

# Accessible Microsoft® Word Documents - Checklist

This document is a quick reference guide to assist you in producing an accessible Word document. For more information see: Making Microsoft Word 2010 Documents Accessible, available at: [www.bradford.ac.uk/lss/documentation](http://www.bradford.ac.uk/lss/documentation).

It is a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to produce documentation that is as accessible as possible. Failure to do this is a disciplinary offence under the University's Code of Practice: Web Based Materials. See [www.bradford.ac.uk/webid](http://www.bradford.ac.uk/webid).

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Adobe Acrobat	If you have the full version of Adobe Acrobat installed on your PC, ensure Word is set up to convert the document correctly to pdf (i.e. to create bookmarks using headings, Document properties and Document structure tags for accessibility etc).
Alternative (ALT) text	Screen readers and Braille displays generally only translate text, so you must add alternative text to all graphics images and tables. ALT text should be brief, but meaningful, eg "Screenshot of printers dialog box, showing the Library printer selected."
Animation	Do not use animated text or flashing / blinking elements which can trigger seizures in those who have photosensitive epilepsy.
Bullets and Numbering	Always use bullets to mark important points, and numbered bullets for lists of instructions.
Colours	When using colours, ensure a high contrast exists. Never have two similar colours next to each other. Do not convey information by colour alone, e.g. see the red text below.
Columns	To create text in columns, don't press the tab key to space out the text. Use a table, or the column feature. Ensure there is plenty of space between the columns.
Complex Layouts	Avoid complex layouts; these may not convert into accessible PDFs because they may not linearize correctly.
Cross References	Use Word's cross reference facility to create links between items in the same document for easy navigation.
Font Size	Text as a rule should be no smaller than 12 point. ( <u>Corporate ID stipulates Arial 12 pt.</u> )
Foreign text	If the document contains foreign text, select it and mark it with the appropriate language.
Graphics	"Group" associated graphics together and then add alternative text to the whole item. If using the square or tight wrapping style, adjust the "Distance from text" to add extra white space.
Headings	Use proper heading styles and make sure they clearly indicate what the following information is about. Use sub-headings to break up large paragraphs of text beneath a main heading.

Hyperlinks	Hyperlinks should be typed in full, so that when the document is printed, users can see what to type into the internet browser's address bar, e.g. <a href="http://bbc.co.uk">http://bbc.co.uk</a> . A screen tip describing the linked resource can be added if desired.
Language	Use clear and simple language which is easy to understand. Avoid jargon, keep sentences short, and always include punctuation.
Paragraphs	Do not have dense paragraphs of text. Space out information to avoid "busy" areas and use bullets to simplify. Use the "Spacing Before" and "Spacing After" paragraph properties instead of pressing the Enter key to add additional space. (If you do use the Enter key to create a blank paragraph, ensure the style is Normal).
Spelling Check	Always spell check documents to avoid problems with screen readers mispronouncing incorrect words.
Styles	Always use styles to format text such as titles, headings, and paragraphs, and use them in a logical order. For example if a document contains Heading 1 and Heading 3 styles but no Heading 2, this may affect the logical reading order of the document when used by a screen reader.
Tables	Design tables so they can be read row by row, ie horizontally. Screen readers and Braille displays read tables row by row across columns, so the table should make sense when read from left to right. Use Word's table feature. Use the Bookmark tool to mark Row and Column headings. Ensure Alt text is added.
Text	People with cognitive disabilities can find dense paragraphs of text particularly difficult to read. Use lots of white space around blocks of text and avoid using all uppercase text, too much underlined, bold or italicised text, or a justified layout.
Text boxes	Avoid using text boxes which can result in the "text" being ignored or read in the wrong place by a screen reader, unless it is part of a grouped image with ALT text.
TOC	Always insert Table of Contents when creating a large document.

### **Accessibility Checker**

Word 2010 has an inbuilt accessibility checker. This allows a document to be checked for any potential issues which may make it less accessible, before it is converted to a PDF file. The report produced lists any potential issues and gives guidance on how they may be corrected.

Click on the **File** tab - **Check for Issues** and select **Check Accessibility**.

An Accessibility Checker pane will appear on screen. The pane is split into section, Errors and Warnings. Errors must be corrected and Warnings may need correcting if necessary.