

## Tips for Using Graphics

Use graphics purposefully and not just because they look good. You can use graphics to enhance other content or serve as standalone instructional elements. They can provide valuable information and assist in navigation of your course.

Consider the following suggestions when adding graphics to your course:

- Use simple graphics. Clean and simple is often the most effective. You don't want design overtaking content, nor do you want to increase download times unnecessarily. Avoid lengthy text and lots of numbers within the graphic.
- Avoid background images. Use a white or pale solid background with dark text instead of adding background images. High contrast between text and background is easier to read.
- Watch the file size. Large and numerous images may look great on your page, but they will frustrate users who must wait for images to load.
- Use the right format. It's important to save your pictures in a web-ready format. In general, use the PNG format for simple graphics such as logos, charts, and drawings. The JPG format is usually better for photos and images with subtle shadings or gradients. The JPG format also allows for better compression of a file. Select the best format for better image quality and smaller file size.
- Crop photos. Cut out nonessential areas of an image to maximize impact and decrease download time.
- Use animated images sparingly. They can cause the screen, or parts of it, to flicker and change rapidly. Animations can detract from the accessibility and usability of a page. Moving images also cause problems for students with cognitive impairments and may be hard to interpret by students who have low vision.
- Provide alternative text using the ALT attribute. Screen readers and other text-to-speech software read the image's alternative text aloud to the user.