

GRADE

The Georgia Tech Research on Accessible Distance Education (GRADE) project provides research, training, technical assistance and information dissemination to improve the accessibility of distance education for students with disabilities at universities and colleges throughout the nation.

Activities

- **Professional Development:** GRADE provides training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge and skills of faculty, staff, administrators and students by the:
 - Creation, evaluation and dissemination of **access elearning**, a thorough curriculum on building and retrofitting accessible distance education courses;
 - Creation of technical assistance materials, based on the course curriculum, to provide a detailed summary of issues, solutions and tips for improving access;
 - Hosting of a national leadership institute on accessibility in distance education in Atlanta, GA in 2005.
- **Barrier Removal:** GRADE is committed to making the Georgia Institute of Technology a model institution on accessibility for distance education. Successful strategies and results are disseminated nationwide to assist others in course design by:
 - Retrofitting of existing distance education courses for accessibility;
 - Creation of accessible courses from inception;
 - A focus on courses that present challenges due to nature (engineering, mathematics) or inclusion of rich media.
- **Outreach through MERLOT:** Through partnership with the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and On-Line Teaching (MERLOT), GRADE will:
 - Develop voluntary standards for accessibility in distance learning;
 - Review materials in the MERLOT database and document promising practices in accessibility;
 - Provide technical assistance on the voluntary standards to MERLOT members who wish to retrofit materials.