**Instruction Guidelines for Completing the**

***EIR Accessibility Exception Request Form***

The University of Texas at Austin must comply with the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) Accessibility Rules when developing, procuring, maintaining, or using Electronic and Information Resources (EIR). All hardware, software, applications, websites, and other EIR must comply with certain technical accessibility standards. Accessibility is currently defined by two standards – Section 508 for most categories and Section 508 plus WCAG 2.0 AA for websites and programs. Texas standards, outlined in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), mirror federal standards, [1 TAC 206](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac%24ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=1&pt=10&ch=206), aligns state web accessibility standards with the federal regulations set forth in Section 508.

An *EIR Accessibility Exception Request Form* must be submitted for each non-compliant EIR if:

* Achieving compliance with accessible standards is not possible.
* The vendor objects to the EIR Warranty Clause (Access by Individuals with Disabilities).
* The contract is not eligible for reduced warranty language.
* The vendor indicates the EIR is not compliant.

Requesters will be asked to provide a VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template) or initiate communication with the vendor if a VPAT is not easily located. Vendors who wish to do business with the University must provide information about their product’s conformance to applicable accessibility standards via the VPAT. Completion and submission of the VPAT is a requirement for products and services where EIR is involved and should be submitted via email to the University EIR Coordinator for review with the *EIR Accessibility Exception Request Form*.

**Directions for Requesters completing the**

***EIR Accessibility Exception Request Form***

Requesters need to answer all of the questions. Failure to answer all questions will result in delays in processing your request. Please use the guidance below to complete the request form.

**1. Requester Information**

* **Requester Name:** The requester is the university employee who initiates the purchase of the EIR and/or is tasked with the responsibility of completing the *EIR Accessibility Exception Request Form*:
* **Job Title:** Enter the requester’s official job title.
* **Date:** Enter today’s date using the format MM/DD/YYYY.
* **Email:** Enter the requester’s university email address.
* **Phone:** Enter requester’s preferred phone number, including area code and extension (if applicable).
* **Office Address:** Enter the city, state, and zip code of your on-campus workplace.
* **Program or Division:** Enter the name of the CSU, program, or division purchasing the EIR.
* **EIR Owner:** Enter the name of the person or department that owns, has purchased, or is securing the EIR. The owner is an individual or group with primary responsibility for an EIR.

**2. Vendor Information**

* **Vendor Name:** The name of the vendor who makes or sells the EIR product/service.
* **Vendor URL:** Provide web link from the vendor’s website that links to the EIR product/service.

**3. Vendor Employee to Address Accessibility Questions and Issues with the Product**

* **Vendor Employee Name:** Enter the name of the employee the requester is consulting with.
* **Vendor Employee Phone:** Enter the employee’s phone number, including area code and extension (if applicable).
* **Vendor Employee Email:** Enter the employee’s email address.

**4. Description of Electronic Information Resource (EIR) Product/Service**

* **EIR Product/Service Name:** Enter the name of the EIR. Examples: Microsoft Office, FileMaker Pro, etc.
* **EIR Description:** Provide a description of the product / service / software / program.
* **Contract Amount for EIR & License Term:** Indicate the cost of the EIR and when the contract will expire.
* **EIR Type:** Select from the options listed.
* **EIR Procurement Type:** Indicate whether it is a new purchase, a renewal, or if you have already purchased the EIR.
* **The EIR is**: Indicate how the EIR is used.
* **This EIR will be available to:** Indicate the usage scope for this EIR (audience).

**5. Justification for Exception**

* **Provide supporting information to justify this request:** Provide a detailed explanation for requesting this exception. Example: No accessible alternative exists which provides screen reader compatible remote support.
* **Describe the significant difficulty and/or expense in achieving accessibility**: The vendor must provide the requester with an explanation of why it is difficult to achieve compliance with accessible standards.
* **Planned Accessibility Compliance date:** Enter the date the vendor expects the EIR to be in compliance with accessibility standards. Use the format MM/DD/YYYY. If the vendor is unsure of the date or if no date is planned, the vendor must provide the requester with an explanation of why the EIR will not be made compliant.
* **Other relevant information**: Provide information that supports your request for an accessible exception (e.g., the EIR is operated by a department as part of a national security system, the EIR is located in spaces that are frequented only by service personnel for maintenance).
* **Similar Products:** Do similar products exist? If so, provide the name of the product, whether it meets accessible standards, and the cost associated with the purchase. Provide rationale for moving forward with an exception request if there is a similar product available that meets accessible standards.

**6. Alternative Compliance Methods**

* **Describe the alternative means of access**, including time and expense to implement. Provide a detailed description of an alternative but equitable means of access for individuals with disabilities who could not otherwise receive the benefit of the EIR in question. This solution must result in an equivalent experience for the user. Example: *Orders may also be placed over the phone or in person at the box office utilizing a 24-hour help line.* (If others can access information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week utilizing a website, the alternative should provide the same type of access).

**7. Signatures**

* Form must be signed and dated. The form will be routed for signature via DocuSign to the respective Dean/Vice President, the Department Head/Chair, and the Requester.

**Next Steps:** After completing and submitting the EIR Accessibility Exception Request Form, please email a copy of the EIR’s VPAT to the EIR Accessibility Coordinator at ada@austin.utexas.edu.

***Note:*** *An approved exception request is not an exemption from making EIR accessible. Instead, it is documentation of temporary acceptance of risk by the University until the EIR or associated service can be brought into compliance through modification or substitution with a comparable accessible EIR.**Approved exceptions do not eliminate the University EIR owner’s responsibility to provide access to the EIR by an alternate method or in an alternate format. Furthermore, if an exception is granted, this does not preclude a person with disabilities from filing a lawsuit against the university.*