



TrustEd Apps™ Accessibility Rubric User Guide

Version 1.0

Introduction & Context.....	2
Contents	3
Purpose.....	3
Scope	3
In Scope.....	4
Out of Scope	4
Accessibility Rubric Details	5
Scoring	6
Conclusion.....	6
Troubleshooting.....	7
FAQ	7
Glossary.....	9
Acronyms.....	9
Terminology.....	9
Resources & Best Practices.....	10



Introduction & Context

Including accessibility and consideration for students of all ability levels in the activities of educational institutions is an important but complicated aspect of creating inclusive learning environments. It is a multifaceted process that requires an understanding of the user experience of people with a broad range of abilities, including those with disabilities, as well as the technical specifications of accessibility conformance requirements. Expertise regarding this user experience is typically easy to find at an educational institution, while technical expertise can be a little more difficult to come by. Multiple institutions with the requisite expertise to conduct accessibility evaluations often evaluate the same product, creating duplicative effort among member institutions. Those same institutions were also creating their own forms, questionnaires, and processes for suppliers to follow as part of their accessibility vetting activities, requiring suppliers to complete multiple forms for the same product, creating a different duplicative effort.

Members of 1EdTech's Accessibility Task Force developed the [TrustEd Apps Accessibility Rubric](#) to address these concerns as well as to share the load of accessibility evaluation and assessment among member institutions. The use of the rubric not only increases access for students with diverse abilities but can also reduce friction and duplicative effort in the process. The task force is composed of stakeholders from higher education, K-12, and the supplier communities. Each member has been tasked with sharing insights from their perspectives and experiences with accessibility vetting to reduce redundancy, increase efficacy, and share expertise more widely.

The goal of developing this rubric is to streamline the approach to accessibility evaluation. Suppliers and institutions are often considered to have opposing views on accessibility when that is often untrue. The development and use of this rubric creates the opportunity for both sides to highlight the importance accessibility plays in the procurement process, each side's commitment to accessibility, and how they work to increase access. As the rubric is used, the task force will continue to provide oversight and expert analysis that will lead to further refinement to ensure that the rubric is a valuable component of an accessibility vetting strategy for both suppliers and their customers.



Contents

This document contains an overview of the rubric and its purpose, along with guidance for its use and supporting resources.

Purpose

The purpose of the TrustEd Apps Accessibility Rubric is to:

- Leverage accessibility expertise across 1EdTech member organizations and individuals to improve the approach to access for students with a broad range of auditory, visual, physical, and cognitive abilities.
- Provide a common framework for discussions and evaluating tools about accessibility with tool providers and suppliers.
- Supplement legislated requirements and/or accessibility conformance documentation.

Scope

The TrustEd Apps Accessibility Rubric has been designed to support this holistic, comprehensive approach to accessibility evaluation. Accordingly, the rubric is not intended to replace existing accessibility conformance documentation secured as part of a procurement process; it is meant to supplement it. Rather than asking how the product meets accessibility standards, the rubric's prompts include questions about the testing conducted by the supplier, how accessibility has been included in the design of the product, and what training has been provided to development staff. It also includes considerations of the supplier's posture regarding accessibility, including policy statements, dedicated accessibility support for clients, and the supplier's understanding of and approach to the need for potential alternatives as part of an overall accommodation strategy.

The rubric benefits 1Ed Tech member institutions, particularly those that do not have staff with deep accessibility expertise needed to complete technical assessments of accessibility. It allows member institutions to review the information submitted by suppliers who complete the rubric and any comments shared by member institutions who have evaluated the tool. This benefit is twofold: it allows member institutions to access expert technical reviews they



typically would not be able to access while allowing suppliers to provide standard information to multiple potential clients without having to complete individual forms from potential clients asking for similar information in various formats. The development of this rubric fulfills numerous needs in the educational landscape and influences the market by emphasizing the importance of accessibility as institutions continue to build inclusive learning environments.

In Scope

The rubric is one component of a comprehensive accessibility assessment and evaluation. It provides insight into multiple aspects of creating access to educational opportunities and resources. Specifically, the following are in scope for the rubric:

- Self-evaluation completed by the supplier with an opportunity for members to provide feedback.
- Holistic assessment of accessibility that allows the supplier to provide insight into their approach to policy, procedures, product design, and professional development, among others.
- Opportunity for member institutions to receive consultation, guidance, and advice regarding accessibility from others with accessibility expertise.
- Supports a comprehensive approach to assessing the accessibility of supplier-selected learning tools / educational technologies.
- Reduces redundancy and duplicative efforts by streamlining the availability of accessibility information the supplier community provides.
- Increases access to education for students of all abilities by emphasizing the importance of accessibility in creating inclusive learning environments.

Out of Scope

It is important to note that the rubric is not intended to duplicate existing work or create additional standards in an already crowded field. The rubric is intended to allow suppliers to provide additional insight into how the company has approached accessibility and worked to create access. To that end, the following are not in scope:

- Technical accessibility review mapped to specific technical criteria.



- Completion of accessibility conformance documentation.
- Certification of accessibility conformance.
- Legal advice regarding institutional or supplier responsibility under state or federal law.

Accessibility Rubric Details

The 1EdTech TrustEd App Accessibility Rubric offers suppliers the opportunity to supplement the accessibility conformance documentation they provide regarding their products to existing and future customers. It collects information about the supplier's stance, philosophy, and level of activity to address accessible and equitable access to content, tools, and resources designed for an educational setting. It also allows the supplier to provide additional details about how accessibility has been considered during the design, development, and review of the product. Educational institutions will find this additional information valuable as they assess the product's fit for their needs.

The 1EdTech TrustEd Apps Accessibility Rubric provides a framework for evaluating four key areas of a supplier's maturity in making content, tools, and resources accessible to all learners. The rubric begins with basic information about the product being assessed, including the version and whether the review is for the platform, content, and/or any embedded tools that may be part of the product, the relevant dates related to its development, and the review, and who completed the form, including their qualifications to provide accessibility information and how they are associated with the supplier.

- **Information and Documentation:** This section allows the supplier to indicate whether or not they have a publicly available accessibility statement, how conformance documentation has been developed, how they approach the accessibility of documents shared and roadmap considerations.
- **Procurement Process and Communication:** In this section, the supplier is able to identify how accessibility features are shared during product demonstrations, how accessibility gaps are identified and shared with clients, and what mechanisms are in place for clients to share concerns, errors and defects related to accessibility with the supplier when the product is in use.



- **Accessibility Conformance:** This section of the rubric asks the supplier to provide insight about how accessibility has been included in the design, development, testing, and release of the product, not as a replacement for accessibility conformance documentation but as a supplement to it. This section of the rubric also includes a series of questions that may be answered by clients who currently use the product. These questions include assessing if the client's evaluations of the product were consistent with the accessibility conformance documentation provided and how the supplier approached addressing accessibility issues, including how client feedback was obtained.
- **Alternatives and Accommodations:** The final section of the rubric addresses how the use of the product may be accommodated and what role the supplier can and will play in determining accommodations for individual students.

Each section of the rubric also provides an area for existing clients of the supplier to provide feedback on that section's questions and their experiences working with the supplier.

Scoring

The rubric provides a scoring system to assess the overall accessibility performance of the product or service. The total score (42) is calculated based on the scores given to each item. The scoring scale includes three levels: Emerging (1-12 points), Advancing (13-26 points), and Optimized (27- 42 points). The evaluation is a self-review by the supplier and is required to be updated annually. Results will be available to 1EdTech members.

Conclusion

The Accessibility Rubric is a valuable tool for evaluating the accessibility conformance of a product or service. By assessing various aspects, including information/documentation, procurement process, communication, accessibility conformance, and alternatives/accommodations, it helps stakeholders make informed decisions. The scoring system provides an overall indication of the product's accessibility level.



Troubleshooting

If you encounter difficulties with the tool or have questions, please get in touch with 1EdTech support at support@1edtech.org. Your message will be tracked and routed to the appropriate 1EdTech staff member who can best assist you.

FAQ

- **What is the difference between the Accessibility Rubric and VPAT?**
 - The VPAT offers suppliers an opportunity to highlight how their product conforms with accessibility guidelines and standards. The Accessibility Rubric does not map to any one accessibility standard or guideline but instead offers suppliers an opportunity to highlight how their organization approaches accessibility considerations. The rubric takes a broader look at accessibility and allows the supplier to indicate how mature their approach to accessibility is.
- **Who completes the Accessibility Rubric?**
 - A representative of the supplier completes the document.
- **What does self-assessment mean versus third-party reviewed?**
 - Self-assessment indicates that a representative of the supplier will complete the rubric and submit it to the task force for review. The task force will review the completed rubric, but it will not be independently verified, nor will task force members or 1Ed Tech personnel be available to provide a review or complete the rubric on behalf of the supplier.
- **Who has access to the completed information?**
 - The completed rubric will be available online to 1Ed Tech members in the TrustEd Apps Directory and the TrustEd Apps Management Suite.
- **What is the benefit to publishers and other vendors to complete this rubric?**
 - The rubric allows publishers and suppliers to share information about their approach to accessibility as it relates to a specific product with potential clients. As suppliers are asked to provide additional information to potential clients during procurement activities, they can highlight that the rubric has been completed and hopefully reduce redundancy and duplicative effort.



- **Who is able to update this document?**
 - Suppliers will be able to update the completed rubric and will be asked to submit any updates on an annual basis. 1EdTech members will be able to submit additional information based on their experiences with the product to the 1EdTech Accessibility Task Force for review and publication with a completed rubric.

- **How does this rubric benefit the educational communities and buyers?**
 - The rubric contains information about a supplier's approach to accessibility and accessibility considerations for the product that is outside the scope of formal accessibility conformance with standards. It allows potential clients to review this information as part of the procurement process to determine if the supplier and its product are a good fit for their educational technology needs. It leverages the expertise of the accessibility task force by combining commonly asked questions in one place.

- **How often is the document updated?**
 - Completed rubrics will be updated at least annually.

- **As a completer of the rubric, what is the process to unpublish my rubric results?**
 - Contact 1EdTech support at support@1edtech.org.

- **How does this compare to the HECVAT?**
 - The accessibility rubric provides suppliers with an opportunity to document the maturity of their approach to accessibility. There are some common elements with the HECVAT, particularly on the questions on the rubric related to accessibility standards and vetting, but the rubric offers suppliers an opportunity to expand and provide information about their philosophy and approach to access.

- **Where can I find further help?**
 - Contact 1EdTech support at support@1edtech.org. Your message will be tracked and routed to the appropriate 1EdTech staff member who can best assist you.



Glossary

Acronyms

- **ACR - Accessibility Conformance Report** is a document, based on a VPAT, that formally summarizes the extent to which a specific product or service conforms to an agreed set of accessibility guidelines and standards.
- **HECVAT - Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit** is a questionnaire framework specifically designed for higher education facilities to measure vendor risk to confirm that information, data, and cybersecurity policies are in place to protect sensitive institutional information and students' personally identifiable information (PII).
- **ICT - information and communication technology** is a category of products and services specifically regulated by Section 508 guidelines.
- **VPAT®** - The Voluntary Product Accessibility Template® from the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) is a template containing information regarding how an ICT product or service conforms with a specific version of WCAG criteria and/or with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- **W3C** - The World Wide Web Consortium is the main international standards organization for the Internet.
- **WCAG** - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines is part of a series of web accessibility guidelines published by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium, the main international standards organization for the Internet.

Terminology

- **Accessibility** - Accessibility is when the needs of people with disabilities (physical, cognitive, sensory, mental health, etc.) are specifically considered, and products, services, and facilities are built or modified so that people of all abilities can use them.
- **Accommodations** - The term "accommodation" may be used to describe an alteration of an environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. They allow students with disabilities to pursue a regular course of study.



- **Assistive technology** - The term “assistive technology device” means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability.
- **Section 508** of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended - Accessibility standards that apply to the procurement processes of the federal government for information and communication technology

Resources & Best Practices

Resources are referenced by their section on the evaluation rubric.

D1

- [Developing an Accessibility Statement | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- [Developing a Website Accessibility Statement | Section508.gov](#)
- [Generate an Accessibility Statement | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- [TechCheck - Peatworks](#)
- [DEI Best Practices Collection - Disability:IN](#)

D2

- [Request Accessibility Information from Vendors & Contractors | Section508.gov](#)
- [VPAT - Information Technology Industry Council](#)
- [Reporting Conformance to ICT Accessibility Standards](#)
- [AEM Center: Understanding the VPAT®](#)
- [How to Create an Accessibility Conformance Report Using A Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT®\) | Section508.gov](#)
- [18F Accessibility Guide](#)

D3

- [AEM Center: Designing for Accessibility](#)
- [Writing for Web Accessibility – Tips for Getting Started](#)
- [Developer Help | Accessibility | Social Security Administration](#)
- [AEM Center: Creating Accessible Documents](#)
- [Create Accessible PDFs | Section508.gov](#)
- [The WCAG 2 Documents | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)



- [Create Accessible Digital Products | Section508.gov](#)

D4

- [Accessibility Conformance Report/Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT®\) Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) | Section508.gov](#)
- [Implement | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)

D5

- [Planning and Managing Web Accessibility](#)

P1

- [Step 6: Testing & Validation - Peatworks](#)

P2

- [Involving Users in Web Projects for Better, Easier Accessibility | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- [Accessibility Testing for Websites and Software | Section508.gov](#)
- [Play 11: Track and resolve accessibility issues | Section508.gov](#)

C1

- [Design and Develop Overview | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- [Accessibility Fundamentals Overview | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)

C2

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#)

C3

- [Involving Users in Evaluating Web Accessibility](#)
- [Accessibility Testing for Websites and Software | Section508.gov](#)

C5

- [OCR Web Accessibility Video Series - YouTube](#)
- [Accessibility Training, Tools, and Events | Section508.gov](#)



C6

- [Involving Users in Web Projects for Better, Easier Accessibility | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)

A1

- [Accessibility - YouTube](#)
- [Microsoft Inclusive Design](#)
- [How People with Disabilities Use the Web | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- [Accessibility Principles | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)
- [Inclusive design | UX design | Accessibility for Teams](#)
- [Inclusive Design 24 #id24 - YouTube](#)