelop site?**

A key question in moving from audit to action is whether accessibility problems on the site can be rectified or whether redevelopment is the only option.

Redevelopment might be the only option for achieving your accessibility goal if key elements of the publishing technology had built-in accessibility problems. For example, the content management system might rely completely on older HTML codes that are now deprecated and contrary to the WCAG Priority 2 guideline that deals with the use of the latest version of HTML/XHTML.

On the other hand, redevelopment might be a preferred option and the most efficient way to achieve your accessibility goal. This may particularly be the case if you have other drivers for change on the website.

The decision to rectify or redevelop can only be made in the context of your actual site and technology. There are a number of factors to consider in making this decision:

* Is the current site dated or defective in ways other than its accessibility?
* Can redevelopment be justified on other grounds, such as improved functionality, greater reliability and improved efficiency?
* Are there other drivers towards redevelopment, for example a need for bilingual capability to meet requirements of the [Official Languages Act 2003](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/32/enacted/en/html)
* Are accessibility problems embedded in content to such an extent that a clean start on a new site, with content recreated instead of transferred, is the most sensible approach?

If the decision is to redevelop, consider how to preserve user bookmarks, search engine positioning and other assets of the original site's resources. To do so, either the â€œoldâ€ addresses should continue to function or these should be redirected automatically to their replacements on the new site.

### **Accessibility conformance claims and accessibility statements**

Based on your accessibility audit, you may be able to make a conformance rating claim for your website. Typically this is done by displaying the Single-A, Double-A or Triple-A logo on the homepage or throughout the site.

A WAI logo only refers to the page on which it is displayed and not the entire site. Different parts of the site may have different WAI conformance ratings. For example, if your site contains content in PDF without an accessible HTML alternative, not even a conformance rating of WAI Single-A can be made for the entire site, even if all HTML pages are accessible.

A more detailed and meaningful way to state the accessibility of your website is to write an accessibility statement. This should be a clear statement of your organisation's commitment to maintaining an accessible website and of the conformance rating of the website.

Where some services or information are still not available in an accessible format, provide information on how this content or service can be requested or accessed through a different channel. There are a number of ways in which this can be done:

* Example 1: Many local authority websites provide planning application information online that includes Geographical Information System (GIS) information. This graphical content is currently very difficult to make accessible. In this case, provide contact details for the planning office, which is experienced in handling queries over the phone and in person on planning application matters. The staff involved should be trained to understand the limitations of the system for people with disabilities;
* Example 2: Your website may contain a lot of legacy content that is in inaccessible formats. Provide clear instructions on how someone can request that this information is converted to an accessible format.

An accessibility statement should contain the following features:

* A clear statement of the organisation's commitment to maintaining an accessible website;
* An accurate statement of the website's WAI WCAG conformance rating;the accessibility features of the website;
* Known accessibility issues with the site and timelines for addressing these;
* How users can request information or a service on the site that is currently inaccessible in a format or channel that best suits their needs;
* How someone can send feedback on the accessibility of the site.

If you claim an accessibility level for your website and have used a sample to audit accessibility, this could also be included in your accessibility statement.

# **Further information**

## **Contents**

* [NDA information](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#nda)
* [Excellence through Accessibility (EtA)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#excellence-through-accessibility)
* [WAI resources](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#wai-resources)
* [Writing for the web](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#writing-for-the-web)
* [Glossary](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#glossary)
	+ [Accessibility (web)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#accessibility)
	+ [Adaptive and Assistive Technologies](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#adaptive-and-assistive)
	+ [Audit (of accessibility)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#audit)
	+ [HTML (HyperText Markup Language)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#html)
	+ [ICT](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#ict)
	+ [JAWS](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#jaws)
	+ [Screen reader](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#screen-reader)
	+ [Usability (web)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#usability)
	+ [XML (eXtensible Markup Language)](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/universal-design-for-ict/web-accessibility-auditing/further-information/#xml)

### **NDA information**

[Ask Me: Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities](https://universaldesign.ie/cntmgmtnew.Nsf/0/AF4DB8120103088D80256C830060FB2F?OpenDocument)

### **Excellence through Accessibility (EtA)**

The National Disability Authority (NDA) launched the [Excellence through Accessibility Award (EtA)](https://universaldesign.ie/) EtA Award in 2005. This initiative comes from a government commitment to accessibility in the 2000 Programme for Prosperity and Fairness . It aims to promote excellence in the provision of accessible public service. Government departments and their agencies are encouraged to join the scheme and to work towards reaching the highest level of accessible service delivery. The award looks at three key areas: the built environment, customer services and channels.

The NDA has published guidelines as part of the EtA award initiative. Guideline 14 requires that 'the organisation is committed to achieving conformance level Double-A with the Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0'

The EtA award scheme sets out a number of performance indicators for this guideline. These include full compliance of all HTML-based information and services with level Double-A of WAI WCAG but also lower levels of accessibility, including:

* A commitment to auditing and improving accessibility;
* A web accessibility statement in place on each website stating a commitment to reaching and maintaining level Double-A; and
* That new content published to the site is Double-A compliant.

Participation in the EtA award provides a structured process for implementing continuous improvements in the accessibility of public websites.

The NDA's seeks to promote commitment to continuous improvement in accessibility of public services. To do this, the award encourages the development of policies, practices and relationships to ensure that achievements in accessibility are sustainable and meaningful to customers.

### **WAI resources**

[Checklist of Checkpoints for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.Html)

[W3C - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 Priorities](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/#priorities)

[W3C [DRAFT] Involving Users in Web Accessibility Evaluation](http://www.w3.org/WAI/EO/Drafts/eval/users.Html)

[W3C - Ongoing Monitoring](http://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/considerations.Html#ongoing)

[W3C - Implementation Plan for Web Accessibility](http://www.w3.org/WAI/impl/Overview#intro)

[Other sources of information: NDA information on accessibility policy and legislation](https://universaldesign.ie/technology-ict/web-and-mobile-app-accessibility/legislation-and-public-policy/)

[European Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of Regions, regarding eAccessibility](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/index_en.Htm%3E)

[Alliance for Technology Access - Designing and Understanding Accessible WWW Pages](http://www.ataccess.org/rresources/webaccess.Html)

[WebAIM - Web Accessibility in Mind](http://www.webaim.org/)

[Web Accessibility for All](http://www.cew.wisc.edu/accessibility/)

[Irish National Centre for Technology in Education Web Publishing Centre](http://www.ncte.ie/wpc/keep_accessible.Htm)

[The National Council for the Blind of Ireland - Centre for Inclusive Technology](http://www.cfit.ie/)

### **Writing for the web**

[How Users Read on the Web (Jakob Nielsen)](http://www.useit.com/alterbox/9710a.Html)

[Applying Writing Guidelines to Web Pages (Jakob Nielsen)](http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/rewriting.Html)

[Inverted Pyramids in Cyberspace (Jakob Nielsen)](http://www.useit.com/alterbox/9606.Html)

[Sun Microsystems Writing Guidelines - Difference between paper and online presentations](http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/wftw1.Html)

[Web writing for users of varied interest levels](http://www.e-gineer.com/v1/articles/web-writing-for-many-interest-levels.Htm)

[Web style guidance](http://www.provenanceunknown.com/edit/style.Html)

### **Glossary**

This brief glossary covers some key accessibility terms.

**Accessibility (web)**

Ensuring that information or services delivered through websites are available to and usable by the widest possible audience.

**Adaptive and Assistive Technologies**

Hardware devices and software that are used to adapt an existing system for use by someone with a disability or that assist someone with a disability in carrying out tasks.

**Audit (of accessibility)**

A web accessibility audit measures your website's level of accessibility in a systematic way against a set of accessibility checkpoints.

**HTML (HyperText Markup Language)**

Computer language used to create web pages.

**ICT(Information and Communication Technology)**

The broad range of technology used in information management and communication. This includes websites and devices (such as personal computers) used to access them, in addition to many other types of technology.

**JAWS**

A widely used screen reader program.

**Screen reader**

Software that reads the contents of the computer screen aloud.

**Usability (web)**

Ensuring that a website or service facilitates users in carrying out their goals.

**XML (eXtensible Markup Language)**

Computer language used to structure information. XML and some related technologies can help to facilitate web accessibility.