






### Blackboard Ally Overview

Ally is Blackboard's tool for making digital course content more accessible to students with all ranges of abilities. It makes suggestions to make images and documents more accessible, and it can automatically generate accessible versions of some documents.

**Document types:** .pdf, .docx, .pptx, .jpg, .tiff

Ally gives a score to each document type which can be seen after uploading the file and refreshing the page. It usually appears within 2 minutes, but depending on the file size, this process can take up to 72 hours.

Each score is composed of both a numerical number and a colored gauge that reflects the number. Accessibility scores are determined by the severity of issues in each file. A low score indicates the file has severe or multiple accessibility issues; a high score means there are minor or no accessibility issues. For accessibility scores less than 100 percent, Ally gives you suggestions for improving the accessibility of the file. There are three colors of gauge icons that measure your file's accessibility:

-  **Red icon** = Not Accessible
-  **Orange icon** = Somewhat Accessible
-  **Green icon** = Accessible

Once you select a file's score, a panel opens to show the numerical score value along with information on the file accessibility. For accessible files, Ally tells you what you did correctly. For files that are not accessible, Ally shows issues within the document and shows you how to fix the problem.

You will find the following details in the file accessibility panel:

- A. **Accessibility Score:** The file's accessibility color and numerical score based on severity of accessibility issue.
- B. **Description:** The description of the accessibility issue affecting the file.
- C. **Additional information:** Detailed information about how the issue affects accessibility and why it is important to correct.
- D. **Instructions to improve:** Step-by-step instructions for your preferred software that show you how to improve file accessibility.
- E. **Direct file upload:** A drag-and-drop area to upload original or fixed files.

Ally produces either image or text feedback for improving document accessibility. Image feedback often involves adding a description for clarity. Text feedback will often include multiple step instructions for your preferred software, such as Microsoft Word or LibreOffice.

## Making course content accessible



### PDF Feedback

#### PDF Scanned

Accessibility score for: **ImageOnly.pdf**

0%

This PDF is scanned

[What this means](#)

Can this document be found in the library?

No  Yes

If you don't have a text-based version, it may be available in the library instead. Providing a reference to the document in the library is the next best thing to do.

[Back](#)

#### PDF Tagging

Accessibility score for: **Assembly+Instruction++Patch+Panel+NYS-SPP-L1.pdf**

7%

This PDF is untagged

[What this means](#)

[How to make a PDF tagged](#)

Upload a tagged version

Drop file to upload or [Browse](#)

#### Word (.doc)

Accessibility score for: **Echo 360 Create Blackboard Test.docx**

5%

This document does not have headings

[What this means](#)

[How to add headings](#)

Upload a version with headings

Drop file to upload or [Browse](#)

#### PowerPoint (.pptx)

Accessibility score for: **from template.pptx**

45%

This presentation contains images that are missing an alternative description

[What this means](#)

[How to add descriptions](#)

Upload a version with alternative descriptions

Drop file to upload or [Browse](#)

#### .jpg or .tiff Alt Text

Accessibility score for: **pdf scan test tif(1).tif**

24%

This image is missing an alternative description

[Why this matters](#)

[How to write a good description](#)

Add alternative text

Enter a description for this image [Add](#)

Or  Indicate image is decorative

This image is used for decoration only and a

## Making course content accessible

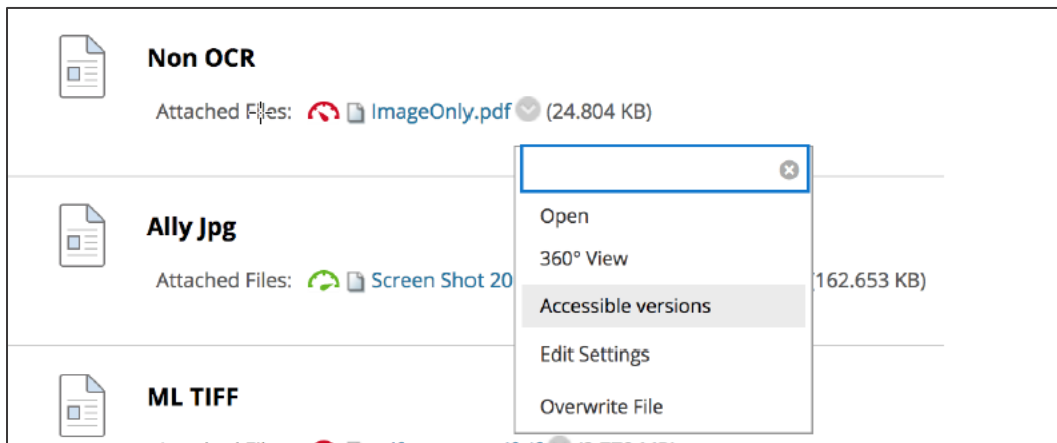


An image description should provide a textual alternative to the image so that people with a visual impairment can get an equivalent experience. Descriptions also make it easier for all students to connect the image with the context. Adding any text that appears in the image to the description will increase the accessibility score.

Instructors can follow the onscreen instructions for fixing any accessibility issues. This may involve opening the original document in the original program (Word, PowerPoint, etc.), and Ally will walk the instructor through the process.

### Accessible Versions

When applicable, Ally will automatically generate accessible versions for files that can be downloaded by clicking the arrow icon next to the item.



Student view of Accessible versions after clicking the arrow icon next to the item.

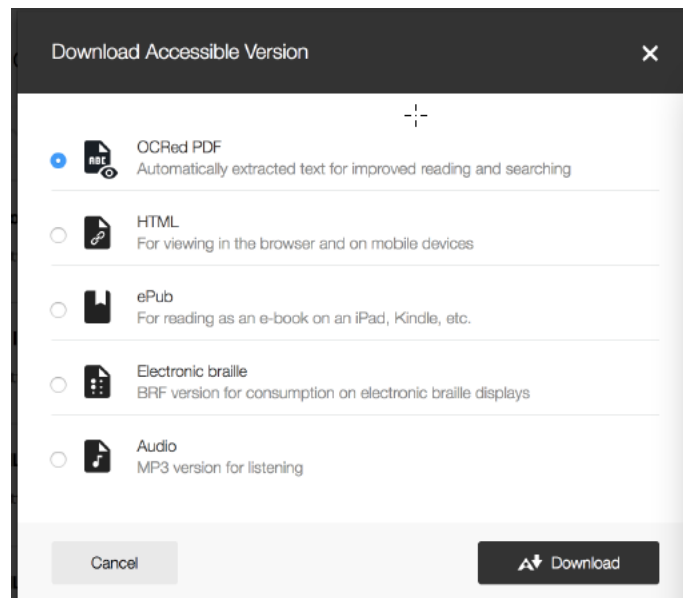
OCR (Optical Character Recognition) is used to extract text from images. This OCRred version will be available to students under the "Accessible versions". However, this method can be very inaccurate and should not be considered a final solution.

## Making course content accessible



Accessible Versions automatically generated for .pdf, .docx, and .pptx, include:

- **OCRed PDF:** Automatically extracted text for improved reading and searching
- **HTML:** For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices
- **ePub:** For reading as an e-book on an iPad, Kindle, etc
- **Electronic braille:** BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays
- **Audio: MP:** version for listening



### Additional Resources

For additional information and help topics regarding Blackboard Ally, visit <https://help.blackboard.com/Ally>.