

DTA input into the Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the delivery of outcomes under the the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to build inclusive and accessible communities.

The Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) manages the Digital Service Standard (the Standard), a set of 13 criteria that help digital teams across the APS ensure they build government services that are simple, clear and fast. The Standard is included at Attachment A and more information can be found at: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/>.

The Standard applies to public facing Australian Government services owned by non-corporate Commonwealth entities. All digital services which were designed or redesigned after 6 May 2016 fall within the scope of the standard and must be assessed against it, including:

- new and redesigned government services, information and transactional; and
- all high volume transactional services (for example, lodging a tax return online), existing or being designed/redesigned.

The Standard does not apply to state, territory or local government services. However, these jurisdictions may decide to apply the Standard to improve their service delivery. More information about the scope and application of the Standard can be found at: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/scope-of-standard/>.

Several criteria in the Standard help agencies support accessibility and digital inclusion in communities, including *Criterion 1: Understand user needs* and *Criterion 12: Don't forget the non-digital experience*.

Criterion 9: Ensure the service is accessible to all users regardless of their ability and environment provides the most specific guidance for agencies on accessibility and inclusivity. There are a range of things agencies must do at different stages to meet this criterion, including demonstrating:

- The service is accessible (i.e. meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 [WCAG 2.0] Level AA standards)
- Evidence of user research and usability testing, including users with low level digital skills, people with disability, people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- How the team has designed and tested for users of assistive technologies based on user research, usability testing and analytics
- How the team has included cultural and linguistically diverse communities in the design
- Ongoing testing plans for accessibility so that users can continue to access the service.
- Non-digital access and support for people unable to use, or struggling with, the digital service.

The application of *Criterion 9* under the Standard is a continuation of commitment to improve the lives and access to information by the Australian Government for people with a disability. The Standard follows related initiatives such as the endorsement of WCAG 2.0 for all government websites and online information. The DTA provides support and guidance to agencies to make their websites and content more accessible for people with a disability

through a dedicated mailbox, plus online guidance at design guides (see: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/design-guides/>) and content strategy (<https://guides.service.gov.au/content-guide/>).

More information on the requirements for meeting *Criterion 9: Ensure the service is accessible to all users regardless of their ability and environment* can be found at: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/9-make-it-accessible/>.

All services within the scope of the Standard are assessed against the Standard. The DTA provides an assurance framework that guides agencies on how to assess and report against the Standard. The DTA leads assessments for all new and redesigned transactional services with greater than 50,000 transactions per year. All other services are subject to agency self-assessment. More information about the assurance framework can be found at: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/meeting-standard/>.

The DTA supports agencies in applying and assessing against the Standard by:

- Providing guidance materials via the DTA website;
- Providing training courses: Getting started with the Digital Service Standard and Assessing against the Digital Service Standard;
- Providing direct advice to agencies on how to apply and assess against the Standard; and
- Leading assessments for high volume services.

These services are available from: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/>.

ATTACHMENT A: THE DIGITAL SERVICE STANDARD

The Digital Service Standard ensures digital teams build government services that are simple, clear and fast.

All services which were designed or redesigned after 6 May 2016 fall within the scope of the standard and must be assessed against it. You can check the changes between the Live and Beta Standard.

The Criteria

Government agencies will be expected to:

- 1. Understand user needs**
Understand user needs. Research to develop a deep knowledge of the users and their context for the service.
- 2. Have a multidisciplinary team**
Establish a sustainable multidisciplinary team to design, build, operate and iterate the service, led by an experienced product manager with decision-making responsibility.
- 3. Agile and user-centred process**
Design and build the service using the service design and delivery process, taking an agile and user-centred approach.
- 4. Understand tools and systems**
Understand the tools and systems required to build, host, operate and measure the service and how to adopt, adapt or procure them.
- 5. Make it secure**
Identify the data and information the service will use or create. Put appropriate legal, privacy and security measures in place.
- 6. Consistent and responsive design**
Build the service with responsive design methods using common design patterns and the style guide.
- 7. Use open standards and common platforms**
Build using open standards and common government platforms where appropriate.
- 8. Make source code open**
Make all new source code open by default.
- 9. Make it accessible**
Ensure the service is accessible to all users regardless of their ability and environment.

10. Test the service

Test the service from end to end, in an environment that replicates the live version.

11. Measure performance

Measure performance against KPIs set out in the guides. Report on public dashboard.

12. Don't forget the non-digital experience

Ensure that people who use the digital service can also use the other available channels if needed, without repetition or confusion.

13. Encourage everyone to use the digital service

Encourage users to choose the digital service and consolidate or phase out existing alternative channels where appropriate.

Full version available at: <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/>