Using Blackboard Ally

Ally Reports and Fixing Content in Canvas

Blackboard Ally is a useful add-on for ensuring the content in your Canvas course is accessible to all students and staff who access your course area. In this guide we will explore what Blackboard Ally is, how to generate reports about the accessibility of your course and, finally, how to fix any problems that Ally finds.

Contents

1. What is Blackboard Ally?

Ally is a tool that is available in all Canvas courses at the University of Liverpool, it allows two key affordances for your course content.

1. It checks how accessible your documents and pages are and can help to fix accessibility issues.
2. It allows students and staff to download alternate formats of your content (for example PDF, Digital Braille, Audio etc.).

There is also a reporting feature that allows you to generate reports on the accessibility of all files, pages, discussion boards and assignments within your course space.

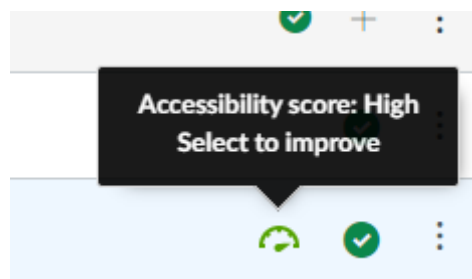## 2. Using Ally in the Modules Area

Ally will show up for staff on a course as a small dial called the "accessibility score indicator" in the Modules area of Canvas, next to the green 'published' tick-marks (as highlighted in the screenshot below).
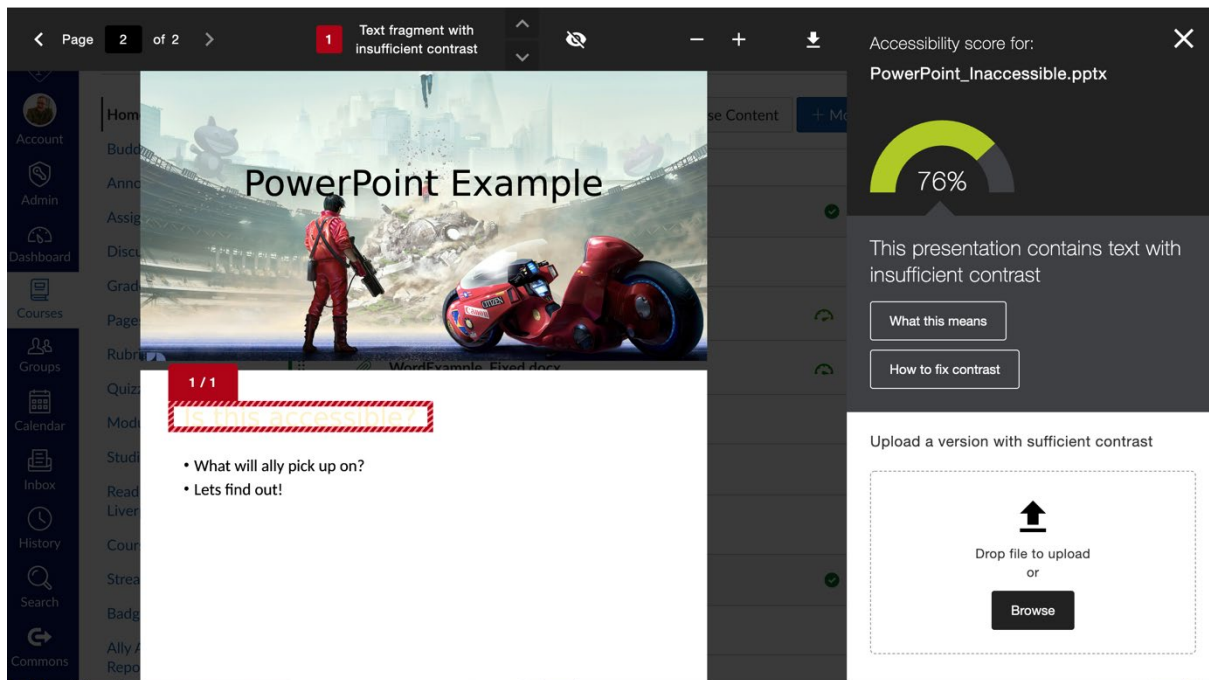
Accessibility scores are in a range from Low to Perfect as outlined below:

Low: File is not accessible and needs immediate attention.

Medium: File is somewhat accessible and could use improvement.

High: File is accessible but could be improved.

Perfect: File is accessible. No improvement needed.

Hovering over the dial will provide you with your accessibility score, here you can see that we have a 'high' accessibility score, this means that there are some accessibility issues within the file, but they are not severe, to fix these issues we can click on the accessibility score icon.

This will bring up the Ally instructor feedback interface.

The ally instructor feedback interface will highlight any accessibility issues in your document, you can use the following CIE (Centre for Innovation in Education) guides to support fixing accessibility issues.

- [Accessible Presentations](#)
- [Accessible Word Documents](#)

Once you have fixed the issues picked up by Ally you can drag and drop your accessible file into the box in the bottom left-hand corner to replace the file in Canvas.

3. Using Ally in the WYSWIG Editor

Ally is also available in the "What You See Is What You Get" (WYSWIG) editors in Canvas. WYSWIG editors that support Ally can be found in the following places.

- Announcements
- Assignments
- Discussion Topics
- Quiz descriptions
- Syllabus
- Pages

Your accessibility score in these areas updates dynamically as you create content in these areas, it is displayed at the top right-hand side of the editor, as shown in the screenshot below.

You can click on the accessibility score to bring up the instructor feedback panel, in the WYSWIG feedback panel you can make changes that are suggested, and your content will update automatically. An example is shown I the screenshot below.
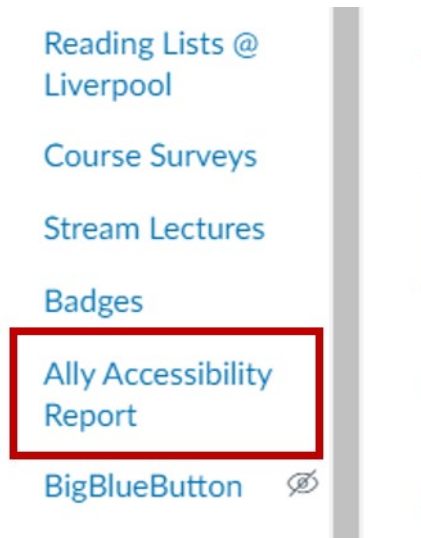
The WYSWIG feedback will help you to fix any of these common accessibility issues.

- Low contrast text
- Heading order
- Image ALT text
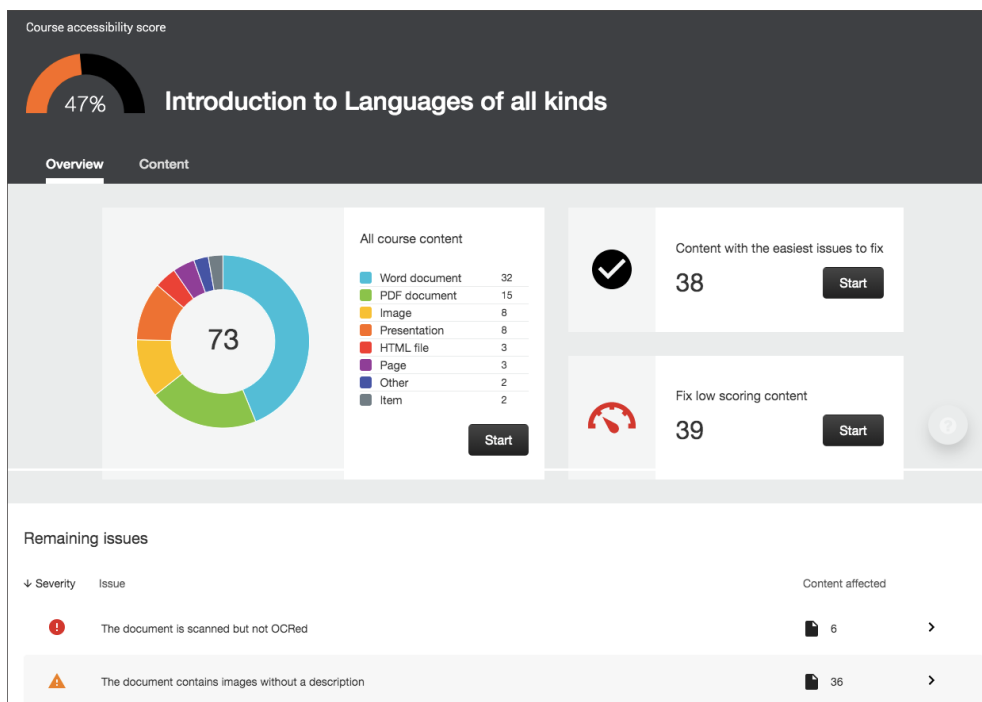- Tables without headers
- Tables with empty headers

4. Using the Accessibility Reports Function

One quick way to audit your course is to use the accessibility report function that Ally provides, here you can see all documents, pages, announcements, assignments, discussions, quizzes, and syllabus pages and see their accessibility score.

You can access your courses Ally Accessibility Report from the course menu on the left-hand side, this will only appear for staff, not students.

This will bring up your course report.

This report allows you view and make fixes too all the content within your course. In the top-left you are given an accessibility score for your entire course. Ally's accessibility score comes from checking the following types of documents in your course:

- PDF Files
- Word Files
- PowerPoint Files

- OpenOffice/LibreOffice Files
- Uploaded HTML files
- Images
- WYSWIG Content
- Embedded YouTube videos

The screenshot shows an overview of your course, including an outline of the distinct types of files you have in your course. You can view all the files that Ally can read by clicking the "View" button in the course content section or by clicking on "Content" underneath your accessibility score. The screen below shows what happens when you click either of these.

Clicking on the file will bring up the Instructor Feedback interface from sections 2 and 3 of this guide, depending on the type of content you click on.

5. Further Accessibility Guidance

We have several resources to support accessible and inclusive practice in your course, a few of which are highlighted below:

- [Designing Inclusive and Accessible Assessments](#)
- [Guidance for inclusive and accessible synchronous presentations using Zoom and/or Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Inclusive Curriculum](#)
- [Making asynchronous video recordings accessible](#)