

Develop accessible Word documents - checklist

Styles

	Edit 'Styles' to format your document – Do not use font formatting to style text i.e. change font type and size manually.
	Style elements (e.g. Heading hierarchy etc.) have a significant role in terms of accessibility – ensure these are used as they have a different look i.e. Heading 1 looks bigger than Heading 2 etc.
	Headings levels should be in correct order i.e. Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3 not Heading 1, Heading 3, Heading 2.

Fonts

	Use 12 point font or larger.
	Use a sans serif font i.e. Arial, Helvetica or Verdana.
	Using italics or upper-case letters for emphasis is not recommended.
	Be consistent with the fonts used in the document.

Colours

	Avoid using colour as the only means of distinguishing information.
	If you are using colour, ensure the information being conveyed can be done without the colour e.g. consider this with graphs etc and if it can't consider an alternative.
	Ensure there is colour contrast e.g. black and white.
	If printing the document use a matte/non-glossy finish.

Spacing

	When starting a new page, use the Insert tab then Page Break or CTRL + Enter. Don't keep pressing Enter to generate space.
	When adjusting spacing do it via the 'paragraph' formatting menu.
	Space between the lines should be at least 25 to 30% of the point size.

Images

	Default the wrapping style of non-text elements as 'in line with text'.
	Ensure any graphics and images have alternative explanatory text.
	Avoid text boxes, Word Art, SmartArt and watermarks as they're inaccessible to screen readers.
	Avoid using watermarks and background images as they can make documents illegible.

Columns

	When inserting a column, use the 'page layout' tab then 'columns'.
	Try to avoid using multiple successive spaces and tabs – assistive technology will not recognise this as a column.

Tables

	When including a table, use the 'insert' tab then 'table'.
	Use correct 'table headings' and 'check' the 'header row' check box.
	If a table extends across a page the heading rows must be repeated at the top of the table on each of the subsequent page/s.
	Avoid merging cells and rows and having empty cells and don't put links or images in tables.

Hyperlinks

	When choosing which word/s to hyperlink, choose the word/s that best describe where you are taking the user.
	Don't use terms such as 'click here' or 'more info' as the hyperlink title.

Graphs and Charts

	Add a short caption preceding the chart or graph that describes the content.
	Provide an alternative presentation of any findings. For many charts, the best alternative format in which to present data is a table with the original figures.

Headers & Footers

	Do not manually type the page numbers. Use the 'insert tab' then 'page number'.
--	---

Remember – once completing your document always run accessibility checker!