

Captions and Transcripts FAQ

With almost all UCI classes going digital, the need for captions and transcripts for audio/video content is at an all-time high. But why are they necessary? How do you create captions or transcripts? What resources does UCI offer to make audio/visual content accessible? The information below answers these questions and provides some understanding of digital accessibility.

1. What is captioning?

According to the National Association of the Deaf, "[Captioning is the process of converting the audio content of a television broadcast, webcast, film, video, CD-ROM, DVD, live event, or other productions into text and displaying the text on a screen, monitor, or other visual display system.](#)" Audio content includes spoken dialogue or narration, music, and any sound effects. For clarity, captions should also include speaker identification.

[There are many different kinds of captioning](#), but most readers of this FAQ only need to know about the following types:

Real Time Captioning: This type of captioning occurs in real time as a person is speaking.

Pre or Post Recorded Captioning: This type of captioning occurs before or after a recorded event, such as a lecture. Pre or post recorded captioning is more accurate than real time, but takes longer to create.

All captions can be human- or machine-created. With the current state of technology, human captions are more accurate, though machine captioning is substantially cheaper. It is also possible for a person to use machine captioning as a starting point and correct errors afterwards. You must create a transcript before you can make captions.

2. What is a transcript?

A transcript converts the same audio content as captioning, but places the text into a scrolling document instead of on a screen. Like captioning, transcription can take place in real time or pre/post recording, and can be created by either a human or machine.

3. Which one is better?

It depends on the type of media and the needs of your audience. Captioning is generally better for video because it is time coded, meaning that the user can follow the presentation in real time. As a rule of thumb, UCOP recommends using [transcripts for audio and captioning for video](#). In the case of a reasonable accommodation request, the requester's needs determine whether captioning or transcripts are more appropriate.

4. Why is it necessary to create captions and transcripts?

Captions and transcripts allow people with and without disabilities to fully participate in class. Those who are deaf and hard of hearing are just some of the many disability categories that need captioning. People who have difficulty processing spoken information can also obtain course content through a transcription.

While captions are critical for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, they are also helpful for people without disabilities, including those whose primary language is not English. People are more likely to get a speaker's message when they can both hear and read that person's words. Also, captions can convey information that is lost when a bad Internet connection causes sound skipping.

5. When is creating captions and transcripts required?

Creating captions or transcripts is required when necessary to fulfill the Americans with Disabilities Act's effective communication requirement. Federal and state law require UCI to ensure that communications with people with disabilities must be as effective as communications with people without disabilities. ASL interpretation, captions, and transcripts are examples of how UCI ensures effective communication with people with disabilities.

Captions and transcripts are required when requested as a reasonable accommodation that the Disability Services Center (DSC) approves. Universities likely have even greater legal obligations in this area, as recent lawsuits against Harvard and MIT resulted in [both schools captioning all of their media](#), even [faculty-created content](#).

Students who need captions or transcripts for effective communication typically request them as reasonable accommodations. Sometimes, students direct these requests to the Disability Services Center. Faculty members will receive reasonable accommodation requests from students registered with the DSC. If a student not registered with the DSC requests a reasonable accommodation directly from an instructor, that faculty member should direct them to [register for DSC services](#) or contact the DSC at 949-824-7494 or dsc@uci.edu for more information.

6. Who is responsible for creating captions and transcriptions?

Faculty are responsible for ensuring that all media content has captions and transcripts. Faculty can use YuJa to clean up captions using the caption editing tool before posting content for a class. The DSC will provide the necessary supports if it determines that a student with a disability needs live captioning or ASL for a live/synchronous class. These supports can include using a third-party human captioning tool for your course content, to ensure accuracy.

7. How do you create pre- or post-recorded captions and transcripts?

UCI has a service called YuJa which allows faculty to quickly add pre or post recorded captions to uploaded media. Resources and instructions about YuJa are available through [UCI Replay](#). It is highly recommended that faculty [integrate YuJa with Canvas](#),

which allows them to embed YuJa hosted media with captions directly onto a Canvas course page. The Described and Captioned Media Program has a resource page for [guidelines and best practices for captioning educational video](#). The [accessibility section of UCI's Teach Anywhere](#) website has additional resources about captions and transcripts. UCI Zoom meetings recorded to the cloud are also automatically transcribed after the fact. OIT's UCI Zoom website includes [information about caption and transcription options in Zoom](#).

8. How do you create live captions and transcripts?

Zoom recently created a feature where speakers can produce live transcripts without additional third-party software. Additionally, speakers can make those transcripts appear on the screen as captions. Step-by-step instructions for enabling and viewing live transcripts and captions are available at [UCI Zoom Transcript and Captions Help page](#).

9. Can someone refuse to provide transcripts if a lecture is copyrighted?

No, but that person can still have protection for their copyrighted material. The United States Department of Education states that [instructors cannot refuse a reasonable accommodation request to record a lecture based on copyright ownership](#). Colleges and universities can have students sign agreements not to use the recordings (or, in this case, transcripts) in a way that constitutes copyright infringement. The DSC regularly follows this practice.

10. Where should you go if you need help?

If you are using Zoom or YuJa to add captions and it is not working, contact the OIT Help Desk at OIT@uci.edu. If you are looking for guidance on what technology to use for making captions and transcripts, contact the Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (DTEI) at dtei@uci.edu or 949-824-3594. If you have any other questions about captions and transcripts, contact the ADA Coordinator's office at ada@uci.edu or 949-824-5594.