



Digital Accessibility Checklist¹

This checklist is a practical tool to help faculty and staff create inclusive, accessible digital content. It reflects best practices and [WCAG 2.2 Standards](#). Use this checklist to evaluate and improve all digital content. Accessibility is an ongoing process—this tool is a starting point.

General Tips

- ☐ Use clear and simple language. Avoid jargon. Explain technical terms using plain language whenever possible.
- ☐ Use 12-point font or higher font size for body text and 9-point for footnote or endnotes in Word and PDF documents.
- ☐ Use sans serif fonts in all downloadable documents (Arial, Calibri, etc.).
- ☐ If you need to emphasize text, use bold rather than underlining.
- ☐ Run built-in accessibility checkers in Microsoft and Adobe. Google tools require a downloaded accessibility check add-on.
- ☐ Create accessible naming conventions by using clear and descriptive names that reflect the content of the file.
- ☐ Check that documents are in their native file format (the default type a program creates).

PDF Tips

- ☐ Avoid using PDFs as much as possible and only use as optional downloads.
- ☐ If using PDFs, ensure they are [tagged and pass accessibility checks](#).

Headings and Paragraphs

- ☐ Organize content with built-in headings styles. Avoid using Bold, Underline, or All Caps to designate sections of a document.
- ☐ Use headings without skipping levels (H1, H2, H3, H4...).
- ☐ Use style buttons (e.g. bullets) for lists.
- ☐ Avoid using Enter/Return to create a vertical space; instead use built-in line spacing options and page breaks.

Color and Contrast

- ☐ Use sufficient color contrast.
- ☐ Do not rely on color to convey meaning.
- ☐ Use simple backgrounds.
- ☐ Avoid using red and blue colors.

Images

- ☐ Write a functional alternative text (“alt text”) for informative images to convey the purpose of the image (including pictures, illustrations, and charts).
- ☐ Mark decorative images (no alt text needed) as such.
- ☐ Provide an equivalent user experience with your alt text (e.g., an appropriate alt text description of a search button would be “search,” not “image of a magnifying glass”).



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Multimedia

- ☐ Caption all video content.
- ☐ Edit and correct all automated captions.
- ☐ Provide a transcript for audio files. Include descriptions of non-speech audio and speaker names.
- ☐ Provide a verbal description of all visual component (graphs, charts, etc.).

Links and Navigation

- ☐ Use descriptive link text (avoid “click here” or “read more” and instead use “Read the 2025 Report”).
- ☐ The link should make sense out of context, as screen readers jump from link to link.
- ☐ If a link will open or download a file (like a PDF), include a textual reference in the link information (e.g., [PDF]).
- ☐ Do not direct links to open in new windows or tabs. If a link must open in a new window or tab, a textual reference should be included in the link information (e.g., [New Tab]).
- ☐ For citations and references, hyperlink the title of the resources, but not the full URL.

Tables and Data

- ☐ Use tables to structure data. Tables should not be used for layout purposes.
- ☐ Create tables with column and row headers.
- ☐ Assign the correct scope to column and row headers.
- ☐ Set correct reading order for tables for screen reading.
- ☐ Label charts and graphs.
- ☐ Include table captions, typically positioned at the top of a table.
- ☐ Avoid merged or split cells in tables.
- ☐ Use adequate cell padding in tables

¹ This checklist is adapted from: Coolidge, A., Doner, S., Robertson, T., & Gray, J. (2018). *Accessibility toolkit – 2nd edition*. BCcampus. <https://opentextbc.ca/>. This document is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International). Users are welcome to distribute, adapt, remix, and build upon the material in any medium or format if they provide attribution to USM Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation and any other identified original authors, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made. Users may not use the material for [commercial purposes](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/), and if users remix, transform, or build upon the material, they must distribute their contributions under the same CC BY-NC-SA license.