

## University of Alabama at Birmingham's Commitment to Captioning

The interpretation and implementation of disability legislation is evolving, and it is important for UAB faculty and staff to understand our legal and educational requirements. We are committed to providing all of our students with the best learning experience possible.

Captioning and transcription are an essential part of ensuring access to course material and institutional wide communications. The following Guidance and Best Practices are being provided to assist faculty and staff with meeting UAB's compliance obligations. UAB expects all faculty and staff to incorporate these principles into their processes.

Disability Support Services is a university-wide resource for captioning and transcription services for students with communication access accommodation needs. UAB E-Learning Department is a university- wide resource for providing tools to enhance the academic experience such as captioning outside of a student mandated reasonable accommodation to provide institutional wide approach to universal access.

However, the goal for individual units and departments should be to incorporate captioning protocols into their existing process for producing videos (i.e. included in checklists). University Relations, Student Affairs Marketing & Communications, and e-Learning are examples of units that incorporate this as general practice.

### **DSS serves as a resource for assistance:**

- Recognizing when materials **must** be captioned or transcribed
- Locating captioned media
- Creating captioned media
- Arranging for captions to be added by an outside vendor

### **Materials that require captioning and/or a transcript include:**

The University is **legally obligated** to caption or provide a transcript of the following materials:

- Audio/video content that is mandatory for all students (Example: orientation videos)
- Online/hybrid courses or educational programs, when a student who uses captioning as a reasonable accommodation is registered in the course
- Audio/video content that is shown as part of a face-to-face or live course or educational program, unless an interpreter or CART writer is present, when a student who uses captioning as a reasonable accommodation is registered in the course

- Audio/video content that is mandatory for all employees, such as employee training videos (Example: UAB HR Open Enrollment video)
- Audio/video content that is job-related to UAB employees who use captioning as a reasonable accommodation
- Audio/video content that is accessed by the general public and which is hosted on or embedded in an official UAB website or must have synchronized captions
- Audio/video material requested to be accessible by a disabled individual as a reasonable accommodation

### **Best practices regarding audio/video material:**

- Adding captions or creating a transcript for audio/visual media is **always good practice**.
  - Captions benefit deaf and hearing-impaired individuals, non-English or ESL speakers, those with learning disabilities, visual learners and all users in a noisy environment.
  - Captions and transcripts make videos and podcasts searchable.
  - Captioning media at time of production is more efficient than having to revise the media for accessibility post-production.  
Professional captioning is strongly recommended by DSS for all course videos and is the required method of captioning when a student in the course is approved for captioning as an academic accommodation.
  - Departments should purchase only audio/video materials that include captions. University personnel should work with the vendor and seek DSS support as needed.
  - University departments that create audio/video content should include plans for captioning as part of the original projection. Projects that are created using a script can be captioned inexpensively. It is generally less expensive to add captions from the onset rather than waiting to add them when a request is received.
  - Audio/video content posted to any UAB web page should be captioned. The university community includes a number of individuals who require or benefit from captions, and it is preferable for captions and transcripts to be immediately available, rather than added retroactively when requested. (Examples: commencement, freshman book discussion, virtual events such as town halls)
  - All web designers, instructional technology personnel, instructional designers, and instructors must ensure that all content, required as part of a UAB course as coursework, is accessible and adheres to Section 508 compliance standards and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 AA (WCAG 2.0 AA).

## **Additional Notes:**

- Captioned versions of videos are often readily available through the publishers/owners of a video.
- Kaltura is the preferred platform when using as a vendor for caption. Everyone at UAB (faculty, students, staff) has access. Kaltura can be accessed inside of Canvas by clicking 'My Media' or access it Kaltura outside of Canvas at <https://mediaspace.uab.edu>.

It is also important to note that captioning alone may not address every audio/ video accommodation request and that DSS should be consulted for additional resources, methods and accommodation requirements.

### **Resources:**

[Best Practices for Caption Quality](#)

[DSS Caption Request Form](#)

**Kaltura** is UAB's multimedia content management system. The system is integrated into Canvas, and can also be used outside of Canvas. Through Kaltura, users have access to tools such as screen recordings, editing, and automatic upload and cloud encoding of their multimedia materials for device agnostic delivery. Users can also have videos [machine captioned](#) using automatic speech recognition (ASR) and can be [edited for accuracy](#). More information on Kaltura can be found on the [UAB eLearning Kaltura webpage](#).

[National Deaf Center: Why Captions Provide Equal Access](#)

**UAB eLearning** is a faculty-facing, full-service center focused on enriching the academic experience. We are here to support faculty with instructional design services, media production services, academic technology training, and more. All media produced through our services is captioned. Our designers make sure that courses are built using Quality Matters (QM) standards and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. eLearning also provides group or one-on-one training in UAB's approved content management system (Kaltura), academic learning management system (Canvas) and additional academic technologies. More information eLearning's services can be found at [uab.edu/elearning](http://uab.edu/elearning)

**University Relations** provides a wide range of visual assets to the UAB campus community and to external media. If you are developing creative content for internal or external audiences that carries the UAB name, then it should be of professional quality and should meet UAB brand standards. For information on the department's video guideline visits this [link](#).

## **Disability Support Services**

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