“Draft” Accessibility Review Guide for SIMnet 365/2019.

The Accessibility Review Guide for SIMnet 365/2019 is intended for 3rd party accessibility testing and verification reviewers.

SIMnet’s accessibility goal is full WCAG AA compliance. We often accommodate WCAG AAA criteria within our reach. However, full accessibility in certain components has proven infeasible. The following outlines what is and what is not accessible and what you need to know before validating accessibility in SIMnet.

# Can SIMnet still be used in an accessible way?

Yes, SIMnet provides a variety of accessible alternatives to inaccessible components or assignment types. View the instructor accessibility guide <here> for details on building an accessible course in SIMnet.

# Which components are accessible?

* Student Portal
* Student Help PDF available here <link to PDF>
* SIMbooks and Lessons
  + Page content
  + Show Me videos
  + Guide Me exercises
  + Let Me Try exercises for Computer Concepts
* Test Bank Exams
* SIMnet Exams
  + Simulation based questions for Computer Concepts
* Graded Projects

# Which components are NOT accessible?

* Course Manager (used by Administrators and Instructors)
* Course Manager Help Website (<https://help.simnetonline.com/manager>)
* Course Manager Blog Website (<https://blog.simnetonline.com>)
* Student Help Website (<https://help.simnetonline.com/students>)
  + An accessible PDF of the help website is available here <link to PDF>
* SIMbook and Lesson exercises that require the full simulation
  + Let Me Try simulations for Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Windows, File Management, Browsers, and Outlook
* SIMnet simulated exam questions
  + Simulation based questions for Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Windows, File Management, Browsers, and Outlook
* SIMpaths
  + These exercises rely on the simulated exam questions for the pre and post tests and the simulated Let Me Try exercises for the lesson component

# What do I need to know before testing?

SIMnet has a special color theme for high contrast mode. Be sure to enable this setting prior to testing. To enable high-contrast mode use the student profile link located on the upper-right corner of the interface just after signing in.

Let Me Try simulations and some SIMnet Exam questions cannot be made accessible due to the nature of making a desktop application such as Microsoft Word available in the browser. Desktop accessibility has different standards and capabilities than web-based applications. This can be seen in the differences between the online and desktop interfaces of Microsoft Office. Since we aim to simulate the desktop version of the software, a web-accessible simulation in many cases would fail to properly simulate the desktop interface.

The Guide Me exercises have been specially designed to be accessible and are a valid alternative to the Let Me Try exercise. The Guide Me exercises assess the same learning outcome as the Let Me Try, but in a more controlled environment.

SIMnet contains some assignment types and content that are not accessible. In each case, an alternative assignment type or combination of assignments can be used to provide learning and assessment of the same outcomes in an accessible way.

The Student Help site is not fully accessible, but we publish an accessible PDF containing the same content. We are continually working with our 3rd party documentation vendor to improve accessibility.

SIMnet makes it easy to seamlessly assign alternate learning objects and grading requirements to students with accessibility needs.

# Which tools and screen readers did we test with?

A combination of automated reporting tools were used to evaluate accessibility: Siteimprove Accessibility Checker, Lighthouse Accessibility Audit, Web AIM Evaluation, and the Microsoft Office built-in Accessibility Checker.

The following screen readers were used to test accessibility and user experience: JAWS 2020, NVDA 2019, VoiceOver, and ChromeVox.

In testing, certain screen reader and browser combinations were found to have outstanding bugs, compatibility or standards compliance issues affecting parts of SIMnet. These are noted in the VPAT, including whether or not we were able to provide a workaround.

# Which standards did we use to evaluate accessibility?

* WCAG 2.0, 2.1 A, AA, AAA
* Section 508
* EN 301 549 of ICT products and services in Europe v2.1.2

Please see the completed VPAT here <link to the vpat TBD>

Please see the Instructor Accessibility Guide here <link to instructor guide TBD>

Please see the Student Accessibility Guide here <link to student guide TBD>

Accessibility Guide for Instructors using SIMnet 365/2019

The Accessibility Guide for Instructors is intended for SIMnet Administrators and Instructors.

SIMnet has been carefully designed to support students with disabilities, including the physically impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, those with learning or cognitive disabilities, and the blind and visually impaired. With SIMnet, many types of disabilities don’t require any additional support or accommodations outside of a simple time extension. The following guide outlines best practices and accommodations for students with disabilities and especially for those who require the use of a screen reader.

# What accessibility features does the student control?

The SIMnet Student Portal contains the ability to increase font size, line spacing, and color contrast. Within the Student Profile, the student can turn on High Contrast Mode to increase color contrast for low vision impairments. Students can also use the browser zoom function, however, simulated content including exam questions, Show Me, Guide Me, and Let Me Try exercises require the browser zoom to be disabled. Students who require this content must use operating system zoom features instead.

For details, view the Student Accessibility Guide for Students here. <link to help topic TBD>

# How do I accommodate time extensions?

The ADA Multiplier has been designed to provide students automatic time extensions for timed assignments. The ADA Multiplier is set one time in the Student Profile and will automatically offer additional time on all assignments. For example, a multiplier of 1.5 will offer the student 90-minutes on a 60-minute exam or project.

View the following help topic on using the ADA Multiplier: <link to help topic TBD>

# Which components are NOT accessible?

* Course Manager (used by Administrators and Instructors)
* Course Manager Help Website (<https://help.simnetonline.com/manager>)
* Course Manager Blog Website (<https://blog.simnetonline.com>)
* Student Help Website (<https://help.simnetonline.com/students>)
  + An accessible PDF of the help website is available here <link to PDF>
* SIMbook and Lesson Exercises
  + Let Me Try simulations for Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Windows, File Management, Browsers, and Outlook
* SIMnet Exam Questions
  + Simulation based questions for Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Windows, File Management, Browsers, and Outlook
* SIMpaths

# What SIMnet assignment types are accessible?

The goal with accessibility is to provide the same experience for all students, regardless of disability. However, some SIMnet assignment types don’t offer full accessibility support. In this case you will need to design a course that avoids inaccessible assignment types as outlined below:

* **SIMbooks and Lessons:** Require the Guide Me or Show Me activity instead of the Let Me Try.
* **SIMpaths**: Don’t incorporate this assignment type into your course as the Pre-Test and Post-Test contain inaccessible simulation questions.
* **SIMnet Exam**s: Don’t incorporate simulation questions from Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Windows, File Management, Browsers, and Outlook. You may select test bank questions and simulated questions from other content areas.
* **Test Bank Exams**: Use test bank exams to replace assessment of outcomes otherwise covered in the inaccessible simulated questions.
* **Graded Projects**: Use chapter based projects for homework and capstone projects for the midterm or final exam.

# How do I administer accessibility accommodations in my course?

Every school or accessibility office has different requirements and recommendations on handling accommodations. SIMnet offers a variety of administrative capabilities to implement accommodations at the course or individual student level. There are a number of factors to consider when deciding the best way to implement an accommodations plan, some of which are outlined below.

## Does your school require the exact same experience for all students?

The goal with accessibility is to provide the same experience for all students, regardless of disability, however, some SIMnet assignment types don’t offer full accessibility support. In this case, you will need to design a course that avoids inaccessible assignment types as outlined in the accessible assignment types section.

To provide the same experience for all students we recommend assigning a SIMbook or Lesson with the Guide Me and/or Show Me required, Project, and Test Bank exam for each chapter of content. Capstone projects and multi-chapter Test Bank exams can be used for higher stakes assessments such as midterms or finals.

## Do you expect a high volume of accommodations or have a highly structured course plan with many sections?

If your school allows student accomodations with alternate content then you will want to create a second accessible course based on your main course. The second course will be built from the accessible assignment types listed above and should contain the same learning outcomes as students who don’t require accommodations. Only students who require accommodations will be moved into the accessible course that contains alternate content. Having a second course setup and ready to go will make providing student accommodations simple.

## Do you only expect a handful of students in a limited number of sections per year?

If your course is already set up to use a mix of accessible assignment types and you only expect to have a handful of students that require accommodations each term then you should use the Personal Assignment feature to facilitate accommodations. Among other customizations the Personal Assignments can be configured to require the Show Me or Guide Me instead of the Let Me Try.

Please see the Accessibility Review Guide here: <link to instructor guide TBD>

Please see the Student Accessibility Guide here: <link to student guide TBD>

Accessibility Guide for Students with Disabilities

The Accessibility Guide for Students with Disabilities is intended for blind and visually impaired students and others who use assistive technology.

SIMnet has been carefully designed to support students with disabilities, including the physically impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, those with learning or cognitive disabilities, and the blind and visually impaired. This guide offers tips for using SIMnet with a disability.

# What browser should I use?

SIMnet supports the latest version of the following browsers: Firefox, Edge Chromium, Chrome, and Safari. We recommend reviewing the list of supported browsers published by your screen reader. Each screen reader supports a different set of browsers and browser versions. It’s very important that your screen reader supports your browser.

# How do I turn on high contrast mode?

SIMnet has a special color theme to increase the color contrast that many low vision students need to differentiate colors. Be sure to enable this setting prior to getting started by visiting the Student Profile link located on the upper right hand corner of the website after signing in. The setting can also be turned on from within a SIMbook or Lesson using the Accessibility Options dialog. High Contrast mode will only need to be enabled one time, and will remain in place for all subsequent website visits.

# How do I use browser zoom and OS zoom and magnification?

Students who would like to zoom their screen are advised to use their OS display scale settings to increase the size of the information on screen. However, zooming past a certain magnification threshold may make the window too small to display all information on simulated questions without scrolling.

Text size and line-spacing can also be adjusted from within SIMbooks and Lessons using the Accessibility Options dialog. Similarly, in the Let Me Try and Exam windows, the text size can be changed without altering the size of other controls on the page.

# How does SIMnet handle double- and triple-clicking?

For SIMnet exercises requiring the user double-click or triple-click a control, the standard click commands can be pressed multiple times to register the action. Also, when keyboard input is detected, the default Windows double-click delay is slowed by 50%.

In addition, while most screen readers allow the use of both **Enter** and **Space** for activating controls, often doing the same thing as a mouse click, some of them only support both for certain control types or have a separate keybinding for click. For example, in NVDA spacebar will click buttons but not links and in VoiceOver **Enter** will activate most controls but clicking requires **Control+Option+Space**. In general, if you find the control activation key you typically use doesn’t click, try the alternate activation key.

# How does SIMnet handle right-clicking?

For SIMnet GuideMe activities that ask the user to right-click a certain control, the standard context menu shortcut can be used by keyboard users.

# How should screen readers be used to navigate SIMnet?

Tabbing is a common way of navigating using a screen reader, however, it is limited. By default, using the **Tab key** allows access to **Links** and **Buttons**, but other elements such as headers, cannot be accessed by pressing **Tab.**. We recommend using native screen reader methods for quick access to certain elements on the page. For example, with JAWS, hitting the **R key** cycles through **Landmarks/Regions** and hitting the **H key** cycles through available **headers**.

In general, throughout SIMnet, buttons will correspond with an action and links will be used to navigate to different pages and views. For this reason, it helps to use native screen reader keybindings to cycle through links or buttons, depending on what you want to do. For example, when using NVDA in a SIMbook, the **K key** can quickly focus the Exit link at the end of the navigation region or the **Previous/Next Page** links at the bottom of each page.

Most components that shift focus, such as menus and dialogs, can be exited in multiple ways, like exit/dismiss buttons or the **Esc key**. Certain dialogs are designed to not be dismissable by any student, however, such as those that prevent access to a SIMbook during a closed-book exam. In these situations, exit/dismiss buttons will be missing, shortcuts like **Esc** will not work, and students must select one of the options provided in order to proceed.

# Where can I find additional information regarding accessibility?

Most schools have dedicated accessibility teams and resources. We recommend that you first seek additional help or information directly from your schools accessibility team.