Document accessibility guide

By law, Word and PDF documents on our website must be accessible, or we must be able to provide alternative accessible documents.

You can check the accessibility of any word document you produce by going to file > check for issues > check accessibility. This will also offer an explanation of what needs to be changed and how. Please note that different versions of Word may have different functions and you may need to search online for how the accessibility checker and accessibility steps highlighted in this document work in your version.

Contents

To create accessible documents in Word:

Styles and headings

- Use the styles and formatting toolbar for structure – this is easier for disabled users to adapt the document to meet their needs and to navigate using a screen reader

Font size and type

- Size 14, no smaller than size 12 (for readers with visual impairments). You should be able to provide the document in an alternative font size upon request
- Avoid underlining, except for links. Avoid text in all capitals and italics
- 'Word Art' is not compatible with some screen readers
- Use serif fonts (e.g. **Arial, Calibri).** Avoid sans-serif (e.g. **Times New Roman**) fonts, these have small strokes or extensions at the end of its longer strokes (see below)

Serif   *Sans-Serif*

Abc   Abc

Contrast and text colour

- Readers with learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia) may find dark text colours against pale backgrounds better to read whilst readers with visual impairments may find a pale text on dark backgrounds easier
- There needs to be sufficient contrast between the font colour and the background colour. You can check here – www.developer.paciellogroup.com/color-contrast-checker/ Backgrounds should always be plain

Alignment

- Use left alignment:

- Do not use justified text: This makes the spaces between words uneven which can make it difficult for some individuals to read

Line spacing

- Double or 1.5 spacing between lines
- At least one line space should be left between paragraphs

Page numbering

- Ensure all pages are numbered in the same place. Contents and summaries can make longer documents easier to navigate

Writing style

- Avoid abbreviations or spell in full the first time they are used
- Avoid using long sentences and use words and phrases that best suit your audience. Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Aim for around 25 words or less per sentence

Images

- Any images should include Alt Text (alternative text), which will describe the image (or other objects) for people with visual impairments. Alt Text should also be used for tables, graphics, tables and shapes. Alt Text can help when documents need to be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language
- To add Alt Text, right click on the picture and go to > Format Picture > Size and Properties > Alt Text. Type in a description of the picture into the Title and Description boxes. Or, right click and go to > Picture > Alt text
- Do not use images that are of poor quality, have poor colour contrast or contain difficult to read text, or are stretched out of proportion

Hyperlinks

- When including a hyperlink (url) in a Word document, right click the link and go to > edit hyperlink > ScreenTip to include text to display which will briefly describe the link destination

Tables

- Tables must be made using appropriate markup to ensure that they are rendered properly by assistive technologies. Tables must not be used extensively for layout.

- Table headers should never be empty. This is particularly of concern for the top-left cell of some tables. You need to name the first row of your table as a header. To do this, highlight the top header row, click on table tools

- Highlight the first row of your table, then right click and go to > Table Properties > Row > Repeat Header Rows

- Remember to add Alt text to tables by right clicking on the table > Table Properties > Alt Text. Type in a description of the table into title and description boxes

Videos

- All videos must include both video captions and a transcript

To create accessible PDF documents:

PDFs are often hard to navigate or incompatible with screen reading software. It is therefore important to build accessibility into an initial Word document, and to optimise the accessibility of the PDF by using Acrobat Professional (if possible, this is usually paid for).

Where possible, online information should be published as a webpage rather than a PDF.

More information can be found here: www.support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-accessible-pdfs-064625e0-56ea-4e16-ad71-3aa33bb4b7ed?ad=us&rs=en-us&ui=en-us

Alternative formats

It is the responsibility of the person who produces a document to provide alternative formats upon request. Keele University advise therefore that each document must include this statement:

"If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact [insert: name and contact details]"

The contact details provided should be the name of the individual responsible for the creation and maintenance of that document. Two methods of contacting that individual should be given if possible, such as phone and email or postal address and email.

This tagline should go on all documents, including minutes, agendas, student leaflets and so on, as a matter of routine.

As long as it can be clearly spotted, this tagline can be placed at the beginning or end of the document.

Sources

Information in this document has been adapted from:

Keele University (2023) *Accessibility.* Available at :
www.keele.ac.uk/websupport/styleguide/accessibility/ (Accessed: 07.08.23)

Gov.uk (2023) *Digital Accessibility.* www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents (Accessed: 07.08.23)

Further information

www.keele.ac.uk/websupport/styleguide/accessibility/

www.gds.blog.gov.uk/2018/07/16/why-gov-uk-content-should-be-published-in-html-and-not-pdf/

www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact Laura Campbell, l.campbell@keele.ac.uk, Impact Accelerator Unit, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG