# **Accessibility Checklist**

The following checklist is intended to be used by faculty as a starting point to ensure electronic course materials are accessible based on WCAG 2.0 standards. Standards indicated in the first four sections apply to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, as well as PDF files and web pages. Links for step-by-step guides to edit document settings are provided at the end of this checklist.

## **Text Elements**

Use [semantic headings](http://accessibility.psu.edu/headings/) in descending order. Use the **Heading 1** level only **once** in a document or a webpage to indicate the title. Other heading levels can be used multiple times. Avoid using more than four heading levels.

Use **sans** **serif fonts** for easy readability (Verdana, Arial, Tahoma).

Use font size of 12-14 points/pixels. If it’s a PowerPoint presentation, use font size of 24 points/pixels or larger.

Use dark font colors on light backgrounds (preferably use black text on white background).

Do not rely on visual characteristics (e.g., font size, shifting to a different font) or color to convey information or meaning.

[Avoid spacial references.](http://www.washington.edu/accessibility/checklist/visual-characteristics/)

Avoid use of CAPITAL LETTERS and *italics*. They are difficult to read.

Use **bold** for emphasis.

Avoid underlining words. They can be mistaken for a navigation link.

Avoid blinking or moving text.

## **Figures (photos, drawings, charts, graphs, tables, images)**

For [“Wrap Text”](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Wrap-text-in-Word-bdbbe1fe-c089-4b5c-b85c-43997da64a12) use “In line with Text” format.

If the image adds meaning to the text, add [alternate text](http://accessibility.psu.edu/microsoftoffice/microsoftalttags/) of 10 words or less.

Do not begin your [alternate text](http://accessibility.psu.edu/images/alttext/) with “This is a photo (or image, etc.) of…” The screen reader lets the user know there is an image.

If an image is decorative (i.e., it doesn’t add meaning or information), add a pair of quotation marks with no content (“”) or a space as alternate text. This lets the screen reader know that the alternate text wasn’t forgotten.

Provide caption for tables, charts, and graphs.

Add [long descriptions for complex images](http://accessibility.psu.edu/images/longdescription/).

For [tables](http://accessibility.psu.edu/tables/), add a header row to distinguish the heading text from the data area of the table.

For [charts and graphs](http://accessibility.psu.edu/images/charts/), supplement color coding with other coding and use text descriptions.

Avoid animated, flashing, or flickering images. If an animation is essential to illustrate a concept, keep the flickering (or color change) out of the 2Hz - 55Hz range (Hz is a cycle per second). Animations within that range can cause seizures and are disruptive for students with cognitive disabilities or low vision.

Avoid using images of text.

## **Links**

Use meaningful, descriptive titles for links rather than a long web address.

[Avoid using “click here” or “for more information” for the links.](http://accessibility.psu.edu/linktext/)

## **Color and Contrast**

If you convey any information via color, you must also communicate it in another way. Never rely on color alone to convey information or meaning.

[Use sufficiently contrasting foreground and background colors](http://accessibility.psu.edu/legibility/contrast/).

## **Videos**

Provide closed-captioning or accompanying text transcript for all videos.

If the video conveys visual information (e.g., demonstration of an experimental procedure, graphs, charts, etc.), add audio descriptions to the captions or to the transcript. [Examples of effective practices for audio description of graphs, charts, and tables.](http://ncam.wgbh.org/experience_learn/educational_media/stemdx/)

Video player required is compatible with multiple operating systems and requires only a standard, free plug-in. If a plug-in is needed, a link to download it is provided.

Students can control the navigation (i.e., the audio doesn’t play automatically and can be stopped at any time).

## **Audio**

A text transcript is provided with all audio files. The link to the transcript is placed near the media file and has a descriptive title.

Students can control the navigation (i.e., the audio doesn’t play automatically and can be stopped at any time).

Audio player required is compatible with multiple operating systems and requires only a standard, free plug-in. If a plug-in is needed, a link to download it is provided.

## **STEM Content**

For math equations in D2L, use the equation editor tool. [Watch video tutorial.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQLiKm4iMq4&feature=youtu.be)

Follow the [guidelines for best practices](http://www.pcc.edu/resources/instructional-support/access/math.html) for Math and Science in Word, PDFs, PowerPoints, and D2L.

### **Step-by-step guides for Microsoft Programs:**

* [Make your Word Documents Accessible](https://support.office.com/en-US/article/Make-your-Word-documents-accessible-D9BF3683-87AC-47EA-B91A-78DCACB3C66D)
* [Make your PowerPoint Presentations Accessible](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-PowerPoint-presentations-accessible-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25)
* [Make your Excel Spreadsheets Accessible](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-Excel-spreadsheets-accessible-6cc05fc5-1314-48b5-8eb3-683e49b3e593)