

# Accessibility Best Practices for Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) & Other Documents

## Why make all documents, including ETDs, accessible?

- OhioLINK and other public repositories **require documents to be accessible** to upload. (See [OhioLINK Guidelines for PDF files](#))
- Ensures usability for all readers & expands the reach of your work!
- UC institutional policies follow federal regulations for accessibility, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- All government-funded educational institutions must comply with Title II of the ADA, which mandates that all digital content must be accessible from day 1 after April 2026.

## Word Document Accessibility Checklist

- ✓ [Use Styles to Create Headings](#) for document structure and navigation.
  - [Use the Navigation Pane](#) to review headings and to navigate the document.
  - [Customize or create new styles](#) to meet formatting requirements (spacing, font, etc.).
- ✓ [Generate a Table of Contents](#) from your Headings with just a few clicks.
- ✓ Create Lists using [built-in List tools](#)
  - [Define bullets, numbers, and multilevel lists in Word](#)
- ✓ Add [descriptive alt text](#) to all images to provide a text equivalent for users who can't access your images.
  - Visit the [Microsoft Alternative Text Support Page](#) to learn how to add alt text for all images, shapes, charts, graphics and objects that convey information.
- ✓ Use [meaningful link text](#) so your readers understand where links take them.
  - Do not insert URLs unless required. If you insert URLs, include a short description of the link.
- ✓ [Insert real equations or formulas in Word](#) (not images of math).
- ✓ [Create accessible tables in Word](#) using built-in table properties like Header Row and alt text.
- ✓ Improve accessibility with the [Microsoft Accessibility Checker](#) in Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Run the checker while you write to ensure accessibility along the way.
- ✓ **Manual checks are needed** for:
  - Headings
  - Lists
  - Links
  - Use of color: must use more than color alone to convey meaning
  - Images of text
  - Remove comments, resolve tracked changes and turn off tracked changes before exporting or posting.

## PDF Accessibility Checklist

- ✓ Make the document accessible in the source program *before* exporting it to PDF.
- ✓ [Create accessible PDFs](#) from Word: “Save As” .pdf format with the “Document structure tags for accessibility” option checked.
- ✓ Avoid image-only PDFs.
  - To test: click into the text. If you cannot select the text, it’s an image-only PDF.
- ✓ Use Adobe Acrobat Pro for accessibility checks.

## Multimedia Accessibility Checklist

- ✓ Provide accurate, synced [captions](#) for videos & transcripts for audio files (podcasts, etc.).
- ✓ Use Kaltura MediaSpace or YouTube to generate machine captions & edit them to ensure accuracy.
  - Machine captions are generated for all content uploaded to Kaltura. [Use the Editing Captions Tool in Kaltura](#) to edit your captions.
  - If your content is already in YouTube, you can [Caption YouTube Videos in Kaltura](#).
  - You can also [generate machine captions and edit them in YouTube](#).
  - Include a text description of video content if the visual content in a video is critical to understanding.

## About LaTeX

- ✓ Use accessibility packages to create document structure, tags, and alt text
- ✓ Use Adobe Acrobat Pro for accessibility check after export to PDF

## Resources & Support

Scan the QR codes below to watch a recording of the UC Graduate College’s accessible ETD workshop or download a digital version of this flyer.

<a href="#">Video: Accessible ETDs Workshop</a>	<a href="#">Digital Checklist with Resource Links</a>
	

Still have questions? Contact the Digital Access Team at [DigitalAccess@uc.edu](mailto:DigitalAccess@uc.edu) for assistance.