



National Disability Center
for Student Success

The Faculty Accessibility Measure:

Toward Better Research and Understanding of How Faculty Shape Accessibility in Postsecondary Education

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RESEARCH MEASURE COMPANION

A companion document of “Access Leads to
Achievement: A National Report on Faculty Accessibility
Practices”

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Disclaimers & Limitations

- The majority of our research sample is faculty from 4-year institutions.
- Correlation does not imply causation, so results should be interpreted accordingly.
- These results are not generalizable to all U.S. faculty who teach in higher education.
- The authors caution against drawing conclusions or making policy decisions beyond the scope of these findings.

National Report

In addition to this research companion, there is a separate national report for higher education leaders, faculty, and staff: *Access Leads to Achievement: A National Report on Faculty Accessibility Practices*.

(nationaldisabilitycenter.org/FAM)

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Research Team

The National Disability Center’s interdisciplinary research team is led by people with disabilities — faculty members, researchers, and postsecondary students — who collaborate on a student-centered, asset-based approach that prioritizes understanding disabled students’ experiences and obstacles.

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The Faculty Accessibility Measure (FAM)

The Faculty Accessibility Measure (FAM) was designed to be used in research of U.S. postsecondary faculty who teach in technical/trade, community college, and 4-year college programs.

This measure focuses on both disabled and non-disabled faculty and their experiences supporting students who request accommodations or accessible arrangements through both formal and informal processes. Faculty routinely navigate accessibility decisions whether students provide official documentation, disclose informally, or do not disclose at all. To reflect this reality, the measure captures faculty perspectives on general accessibility practices that shape learning environments for all students, alongside items that address experiences related to disability disclosure, accommodation requests, and institutional support. This approach recognizes accessibility as an ongoing, relational aspect of teaching rather than a practice limited to formal accommodation systems.

There are a wide range of postsecondary programs in the U.S. Items related to program characteristics provide helpful context for how to interpret findings and, in some cases, for skip logic so that students are answering questions that are relevant to their learning environment. The range of postsecondary settings is also evident in the terminology used in the items, broadening out from what is traditionally only measured in a single campus or type of postsecondary program.

While not a part of the measure itself, our measure development process included significant work in creating demographic questions that are related to disability and higher education. These demographic items were piloted and the focus of significant rounds of revision through cognitive labs. These questions are provided here as examples of how disability constructs were measured in relation to the outcomes in the Campus Accessibility Measure. We provide these items for consideration in your future data collection efforts.

This survey is designed to be administered in an online format such as Qualtrics. We recommend a secure delivery platform that can reliably detect bots or other fake users, as online platforms are particularly susceptible to hacking when there is a financial incentive advertised as part of the survey protocol.

Survey Development

Development of the Faculty Accessibility Measure (FAM) focused on the complexity of instructor views on accessibility as well as their agency and perceived support at their institution. FAM development was driven by both survey and interview findings from the Campus Accessibility Measure (CAM) as well as a review of prior measures and research literature. Our approach to accessibility necessarily reflects the systemic nature of postsecondary education, such that one must consider factors both within and around classroom learning.

FAM assesses faculty perspectives of their capacity both from their own current level of confidence and also the support they have to implement accessibility strategies from their institutions. Themes in the FAM cut across both of these levels, including course design, technology, accommodations, and student support. Often these items might overlap, such as technology that is used for the purpose of increasing accessibility.

The measure went through multiple stages of development, including:

- Literature review (Fall 2024)
- Instrument item generation (Winter 2025)
- Cognitive Labs + Full Pilot (Spring 2025)
- Full survey administration (Summer 2025)

Exploratory Factor Analyses

The following sections outline the most recent stage in the measure development process, exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The NDCSS conducted the EFA to understand the extent to which groups of FAM items represented latent (or underlying) concepts related to instructor perspectives on accessibility in higher education.

About the EFA Sample

EFA was conducted using the data from the national sample collected in Summer 2025. NDCSS recruited a total of 454 participants through Prolific.co to take the survey. Participants were eligible if they were at least 18 years of age, were currently teaching in a 4-year college, 2-year college, or technical/trade program, and were in the United States. After removing incomplete responses and ineligible participants, the survey yielded 418 responses. The survey was administered online through Qualtrics and included a combination of multiple choice, Likert-scale, write-in, and open-ended questions. Participants took a median time of 5 minutes 59 seconds to take the survey.

About the FAM Factors

There are a total of 21 items and two factors in the FAM.

Factor #1: Individual Confidence: The first factor has 10 items related to the instructor’s self-reported confidence in creating an accessible learning environment in their classrooms, labs, or other teaching context. An example item focused on a common challenge for faculty: “Thinking about my current capacity, resources, and experiences, I am confident in creating accessible course materials (e.g., PDFs, presentation slides, Word documents).” All of the items were designed to be answered on a five point scale, from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree with 5 = Not Applicable. The Not Applicable scores were removed for the EFA and for further analysis.

Factor #2: Institutional Support: The second factor has 11 items related to the instructor’s self-reported support from their institutions on tasks related to creating accessible learning environments. Many of the items were similar in topics as those that were rated for individual confidence. An example item that emphasized resources provided by the institution: “Thinking about my institutional support, resources, and infrastructure, I have access to information about how to use accessibility features in online learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard, Canvas).” All of the items were designed to be answered on a five point scale, from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree with 5 = Not Applicable. The Not Applicable scores were removed for the EFA and for further analysis.

Demographic Items: A variety of demographic questions assess faculty social and academic profiles in the FAM. In terms of academic demographics, faculty institution type (2-year, 4-year, or technical/trade program), semester modality (in-person, hybrid, or online), disability status, types of disability, and race and ethnicity.

Factor Extraction + Retention: Before conducting the EFA, the data were assessed to ensure suitability for factor analysis. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.92, indicating excellent sampling adequacy for the EFA. Further, Bartlett’s test of sphericity, $\chi^2(210) = 3100.70$, was significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, suggesting correlations between items were sufficiently large for the factor analysis. A scree plot analysis indicated a clear drop after a two factor model. The two factor solution explained 42.3% of total variance, with moderate factor correlation ($r = 0.42$). The shared variance between factors was $R^2 = 0.18$, with a unique variance of 82%, indicating related but distinct constructs represented by the FAM two subscales. All items were thus retained and a two factor model is used for the remainder of this measure report.

Construct/Items	Factor Loading		α
	MR1	MR2	
Overall Measure			0.92
Individual Confidence			0.86
Accessibility statements in syllabi	0.75		
Creating accessible materials	0.70		
Talking about accommodations	0.69		
Teaching students with disabilities	0.65		
Directing to support services	0.61		
Inclusive class discussions	0.60		
Videos with captions	0.53		
Planning alternative assignments	0.47		
Multiple format materials	0.44		
Monitoring presentation pace	0.38		
Institutional Support			0.91
Improving accessibility practices		0.82	
Assistive technologies		0.76	
Modifying assignments		0.76	
Homework/activities accessibility		0.73	
In-class content accessibility		0.69	
Emergency support		0.67	
Course evaluations		0.67	
Screen-reader friendly content		0.66	
LMS accessibility features		0.65	
Student privacy		0.51	
Testing resources		0.28	
SS Loadings	3.61	5.27	
Proportion Variance	0.17	0.25	
Cumulative Variance	0.17	0.42	

Factor Structure

The oblique, rotated factor matrix determined that 10 items loaded strongly onto Factor 1, which was interpreted as Individual Confidence, with loadings between 0.38 and 0.75. The second factor included 11 items and was interpreted as Institutional Support, with loadings ranging from 0.28 to 0.82. The lowest loading item, testing resources, may be limited due to unavailability of testing sites at all campuses. This item may need to be revisited in further analysis of its inclusion on this measure.

Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha. The reliability coefficients of the two factors were $\alpha = 0.86$ and $\alpha = 0.91$, respectively, indicating acceptable reliability given this initial stage of the FAM development. The overall scale reliability was $\alpha = 0.92$, reflecting an excellent internal consistency.

Correlations with Personal Accessibility and Accessibility Motivation Scales

To better understand the FAM measure factors and how they may relate to other accessibility constructs that faculty may hold, we include a correlation analysis of these FAM factors with two additional measures: Personal Accessibility and Accessibility Motivation.

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for FAM Factors and Accessibility Measures

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Individual Confidence	3.48	0.42	—			
2. Institutional Support	3.25	0.54	0.64***	—		
3. Accessibility Motivation	3.39	0.48	0.48***	0.39***	—	
4. Personal Access	3.56	0.44	0.38***	0.40***	0.24***	—

Note: N = 418.

***p < .001.

All of these correlations are significant. This correlation table indicates that the strongest correlation is between the two FAM factors, at $r = 0.64$ (this is higher than the EFA results because of directly computed factor scores). The next highest correlation at $r = 0.48$ is the relationship between the Individual Confidence and Accessibility Motivation, indicating that there is a relationship between the two. Personal Accessibility is also related to both Individual Confidence and Institutional Support. The smallest correlation is between Personal Accessibility and Accessibility Motivation, indicating that variation in one's own access experience is the least significant relationship with Accessibility Motivation amongst these variables. Interestingly, when we included years of experience teaching in this correlation model, it was not related to any of these measures. Further analyses will be conducted in future research.

Interpretation and Implications

The two factor structure captures complementary dimensions of faculty accessibility implementation. Individual Confidence (Factor 1) represents faculty self-efficacy, preparedness, and comfort with accessibility practices, grounded in Bandura's (2006) Self-Efficacy Theory. This factor reflects the individual psychological resources that faculty bring to accessibility work. Institutional Support (Factor 2) represents faculty perceptions of organizational resources, infrastructure, and support systems, aligned with ecological systems perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cawthon, 2022). This factor reflects the organizational conditions that enable faculty accessibility efforts.

The moderate correlation between factors ($r = 0.42$) reveals both connection and independence. Institutional support can build individual confidence, and confident faculty may seek institutional resources, suggesting reciprocal influence. However, the moderate correlation also indicates distinct constructs that may include different predictors of these outcomes. These findings underscore that effective accessibility improvement requires dual focus: building individual capacity through professional development while simultaneously strengthening institutional infrastructure through policy and resource investments.

Faculty Accessibility Survey

The items below were used in the full implementation of the Faculty Accessibility Measure. This includes demographic items, questions about accommodations in the classroom, the personal accessibility measure and the accessibility motivation measure. The items that were part of the final factor loading for the two FAM construct levels are in the table on [page 8](#).

- Text provided in » with italics are instructions to researchers.
- Items with an asterisk (*) were provided only to participants who self-disclosed as having a disability.
- Items with (Reverse) are reverse coded in analyses, so that positive responses receive a higher score.
- We encourage the use of bolding (and not italics) to emphasize key ideas in survey items

Survey Introduction and Eligibility Questions

Section Introduction Text (after consent form): We would like to learn more about your thoughts on teaching in higher education. Please answer to the best of your ability – there are no wrong answers and your input will help us share information about reaching all students.

Do you currently teach undergraduates in a technical training program, college, or university in the United States?

- Yes, I teach in a technical training program or technical college.
- Yes, I teach in a 2-year or community college.
- Yes, I teach in a 4-year college or university.
- No, I do not currently teach undergraduates in a training or higher education program in the US.

Are you currently 18 years of age or older?

- Yes, I am currently 18 or older.
- No, I am not yet 18 years old.

Text provided in » with italics are instructions to researchers.

Items with an asterisk (*) were provided only to participants who self-disclosed as having a disability.

Demographic items

» *Our focus on disabilities that persisted for at least 4 months was tied to focusing on disabilities that may require academic support of one semester or longer. We included direct mention of chronic health and mental health because many people do not see those as disability categories, even though they can qualify a student for accommodations and support services.*

Disability Status

Do you have a disability, chronic health, or mental health condition that has lasted 4 months or longer?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Prefer Not to Say

» *If YES or UNSURE to Disability Status, go to the next section. If NO or PREFER NOT TO SAY, skip to the full FAM measure items.*

Disability Type*

How would you describe your disability or chronic conditions? (Please select all that apply. From here forward in the survey we will use the term “disability” to refer to all disabilities and chronic conditions.)

- ADD/ADHD
- Autism
- Blind or low vision
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Health-related disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health condition
- Mobility-related disability
- Neurodivergent
- Speech-related disability
- Other: Please describe

» *These response options include categories that are both from ADA and from current identity labels, such as neurodivergent.*

Text provided in » with italics are instructions to researchers.
Items with an asterisk (*) were provided only to participants who self-disclosed as having a disability.

Race or Ethnicity

Which of the following best describes you? (Please select all that apply).

- Black, African, or African American
- American Indian, Indigenous, Native American or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino/a/e
- White or Caucasian
- Prefer not to say
- My race is not listed. I identify as:

Years Teaching

How many years have you been teaching undergraduates in this or in a similar field?

(Please round to the closest whole number of years, e.g., 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 12 years, etc).

State or Territory

What US state or territory is your technical training program, college or university in?

Teaching Mode

Do you go to a physical campus or training site to teach this semester?

- Yes, I go to a physical campus or training site.
- Part of my teaching is online: my time is split between online learning and going to a physical campus or training site.
- All of my teaching is online: I do not go to a physical campus or training site.

Accommodations in Classroom

What kinds of accommodations have your students or trainees requested within the last 5 years? (Please select all that apply).

- Extra time on tests and assignments
- Dictionary or glossaries
- Directions read aloud
- Large print or braille
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Quiet or separate settings for assignments and tests
- Alternate formats (Graphic organizers or structured instructions materials or assignments)
- Speech to text for assignments
- Captioning
- Note taking support
- Assistive technology
- Other. Please describe:
- None of the above

Text provided in » with italics are instructions to researchers.
Items with an asterisk (*) were provided only to participants who self-disclosed as having a disability.

Faculty Accessibility Measure Scale Items

» *This next section includes the items that make up the main Faculty Accessibility Measure. There are two factors: Individual Confidence and Institutional Support.*

Rating Scale (this is true for the whole measure).

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
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Individual Confidence

Thinking about my current capacity, resources, and experiences, I am confident...

Teaching students with a range of disabilities.

Creating accessible course materials (e.g., PDFs, presentation slides, Word documents).

Including videos with captions that I use in class or give as homework.

Including accessibility statements in my syllabi or course plan.

Planning alternative assignments that can achieve the same learning outcomes for students.

Providing course materials in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, visual).

Structuring class discussions to be inclusive of different communication styles (e.g., listening, speaking, writing, individual, groups).

Monitoring my pace when presenting information.

Talking to students about how to implement accommodations in my classes (e.g., extended time on assignments, flexible deadlines, ASL interpreters, printed materials in class, recording lectures, lecture notes).

Directing students to disability support services or mental health services.

Text provided in » with italics are instructions to researchers.

Items with an asterisk (*) were provided only to participants who self-disclosed as having a disability.

Institutional Support

Thinking about my institutional support, resources, and infrastructure, I have access to information about...

How to make my in-class content more accessible (e.g., during lectures, labs, discussions).

How to make my homework assignments or out-of-class activities more accessible (e.g., readings, group assignments, projects, take home tests).

How to use accessibility features in online learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard, Canvas).

How to make my digital course content screen-reader friendly (e.g., headings, alt text for images, reading order for pdfs).

What assistive technologies my disabled students might use.

How to maintain student privacy when handling disability-related information.

How to view the accessibility of my courses (e.g., through course evaluations, mid-semester check-ins, informal polling).

How I can improve in my accessibility practices (e.g., through peer teaching evaluations).

How to modify required course assignments while maintaining academic standards (e.g., reducing or chunking length of assignments, providing an alternate response format for assignments or exams).

How to use testing resources such as a testing center or online test timeline extensions.

How to support students with disabilities in an emergency (e.g., weather event, campus lockdown, etc.).

Text provided in » with italics are instructions to researchers.

Items with an asterisk (*) were provided only to participants who self-disclosed as having a disability.

Personal Accessibility Scale

» *These items are adapted from the Campus Accessibility Measure to fit the context of faculty navigating digital and physical aspects of the campus environment.*

Our online course system (e.g., Canvas, Blackboard, etc.) **is easy for me to use.**

College-wide online materials (e.g., websites, PDFs, videos) **are easy for me to use.**

I can get to my campus within a reasonable time.

I can get to my campus with a reasonable amount of effort (e.g., considering parking, accessibility, etc.).

Once on campus, I can get to my workplace within a reasonable time.

Once on campus, I can get to my workplace with a reasonable amount of effort (e.g., considering parking, accessibility, etc.).

Accessibility Motivation Scale

» *These items are adapted from the Cost-Value-Expectancy measure to fit the context of providing accessible learning experiences for disabled students.*

I know I can learn how to make my teaching more accessible for students with disabilities.

I believe I can be successful as a teacher for students with disabilities.

I am confident that I can teach my class material in an accessible manner.

I think accessibility is useful to the students in my classes.

I think accessibility is important to my class design.

I value accessibility in my classes.

Making my classes more accessible requires too much time (Reverse).

Because of other things that I do, I don't have time to put into class accessibility (Reverse).

I'm unable to put in the time to do well with accessibility in my classes (Reverse).

I have to give up too much to make my classes accessible (Reverse).

Recommended Reading

While not a comprehensive list, the following readings provided important perspectives that informed the development of the Faculty Accessibility Measure, the faculty interview protocols, and this national report. National Disability Center researchers focused on research findings from the last 10 years, as well as the legal foundation for accessibility in postsecondary education.

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