Blackboard Ally

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What is Blackboard Ally?

Blackboard Ally is an accessibility tool integrated into Learn@Seneca.

Why Ally?

A key principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is that when you design with accessibility in mind all learners benefit. Blackboard Ally helps make content more accessible, which aligns with Seneca's Accessibility Policy.

What does Blackboard Ally do?

Blackboard Ally scans files you've uploaded in your courses (such as Office files and PDFs) and provides alternative formats of those files (such as tagged PDF, HTML, ePub, electronic braille, audio, and BeeLine reader). This is done automatically. An "A" symbol is placed next to the file. Students can click on the symbol to download alternative formats of the file.

Blackboard Ally assesses the files you've uploaded in your courses (such as Office files and PDFs) and indicates how accessible the files are and provides guidance on how to fix accessibility issues in the files. A 4-level scale is used. Red indicates a file is not accessible and needs fixing. Orange indicates a file is somewhat accessible, but needs fixing. Light green indicates a file is accessible, but could be improved. Dark green indicates a file is completely accessible. The indicators are only visible to faculty. Faculty can click on the indicator symbol to receive help on how to fix the accessibility issues in a file.

What doesn't Blackboard Ally do?

Blackboard Ally does not automatically fix accessibility issues in content. It will provide

guidance on what the accessibility issues are and how to fix them.

How can I make my content more accessible?

There are a number of tools that can help you make your content more accessible. Blackboard Ally is one of them. No tool is 100% effective on its own, but when used in combination, accessibility tools can be highly effective. For example, a good strategy is to run your documents through the built-in accessibility checker in Microsoft Office first before uploading into Learn@Seneca.

To find out how to make your content more accessible, check out the following help sites:

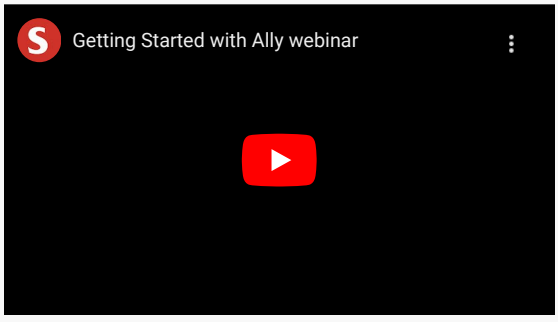
- Teaching and Learning Centre's Accessibility information.
- Improve accessibility with MS Office accessibility checker.
- Diversity and Inclusion's Creating Accessible Documents information.

What Blackboard Ally resources are available?

Check out the following resources for more information about Blackboard Ally:

- Read the Blackboard Ally is Coming to Seneca article in the Academic Newsletter
  - Read the Game On! Going from red to green with Blackboard Ally article in the Academic Newsletter to learn how to fix the three issues commonly found by Blackboard Ally at Seneca
- Watch the Blackboard Ally Overview for Faculty video

- Watch the Getting Started with Blackboard Ally Webinar recording



- Read the Blackboard Ally Quick Start Guide for Faculty.
- Peruse the Seneca Ally support page for students.
- Download Seneca's Blackboard Ally Poster.

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