

# Texas A&M AgriLife Research Procedures

## 29.01.04.A0.01 | Accessibility of Electronic and Information Resources

Revised: May 26, 2022

Next Scheduled Review: May 26, 2027

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### PROCEDURE SUMMARY

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The use of Electronic and Information Resources (EIR) supports the overall operation and mission of Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research). Ensuring these resources are accessible is required by state and federal laws, and supports the success of the agency mission.

Curricular pages are not included within the scope of this procedure; however, for Texas A&M University (University) these pages are covered by University Procedure 33.04.99.M5.01, *Web Accessibility and Usability Procedures*.

This procedure is required by System Regulation 29.01.04, *Accessibility of Electronic and Information Resources*.

Click [here](#) to view **Definitions**.

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### PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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#### 1.0 APPLICABILITY

1.1. This rule applies to the following products and services:

- A. EIR products developed, procured, or materially changed by an AgriLife Research employee or third party, acting as an agent of, or on behalf of, AgriLife Research, or through a procured services contract (i.e., vendor contract); and
- B. EIR services provided through hosted or managed services contracts.

1.2. This rule does not apply to EIR that have been exempted by the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR). A list of exempt EIR are posted on the DIR web site under the accessibility section.

1.3. The intended audiences for this rule include:

- A. AgriLife Research employees who purchase EIR products and/or services, or any other entity that purchases EIR on behalf of AgriLife Research;
- B. Individuals or entities (e.g., application developers, web content managers, vendors, or third parties) that develop and/or change AgriLife Research EIR; and
- C. Units that own or operationally support EIR.

#### 2.0 GENERAL

2.1 Texas A&M AgriLife Research is required to comply with accessibility standards and requirements for EIR found in Texas Administrative Code, Title 1, Chapter 206 (TAC 206) and Chapter 213 (TAC 213).

2.2 Unless an exemption is granted for specific technologies pursuant to 1 TAC §213.37, all EIR must comply with the following requirements:

- A. The appropriate Technical Accessibility Standards based on EIR category (see *Table 1*);

- B. The “Functional Performance Criteria” described in 1 TAC §213.35; and
- C. The “Information, Documentation, and Support” described in 1 TAC §213.36.

2.3 AgriLife Research is required to make procurement decisions, and use contract language which supports the acquisition of accessible EIR products and services.

*Table 1: List of Technical Accessibility Standards by EIR Category*

EIR Category	Technical Accessibility Standards
Software Applications and Operating Systems	1 TAC §213.30
Websites	1 TAC §206.70 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA
Telecommunications Products	1 TAC §213.31
Video and Multimedia Products	1 TAC §213.32
Self-Contained, Closed Products	1 TAC §213.33
Desktop and Portable Computers	1 TAC §213.34

### 3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Director, AgriLife Research shall:

- A. Designate an EIR Accessibility Coordinator;
- B. Approve exception requests for a significant difficulty or expense as described by §2054.460, Texas Government Code (see 1 TAC §213.37) but not under \$10K in value;

*Note: Responsibility under this provision may not be delegated.*

- C. Approve or delegate approval authority for exception requests not subject to a significant difficulty or expense; and

3.2 The EIR Accessibility Coordinator shall:

- A. Develop, support, and maintain EIR accessibility rules, standards, and procedures;
- B. Facilitate the establishment of goals for making EIR accessible; and
- C. Conduct and complete EIR surveys as required by DIR.

3.3 The Director of Purchasing and the Accessibility Coordinator will notify the agency employees of procedures related to the procurement of EIR that support compliance with DIR Accessibility rules.

3.4 The EIR owner (e.g., head or director of a unit) shall be responsible for ensuring that EIR owned and/or operationally supported by the unit comply with this rule. Operational responsibility for compliance with this rule may be delegated by the EIR owner to appropriate personnel within the unit.

### 4.0 PROCURED EIR

4.1 Agency personnel shall follow EIR procurement procedures and processes which support the acquisition of accessible EIR.

4.2 Agency personnel who acquire EIR shall require vendors to provide accessibility information for EIR products or services, through one of the following methods:

- A. Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs) or other equivalent reporting templates (preferred); or
- B. Credible evidence of the vendor's capability or ability to produce accessible EIR products and services. Such evidence may include – but is not limited to – a vendor's internal accessibility policy documents, contractual warranties for accessibility, accessibility testing documents, and examples of prior work results.

4.3 Accessibility information collected for each EIR shall be filed with associated purchasing information within the AgriLife Laserfiche document management system.

## 5.0 ACCESSIBILITY TESTING AND VALIDATION

5.1 The EIR owner is responsible for ensuring developed, procured, or materially changed EIR undergo accessibility testing to validate compliance with the technical accessibility standards.

5.2 Accessibility testing for information resource technology projects – as described in 1 TAC §213.38(g) – shall include the following actions:

- A. Accessibility testing shall be coordinated with the EIR Accessibility Coordinator; and
- B. Accessibility testing validation procedures and results shall be documented to the extent to validate EIR accessibility compliancy has been obtained..

## 6.0 EXCEPTIONS

6.1 For each EIR that does not comply with accessibility standards and requirements in this rule, an exception request must be submitted by the EIR owner.

- A. EIR exceptions up to \$10,000 shall be approved by the unit head.
- B. EIR purchases \$10,000 or over must be approved by the Vice Chancellor of AgriLife.

6.2 The Accessibility Coordinator will review requests for exceptions \$10,000 and above, make determinations regarding requests, ensure that requests meet the requirements for an exception, and forward requests to the Director, AgriLife Research with a recommendation regarding approval.

6.3 The Director, AgriLife Research will review – and if acceptable – approve exceptions to DIR Accessibility rules.

6.4 Exception requests will be stored in accordance with the agency records retention schedule within the AgriLife Laserfiche document management system.

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## RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, OR REQUIREMENTS

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[System Regulation 29.01.04, Accessibility of Electronic and Information Resources](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](#)

[Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) 206, Institution of Higher Education Websites](#)

[Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) 213, Accessibility Standards for Institutions of Higher Education](#)

[Texas Government Code 2054, Subchapter M. Access to Electronic and Information Resources by Individuals with Disabilities](#)

[W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#)

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## DEFINITIONS

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**Accessible:** Describes an electronic and information resource that can be used in a variety of ways and (the use of which) does not depend on a single sense or ability.

**Electronic and Information Resources (EIR):** Includes information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment used to create, convert, duplicate, or deliver data or information. EIR includes telecommunications products (such as telephones), information kiosks and transaction machines, web sites, multimedia, computer software, and office equipment such as copiers, fax machines, and desktop and portable computers.

The term does not include any equipment that contains embedded information technology that is used as an integral part of the product, but the principal function of which is not the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. For example, thermostats or temperature control devices and laboratory equipment that contain information technology that is integral to its operation are not information technology. If the embedded information technology has an externally available web or computer interface, that interface is considered EIR. Other terms such as – but not limited to – Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Electronic Information Technology (EIT), etc. can be considered interchangeable terms with EIR for purposes of applicability for compliance with this rule.

**Information Technology:** Any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. The term includes computers (including desktop and laptop computers), ancillary equipment, desktop software, client–server software, mainframe software, web application software and other types of software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources [TAC 213.1 (9)].

**Owner of an Electronic and Information Resource (EIR owner):** A person responsible for a business function at AgriLife Research who determines controls for, and oversees the development, acquisition, and/or use of EIR supporting that business function.

**Self-Contained, Closed Products:** Products that generally have embedded software, and are commonly designed in such a fashion that a user cannot easily attach or install assistive technology. These products include – but are not limited to – information kiosks and information transaction machines, copiers, printers, calculators, fax machines, and other similar products.

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## CONTACT OFFICE

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Questions concerning this procedure should be referred to AgriLife Information Technology at 979-845-9689 or [firstcall@tamu.edu](mailto:firstcall@tamu.edu).

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## REVISION HISTORY

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Approved: June 30, 2009  
Revised: September 9, 2011  
August 3, 2012  
August 22, 2018  
February 5, 2020  
May 26, 2022

Next Scheduled Review: May 26, 2027