

Is This Tool Accessible?

A quick-reference checklist for evaluating third-party applications used for teaching (publisher platforms, plug-ins, simulations, and other EdTech tools).

1. Search and Review

- ☐ Ask the vendor for their current VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template), based on WCAG 2.2 AA.
- ☐ Check the document date — flag anything older than 1–2 years.
- ☐ Read vendor comments next to each criterion, not just the summary column.
- ☐ Conduct an internet search for the tool's accessibility policy

2. Run an Automated Scan

- ☐ Use a free tool: WAVE (WebAIM)
 - ☐ Scan the login/landing page and at least one content page students will use.
 - ☐ Note contrast, missing alt text, missing labels, and heading structure issues.
- Limitation: automated tools catch roughly a third of WCAG issues — treat this as a first pass, not a verdict.*

3. Test with Keyboard Only

- ☐ Put the mouse aside; navigate using Tab, Shift+Tab, Enter, and arrow keys.
- ☐ Complete one real student task: submit work, take a quiz, or open a module.
- ☐ Confirm focus stays visible at every step — if it disappears, that's a failure point.

4. Spot-Check with a Screen Reader

- ☐ Use NVDA (Windows, free) or VoiceOver (Mac, built-in).
- ☐ Repeat the same task from Method 3 and listen for sensible announcements.
- ☐ Pay special attention to custom widgets: drag-and-drop, video players, simulations.

5. Test Real Student Workflows

- ☐ List the 3–5 tasks students must complete in the tool — not the marketing homepage.
- ☐ Test each task directly, especially timed activities, CAPTCHAs, and drag-and-drop steps.
- ☐ Verify all embedded video/audio has captions or a transcript.

Have 15 minutes?

Run an automated scan (Method 2) on the tool's main screens.

Have 1 hour?

Add a keyboard-only walk-through of one core task (Method 3).

Adopting for the whole course?

Complete all 5 methods and file the VPAT + notes with your department.

