

Creating accessible PDFs

This guidance explains how to create accessible PDFs. This is important to ensure that people using additional technologies to read documents are able to do so effectively, e.g. people who are blind or visually impaired.

If a student is using assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software or screen-reading software it may be possible for the software to read PDF documents. However, some screen-reading software may be unable to read from a pdf containing a simple scanned image of text. The pdf needs instead to include the words themselves.

This accessible format can be achieved by converting the scanned text to a Word document.

See [Instructions for converting PDF documents into Microsoft Word](#) using either Adobe Acrobat DC or Adobe Acrobat XI.

If Adobe Acrobat is not available and you do not have a word-processed document containing the text you will need to type the text into MS Word or similar, making sure you use paragraphs and standard heading styles.

See [General guidance on producing accessible pdfs](#).

If the pdfs are converted from PowerPoint slides, follow the guidance to create accessible PowerPoints, then after converting to PDF:

- Add the reading order. Choose Tools > Accessibility > Reading order. Firstly mark up the figures and paragraphs, then the Background/Artefacts (decorative images) and headings.
- Assign a scope to any table headers. In Tools > Accessibility > Reading order, right-click within the table and select Table Editor. Select first row of

table cells by holding down Shift and clicking in each cell. Right click within these and select Table Cell Properties. Select Header cell and Scope: Column and click OK.

- Choose Tools > Action Wizard > Make Accessible > Start. This will run through the document, you can add alternative text or mark as decorative here. It will bring up any issues at the end.