

What is meant by ‘accessible Word and Pdf documents’?

Accessible Word and Pdf documents can be read by all users, including those who have disabilities or impairments affecting reading or the use of a computer, or those who use assistive technology to access online information. Accessible Word and Pdf document benefit all students.

It is a requirement under equality legislation to ensure that teaching materials are accessible so that no student is excluded because of a disability. Making your Word and Pdf documents accessible only requires some awareness and probably a shift in your production process, and getting used to it. Accessible documents are easier to maintain, update and convert into other formats.

How can staff help?

By using some easy-to-achieve formatting by default in all Word and Pdf documents, you will maximise readability for all students and facilitate the use of assistive software packages used by some disabled students. There are lots of guides online on how to achieve accessible documents, including from Microsoft and Adobe.

	Avoid	Use
Fonts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times New Roman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arial, Verdana, Universe or Helvetica (San serif fonts) • Size 12 minimum, size 14 is best practice
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • block capitals • italics • underlined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the styles and formatting toolbar (good for screen reading software) • bold for emphasis • plain backgrounds • 1.5 or double spacing • page numbers in the same place on all pages • contents page or summary where possible or appropriate
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully justified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • left justification
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • glossy finish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cream or pastel paper with black print
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large as possible or expanding response area 	