

Assistive Technology for Students with Print Disabilities

A student with a print disability may be someone who is blind, has low vision, or a learning disability such as dyslexia, and who is unable to read traditional print materials.

Print Materials

Anything that students read for class must be made accessible for blind and visually impaired students. This includes any material that is required, supplemental or optional reading. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Textbooks
- Handouts
- Course Documents through Canvas
- PowerPoints
- Newspaper and Journal Articles

The student and the professor are encouraged to have a conversation about which format(s) the student prefers. This formatting makes the document readable by the assistive technology software. The student is responsible for making his/her needs known, and the professor is responsible for providing the print materials in an accessible format.

If students are sharing documents, PowerPoints, or other print materials, as part of the course requirements (i.e. group projects, presentations, etc., those also must be made accessible).

Once the document has been made accessible, it can be made available in Canvas or sent to the student as an attachment in an email. It is recommended that whenever possible, the student is provided the document ahead of time in order to make sure it is compatible with the assistive technology software.

Some accessible print formats include:

- Large print - formatting text on a paper to a font size that is larger than usual (font size 18 points or higher).
- Enlarged print - documents are sent to the student electronically and the font is magnified by the software on the student's device (laptop, tablet, cell phone).
- PDF version – all documents should be converted as saved as PDFs. PDF documents can be read by screen readers and text-to-speech software.
- Braille*

*For a student who uses Braille, the Disability Services Office will obtain those materials or convert your documents. Anticipate up to a week for the office to complete that task.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology that provides access to individuals with print disabilities, includes:

- Screen readers - software programs that use speech synthesizers to read text that is on the computer screen. Some screen-reader software must be purchased separately while others may come already installed on a user's device.
 - Some common screen-reader software is JAWS, MAGic, Chromevox, and ZoomText.
- Speech-to-Text – software programs that use speech synthesizers to read text as the user reads along.
- Magnification Software – software that magnifies the font (some, such as MAGic and ZoomText have screen-reader capability as well).

Assistive Technology – Hardware Includes:

- Cell phones, tablets, PCs, Macs – PDFs, audiobooks
- Hand held magnifiers, image readers (located in each campus library and in each testing center)
- The DSS Office has a Braille (Braille typewriter) and a Braille Printer (prints from a computer)
- Digital Voice Recorder (can hold up to 3 months of lectures)
- Headphones/earbuds

Assistive Technology – Software Includes:

- JAWS, MAGic
- Apps: Learning Ally, Vital Source, Audible, iBooks
- Voice-over Features: reads emails, or whatever is on your phone or tablet.
- Notetaking Apps - Sonocent
- Voice Recorders: Super Note, Victor Stream Reader (tape recorder that can navigate through notes easily.) Often donated from public libraries.

Technology is updated yearly – to stay current with software versions. License codes for screen readers can be shared across three computers (across campuses). NOVA can support students financially for a short time and provides training for students and professors to use JAWS and MAGic.

Assistive Technology is Available at Every NOVA Campus

- Libraries have one computer with JAWS, another computer with MAGic/ZoomText, image reader
- Testing Centers have one or two computers with JAWS, one with ZoomText and an image reader
- Open computer labs have one computer with JAWS, one with ZoomText, an image reader and scanner

- Tutoring/Writing Centers: one computer with JAWS, one with ZoomText, an image reader and scanner
- Language Centers: one computer with JAWS
- Technology (hardware and software) can be shared between departments
- Assistive Technology Labs: equipment is available for students to use while on campus (including a laptop with JAWS)

Public libraries have talking book resources (specifically English Lit courses) – uses digital book player.

Assistive Technology – Rule of Thumb

If you use it for your class, it must be made accessible. If it doesn't come from the publisher in an accessible format, the college must take responsibility to make the documents accessible.