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Professional Certificate in British Design for Accessibility and Inclusion

## Designing for Visual Accessibility

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Designing for Visual Accessibility is a crucial aspect of creating inclusive and accessible designs that can be used by people with a wide range of visual abilities. In this explanation, we will cover key terms and vocabulary related to visual accessibility in the context of the Professional Certificate in British Design for Accessibility and Inclusion.

1. **Visual Accessibility:** Visual accessibility refers to the design of products, environments, and services that can be perceived and understood by people with visual impairments, including blindness and low vision. Visual accessibility is an essential aspect of inclusive design, ensuring that everyone can access and use the same information and resources.
2. **Contrast Ratio:** Contrast ratio is the difference in light between the foreground and background colors of text or images. A high contrast ratio makes it easier for people with visual impairments to read and understand the content. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) recommend a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for large text.
3. **Alt Text:** Alt text is a description of an image that is displayed when the image cannot be loaded or viewed. Alt text is essential for people who use screen readers, as it allows them to understand the content of the image. Alt text should be descriptive, accurate, and concise.
4. **Large Print:** Large print is a typeface that is larger than standard print size, making it easier for people with low vision to read. Large print should be at least 14 points or 1.5 times the size of the standard font.
5. **High-Contrast Mode:** High-contrast mode is a feature that increases the contrast between the foreground and background colors, making it easier for people with visual impairments to read and understand the content. High-contrast mode can be particularly useful for people with low vision or color blindness.
6. **Screen Reader:** A screen reader is a software program that converts text on a screen into speech or braille, allowing people with visual impairments to access and use digital content. Screen readers are an essential tool for people who are blind or have low vision.
7. **Color Blindness:** Color blindness is a condition that affects the way a person perceives color. People with color blindness may have difficulty distinguishing between certain colors, such as red and green or blue and yellow. Designers should be aware of color blindness when creating visual content and use a color palette that is accessible to people with color blindness.
8. **Accessible Design:** Accessible design is the practice of creating products, environments, and services that can be used by people with a wide range of abilities, including visual impairments. Accessible design involves considering the needs and preferences of people with disabilities in the design process, ensuring that they can access and use the same information and resources as everyone else.
9. **WCAG:** The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a set of standards for creating accessible web content. WCAG provides guidelines for designing accessible text, images, videos, and other digital content, ensuring that people with visual impairments can access and use the content.
10. **Inclusive Design:** Inclusive design is the practice of creating products, environments, and services that are accessible and usable by people with a wide range of abilities, backgrounds, and preferences. Inclusive

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design involves considering the needs and preferences of people with disabilities, as well as other diverse groups, in the design process.

11. User Testing: User testing is the practice of testing a product, environment, or service with real users to identify any issues or barriers that may prevent them from accessing or using the content. User testing with people with visual impairments can help designers identify and address any visual accessibility issues.

12. Zoom: Zoom is a feature that allows users to magnify the content on a screen, making it easier for people with low vision to read and understand the content. Zoom should be available on all digital devices and platforms.

13. Captioning: Captioning is the practice of providing text versions of audio or video content, making it accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Captioning can also be useful for people with visual impairments, as it provides an alternative way to access the content.

14. Audio Description: Audio description is the practice of providing a narrated description of visual content, such as images or videos, making it accessible to people who are blind or have low vision.

15. Braille: Braille is a tactile writing system used by people who are blind or have low vision. Braille consists of raised dots that can be felt with the fingers, allowing people to read and understand written content.

Challenge:

- \* Choose an existing digital product, environment, or service and conduct an accessibility audit to identify any visual accessibility issues.
- \* Develop a plan to address these issues, using the key terms and concepts covered in this explanation.
- \* Test the product, environment, or service with people with visual impairments to ensure that it is accessible and usable.

Example:

- \* A designer creates a website for a local museum. They conduct an accessibility audit and identify several visual accessibility issues, including low contrast text, missing alt text for images, and a lack of keyboard navigation.
- \* The designer addresses these issues by increasing the contrast ratio of the text, adding descriptive alt text for all images, and implementing keyboard navigation.
- \* The designer tests the website with people with visual impairments and receives positive feedback, ensuring that the website is accessible and usable for everyone.