

Ensuring accessibility for people with special needs

Implementation of laws:

- Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs Journal of Laws 2019 item 1696
- Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities, Journal of Laws 2019 item 848



Purpose: to provide basic information about the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs, indicating our obligations but also our rights as people who have or may have special needs.

The content provided is only a small part of knowledge in the field of broadly understood accessibility.

- [Journal of Laws - Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs](#)
- [Justification](#)



Key concepts:

- availability,
- people with special needs,
- barriers.



Key concepts:
availability



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Key concepts: **accessibility**



The Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs indicates:

Accessibility is the absence of barriers, i.e. architectural, digital and information and communication obstacles that prevent or hinder people with special needs from participating in various spheres of life on an equal basis with others.

Accessibility means enabling every person to have access to every sphere of an institution's activity. and at any time. The aforementioned Act clearly lists the basic aspects of accessibility:

- architectural accessibility,
- digital accessibility,
- information and communication accessibility



Key concepts:
**Who are people with special
needs?**



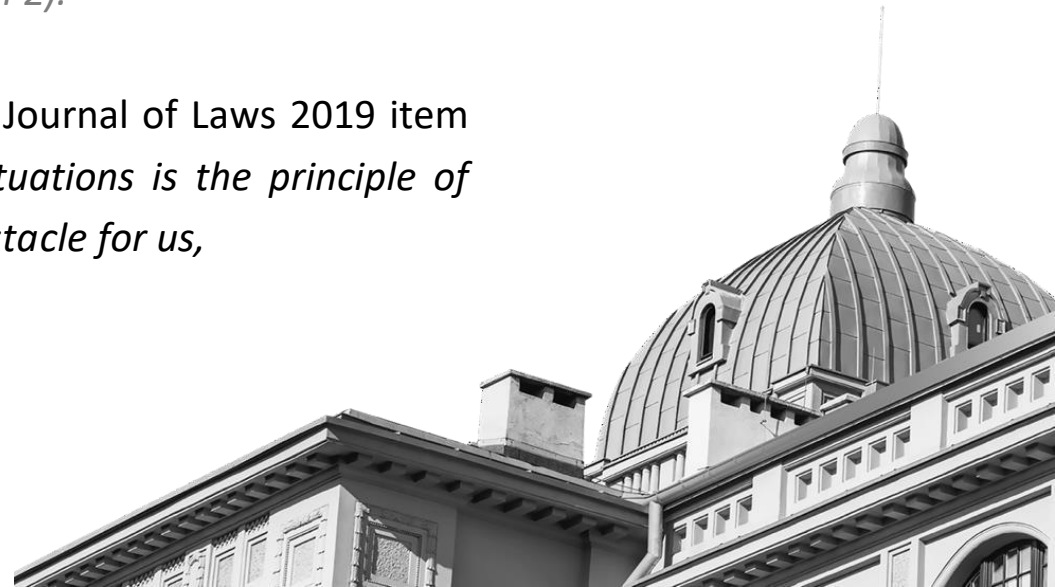
Key concepts: **Who are people with special needs?**

Under the Act:

a person with special needs is not only a person with disabilities, it is: **"a person who, due to his or her external or internal characteristics, or due to the circumstances in which he or she finds himself or herself,**

must take additional action or apply additional measures to overcome the barrier, to participate in various spheres of life on an equal basis with other persons" *(Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs, art. 2, paragraph 2).*

Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs Journal of Laws 2019 item 1696: *The basic idea of formal regulations that aim to counteract such situations is the principle of equality with other people (those for whom the barriers that constitute an obstacle for us, do not exist).*



Key concepts: **Who are people with special needs?**

People with special needs include:

- a disabled person,
- an elderly person,
- a person with a broken limb,
- pregnant woman,
- a parent with a small child,
- a person with heavy luggage,
- there is no requirement for durability here.

In the context of our University, the list of people is huge and includes not only students, PhD students and employees, but also all the people who contact us, provide services, deliver goods, employees of other institutions cooperating with us, external entities, companies that provide services, carry out orders.

Act of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs Journal of Laws 2019 item 1696:
The more user-friendly a space is for people with disabilities, the more user-friendly it is for everyone.



Key concepts: barriers



Key concepts: **Barriers**

The barrier in the context of accessibility that we are talking about is defined by the Act:

*A barrier is an architectural, digital or informational obstacle or limitation.
communication that prevents or makes it difficult for people with special needs to participate
in various spheres of life on an equal basis with other people*



Key concepts: Basic aspects of accessibility



Basic aspects of accessibility:



Accessibility means enabling every person to have access to every sphere of an institution's activity at any time. The aforementioned *Accessibility Act* lists the basic aspects of accessibility:

- architectural accessibility,
- digital accessibility,
- information and communication accessibility

In accordance with the Act, accessibility in each of the above-mentioned spheres is achieved if the minimum requirements specified in Article 6 of the aforementioned Act are met.





Basic aspects of accessibility:

Architectural accessibility (Article 6, Section 1)

- a) ensuring that horizontal and vertical communication spaces in buildings are free from barriers,
- b) installation of devices or use of technical means and architectural solutions in the building that will enable access to all rooms, excluding technical rooms,
- c) providing information on the layout of rooms in the building, at least visually and tactilely or vocally,
- d) ensuring access to the building for a person using an assistance dog referred to in Art. 2, point 11
Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons (Journal Laws of 2020, items 426, 568, 875),
- e) ensuring that people with special needs can be evacuated or rescued in other ways.

This is a basic set of conditions that must be met in order for a space to be considered architecturally accessible .





Basic aspects of accessibility:

Architectural accessibility (Article 6, Section 1)

Architectural accessibility, for example, concerns whether the building **is easy to find**, what colour distinguishes it, where there are parking spaces for disabled people, whether a person in a wheelchair can enter the building through the main entrance or is forced to enter through the side entrance (because that is the only place with a ramp, elevator or appropriate door).

IMPORTANT The entrance to the building should be at street level so that a person using a wheelchair can she did not have to look for another entrance or the help of third parties. We call this or a similar solution **alternative access**.





Basic aspects of accessibility:

Architectural accessibility (Article 6, Section 1)

Alternative access does not meet the requirements of the Act and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities because a person with a disability cannot move like a person without disabilities.

Alternative access also concerns digital and information and communication accessibility.

Each case of alternative accessibility must be indicated in the Accessibility **Report** .

The implementation of the requirements of the Act concerns the pursuit of eliminating the use of alternative access.

Alternative availability can only be used until September 5, 2021. After this date, alternative access may only take place in justified cases, in particular for technical or legal reasons.



Basic aspects of accessibility:

Availability Status Report

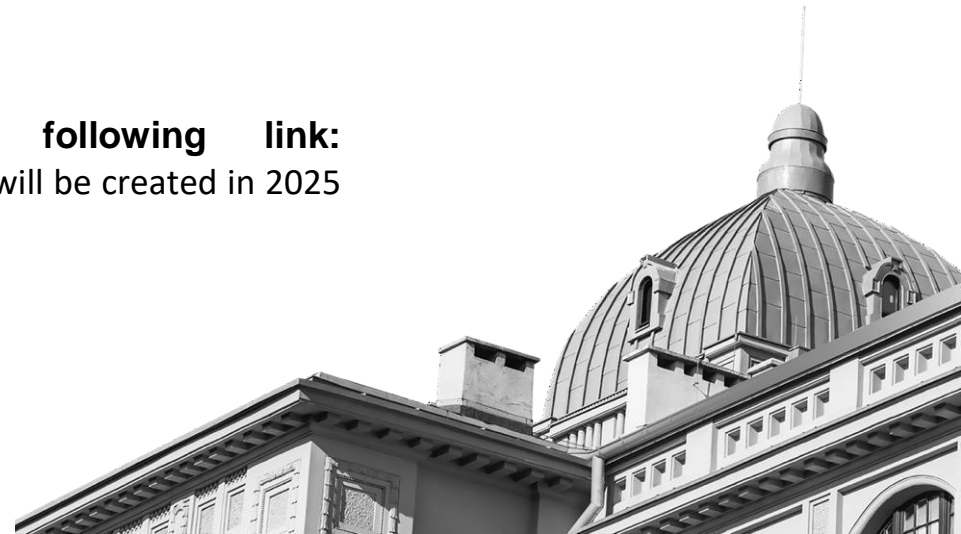


The first Accessibility Status Report must be published in the Central Statistical Office by March 31 (as of January 1, 2021), the next one after 4 years. The results of the Report are available in the BIP

<https://www.bip.uni.lodz.pl/inne/raport-o-stanie-ensuring-accessibility-of-public-entity>

The report is only an ad hoc means of auditing the status of accessibility. If you see any aspect of space (architectural, digital, communication and information) that makes it inaccessible to people requiring assistance, report it: dostepnosc@uni.lodz.pl

The Accessibility Status Report template is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/29f2b670-810e-4d1a-994b-d346cbcea93d>. The next Report will be created in 2025 in accordance with statutory provisions .



Basic aspects of accessibility:

Architectural accessibility (Article 6, Section 1)



QUESTIONS:

- is it easy to obtain information about the layout of the building,
- whether every room (excluding technical rooms) can be accessed by people using wheelchairs, crutches, the deaf, the blind, etc.,
- is the stair lighting set so that all steps are visible,
- whether the stairs between floors are equipped with anti-slip surfaces, whether there are handrails on both sides of the stairs, whether the first and last steps are marked in a contrasting way, etc.,
- if the lighting of the communication section does not cause sharp and contrasting shadows, it should not be used backlights/spotlights in the floor pointing straight up.

Training is available to help you experience the limitations faced by people with disabilities.

Our own experience fully shows what obstacles, invisible to us, we have to deal with.

people with disabilities and all those who temporarily or permanently find themselves in a situation of special need.



Universal design



"**Universal design** is about designing products and environments so that they are accessible for all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

The basis of the idea of universal design is the belief that space and objects, which will be available to the most demanding users will be available to everyone

Ron Mace

an american architect who uses a wheelchair



Universal design



There are 8 principles of universal design :

1. Identical use – everyone should have equal access to every space (physical and virtual) without additional conditions.
2. Flexibility of use – use by the widest possible group, e.g. access to the intercom at the appropriate height, with space for a wheelchair, wrist support, voice prompts and the ability to select a language.
3. Simple and intuitive operation.
4. Noticeable information – regardless of the spatial circumstances and capabilities of the recipient.
5. Error tolerance – minimizing the risk of misuse of items.
6. Low level of physical effort – door handles or levers should operate without effort.
7. Dimensions and space for approach and use – the right dimensions and space for everyone.
8. Perception of equality – equal access to the environment, use of services in such a way that the user does not feel discriminated against in any way.

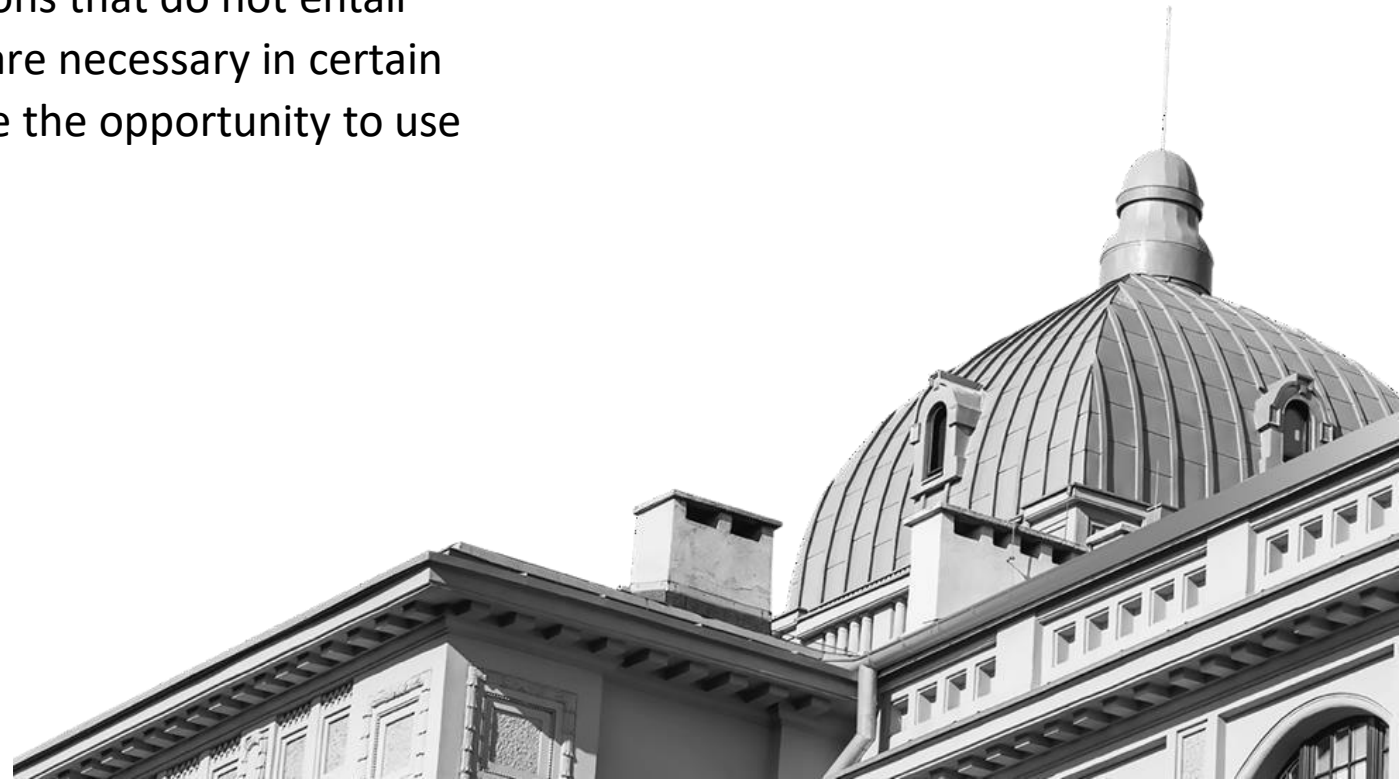


Rational **improvement**



Definition:

necessary and applicable modifications or adaptations that do not entail disproportionate and unnecessary difficulties that are necessary in certain cases to ensure that people with special needs have the opportunity to use from goods and services.



Basic aspects of accessibility:

Accessibility of information and communication (Article 6, paragraph 5)



Minimum requirements:

- service using **means supporting communication** referred to in art. 3 point 5 of the Act of 19 August 2011 on sign language and other means of communication (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1824), or by using remote online access to the interpreter service, websites and applications,
- ensuring the installation of **devices or other technical means to serve hearing impaired people**, in particular induction loops, FM systems or devices based on other technologies, the purpose of which is to support hearing,
- providing information on the website of a given entity about the scope of its activities - in the form of an electronic file containing **machine-readable text**, recordings of content in Polish sign language and information in easy-to-read text,
- ensuring, at the request of a person with special needs, communication with the entity in the form specified in that **request**.



Basic aspects of accessibility:

Accessibility of information and communication (Article 6, paragraph 5)



The accessibility request includes:

- contact details,
- indicating the barrier that hinders or prevents accessibility in terms of architecture or information and communication,
- indication of how to contact the applicant,
- indicating the preferred way of ensuring accessibility (...)

ART. 30 of the Act on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs



Basic aspects of accessibility:

Accessibility of information and communication (Article 6, paragraph 3)

Supporting measures are measures that enable contact through, for example:

- e-mail,
- using SMS and MMS or instant messaging,
- installation of devices or other technical means for the use of hearing impaired persons, in particular induction loops, FM systems (radio sound carriers) or other devices based on technologies aimed at hearing aid.



Basic aspects of accessibility:

**Accessibility of information and communication
(Article 6, paragraph 3)**

There is a requirement to present at least minimal information in sign language and text on the website.
easy to read.

Plain language and easy-to-read language have been defined, among others, in European information and promotion standards



Basic aspects of accessibility:

Accessibility of information and communication (Article 6, paragraph 9)



"Information for everyone. European standards for preparing text that is easy to read and understand"

You must:

- convey information in short sentences
- use positive statements instead of negative ones
- use the active voice in sentences (instead of the passive voice)
- avoid jargon expressions whenever possible
- when using an abbreviation for the first time, provide its expansion
- when using a word in a foreign language, provide its translation
- avoid phraseological units such as: white raven, lion's share, swan song



Basic aspects of accessibility:

**Accessibility of information and communication
(Article 6, paragraph 3)**

In the case of a **university** , information and communication accessibility means the accessibility of educational, research, scientific services, as well as any other space related to its activities.

All orders, regulations, notices and other documents created and made available should meet at least the minimum statutory requirements.

The condition here is to ensure effective communication for every stakeholder of the University of Lodz.



Basic aspects of accessibility: **Digital accessibility**



Digital accessibility means the ability of as many users as possible to use electronic content to the greatest extent possible.

A digitally accessible website, application, document or electronic multimedia should enable universal, convenient and intuitive use.

In the case of the University, the available internet service provides:

- the opportunity to become familiar with the University's educational offer;
- information about the university - architectural accessibility, access, location, accommodation;
- possibility of applying to studies;
- possibility of contacting the University;
- the opportunity to read announcements and news at the University.



Basic aspects of accessibility: **Digital accessibility**

(Article 6, paragraph 2 of the Act of 12 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility with special needs)

In terms of digital accessibility – requirements specified in the Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities.

This Act indicates the requirements specified in the **WCAG 2.1** standard (i.e. Web Accessibility Guidelines), a standard published by the W3C organization describing a set of principles that should be followed by website creators to make these websites and applications as accessible as possible to people with various disabilities.

In short:there are 4 basic principles of digital accessibility:

- perception,
- functionality,
- intelligibility,
- solidity



Basic aspects of accessibility: **Digital accessibility**



Digital accessibility also includes accessibility in **the documents** we create, subtitles , messages , announcements , etc.

Tips for creating:

- align text to the left – do not use justification,
- to spread out characters use the "expanded text" function, it is a mistake to use spaces between letters because the screen reader used by people with visual disabilities will treat each letter as a separate word,
- use fonts of at least 12 points in size that are sans serif (i.e. without serif decorations – the ends of the characters are straight – e.g. Helvetica, Arial, **Calibri**, Tahoma)



Basic aspects of accessibility: **Digital accessibility**



Who is affected by the lack of digital accessibility ?

- people with sensory impairments (sight, hearing);
- manually disabled persons;
- people with intellectual disabilities;
- seniors;
- users of Assistive Technology;
- all people.

Any of us can be affected by digital inaccessibility

In summary, digital accessibility means that people with special needs can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with a digital website.



Basic aspects of accessibility: **Digital accessibility**



This is a very complex area and touches virtually every sphere of our activity.

Useful links, mainly from government websites:

- <https://www.gov.pl/web/accessibility-digital/how-to-create-accessible-digital-internet-service>
- <https://www.gov.pl/web/digital-accessibility/how-to-check-whether-a-website-is-digitally-accessible>
- <https://www.gov.pl/web/dostepnosc-cyfrowa/wcag-21-w-skrocie>
- <https://www.gov.pl/web/digital-accessibility/how-to-create-accessible-text-documents-in-ms-word-editor>



Accessibility Statement

(Article 6, paragraph 2 of the Act of 12 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for special needs)



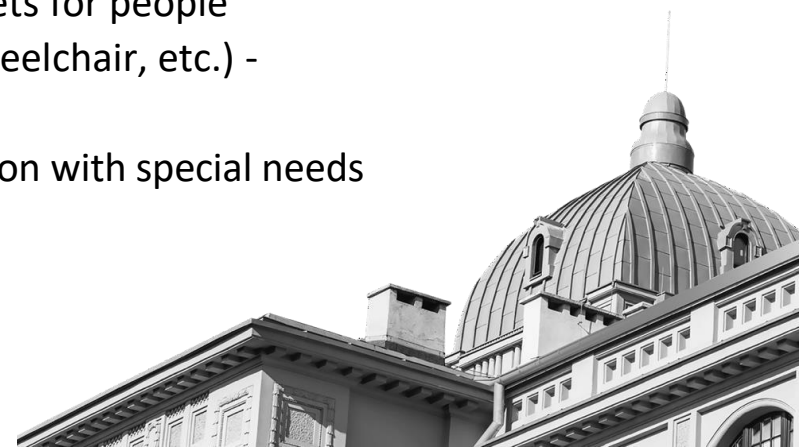
Each public entity, in accordance with the Digital Accessibility Act, should prepare **an accessibility declaration.**

What is this ?

This is a description of the accessibility of a public entity, i.e. it is information for people with special needs about the solutions adopted in terms of accessibility and what there are difficulties – i.e. where accessibility does not occur.

So it describes, for example:

- whether the website/mobile application meets the statutory requirements on accessibility or not,
- whether the buildings in a given unit are accessible (description of tools enabling accessibility)
e.g. whether there is an induction loop in the building, whether and where there are toilets for people with disabilities, where there are parking lots, where it is not possible to get to with a wheelchair, etc.) -
it is necessary here
indicating the person responsible for the building, the content of the page, because a person with special needs must know who to turn to if there are accessibility barriers.



Accessibility Statement



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Accessibility Statement

(Article 6, paragraph 2 of the Act of 12 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for special needs)



The content of the accessibility declaration is precisely defined and common throughout the European Union.

There are 3 types of content in the declaration :

- those that you must use **word by word according to the pattern**, supplementing only with, for example, the name public entity – we marked them in the example as “mandatory format”,
- those that you can describe **in your own words, but include specific required elements in that description** – we marked them as “necessary” in the example,
- other **optional content**, useful for people with disabilities who use from information and services of a given public entity.
- **The University of Lodz has published an accessibility declaration :**
<https://www.uni.lodz.pl/dostepnosc>

Source: <https://www.gov.pl/web/accessibility-digital/how-to-prepare-accessibility-declarations>



Availability:
**Who is responsible
for accessibility tasks ?**



Availability: Who is responsible for accessibility tasks?



The Act indicates the need to appoint a **University Coordinator and A team** that will support each and every one of us in order to meet not only the requirements of the Act but above all to change the University into a fully accessible, friendly and open university in every aspect of its functioning.

Each of us is responsible for making the University of Lodz Accessible university .



Accessibility Coordinator



The University of Lodz is a very complex and large institution. Accessibility and implementation in all its aspects is a massive undertaking.

The coordinator and his team will be responsible for preparing the accessibility database, action plan, implementing it together with the entire academic community .

The University Accessibility Coordinator and team were appointed by the Rector's Order of July 5, 2021. Details are available at <https://www.uni.lodz.pl/dostepnosc>

The following activities are currently planned:

- developing an accessibility implementation plan, supporting the entire community in implementing accessibility, commissioning audits to examine the process, conducting accessibility training,
- Conducting training to raise awareness of accessibility,
- Internal accessibility audits.



Important Information



Implementation of the requirements of the Act on ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs is a **process that will take time each time when we create, build, communicate, introduce ourselves, share, each activity will be related to reflection whether it is of an accessibility nature .**

Accessibility is a process that will continue forever.



Important Information



For anyone who wants to expand their knowledge of accessibility professional training will be organized.

Current information and helpful materials will be sent to you via the University of Lodz communication channels.

Important: the following e-mail address has been launched: dostepnosc@uni.lodz.pl
We encourage you to contact us on any matter related to accessibility.



Thank you for your attention

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dostepnosc@uni.lodz.pl

Sources:

- government websites on accessibility,
- training materials of the Fronia Foundation for People with Disabilities,
- European Law Studies training materials,
- materials of the digital accessibility workshop.

