Universal design in exams

As most people noticed, we focused on universal design of teaching materials in Canvas this fall. The same requirements for accessibility are important for exams. They apply regardless of whether you are unaware of any students' needs OR even if you know that there are no students with special needs. The requirements are non-negotiable.

We must assume that the platform, WISEflow, is designed correctly. Our job is to use it well. This ensures that students who need it (e.g. due to dyslexia, motor challenges, and visual impairments) can use aids that give them the same opportunities to succeed on the exam as others. As a content producer, you are responsible for ensuring that the exam is universally designed. If you need help or have questions, contact nihls@nih.no and we will do our best to assist you.

Some tips and a link to a good resource can be found below.

# UD on questions added in the question editor

* Use built-in styles to create the layout of the question, e.g. bullet points, numbering, etc. The content editor becomes visible when you place the cursor in the writing field.
* If you copy the question from, for example, Word, it is recommended to paste it as plain text (right-click + paste as plain text) and then make changes. This avoids formatting issues that may mess it up.
* Images should have alternative text, but this is so complicated in WISEflow that you can ignore this point when using the question editor (but not if you use file-based tasks where this is easy to add).
* Remember good color contrast and be careful with color changes on backgrounds and text. If there are graphs and figures in the task text, the graphs must be easy to distinguish from each other, e.g. by using different line types. Figures should preferably be distinguishable from each other with more than just color, e.g. text, different shading, etc.
* Create good link texts that clearly describe the purpose of the link. It should be understandable on its own, without having to read the context. Avoid using "click here". The text "Read more about NIH's bachelor's degree program at nih.no (links to an external site)." is an example of descriptive text.
* If you use video clips with speech, there must be a text alternative so that everyone can follow what is being said. During 2023, there will also be a requirement for videos to be described for people with visual impairments, so they can access the content on their own. This can be done through integrated description, i.e. where the central content of the film is described in words by a narrator's voice, or by having a text document that describes the action.

# UD on uploaded documents in file-based tasks

Most of the principles mentioned above are also relevant here! In addition, you must remember at a minimum to:

* Add alternative text to meaningful images. This text makes the information in the image accessible to students with reduced vision. Decorative images, such as a logo, should be marked as decorative, so the screen reader ignores them.
* Specify the correct language in the original document. You do this in the spell-check at the bottom left.
* Specify headings using built-in heading styles (i.e. do not create your own by changing the size, bold text, etc.).
* Note that the document title should be marked as a title. The headings should follow a hierarchy: Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3 without skipping levels (and not based on what looks nice).

If you are not satisfied with the size and color of the headings, you can edit them in the toolbar and check the box to have the edits automatically updated. Right-click on the heading you want to change, press change, and make your choices.

* Tables are created using the table tool in Word. DO NOT paste them in as an image as they cannot be interpreted by a screen reader. Tables should only be used to present data (such as a schedule), not to control layout. Remember to mark the header row etc. so that it can be read correctly by a screen reader. Also, avoid merging cells.
* Charts are created using the chart tool (insert + chart) (not as an image either, for the same reason as above). The different columns/graphs must be distinguishable from each other with more than just color, for example dotted lines or hatching. Charts must also be described in words, since they are not accessible to the blind.

# Assistive devices/recipes

More detailed "recipes" for Word and several other programs/tools have been developed by the University of Western Norway's resource [Universal Design of ICT](https://www.hvl.no/universell) (external).

# "Help/tools

More detailed "recipes" for Word and several other programs/tools have been developed by the University of Bergen's resource Universal Design of ICT (links to external site)."