UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Office of Ethics, Compliance and Audit Services (ECAS)

Information Sheet: IT Accessibility   August 2016

Background:
Several laws govern information technology (IT) accessibility: the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504 and Section 508), and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Education (DOE) have issued written guidance and pursued enforcement actions demonstrating each agency's position that the ADA extends to websites and other electronic technology. In some instances, resolving agency investigations can take considerable time and consume significant institutional resources.

The ADA covers a wide variety of information that is accessed via electronic technology. Examples may include but are by no means limited to websites, web-based applications, online courses, Google documents, videos, live streaming, digital signage, kiosks, automated banking machines, washers/driers, copiers and scanners, iPads, computers, kindles, and telephones.

Current Status:
The UC IT Accessibility Policy http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/7000611 was established in 2013. The policy states that "The University of California is committed to supporting an information technology (IT) environment that is accessible to all, and in particular to individuals with disabilities…."

Under the policy, each location must establish a local IT Accessibility Program with each chancellor designating an individual and/or a committee to develop and oversee the program. The policy also adopts the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA standards for web accessibility.

Next Steps:
ECAS will assure that periodic auditing and monitoring will occur, as appropriate, to ensure local compliance with policy and to ensure that local IT Accessibility Programs are established and operational. The University continues to monitor state and federal laws pertaining to accessibility. In June 2016, the University's chief information officers established a systemwide the Electronic Accessibility Committee (http://www.ucop.edu/electronic-accessibility/initiative/leadership-team.html), with representation from all UC locations. The group promotes greater coordination and resource sharing across locations to support IT accessibility.

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