



**Edge Hill
University**

Library and
Learning Services

Accessibility Best Practice Student Guide





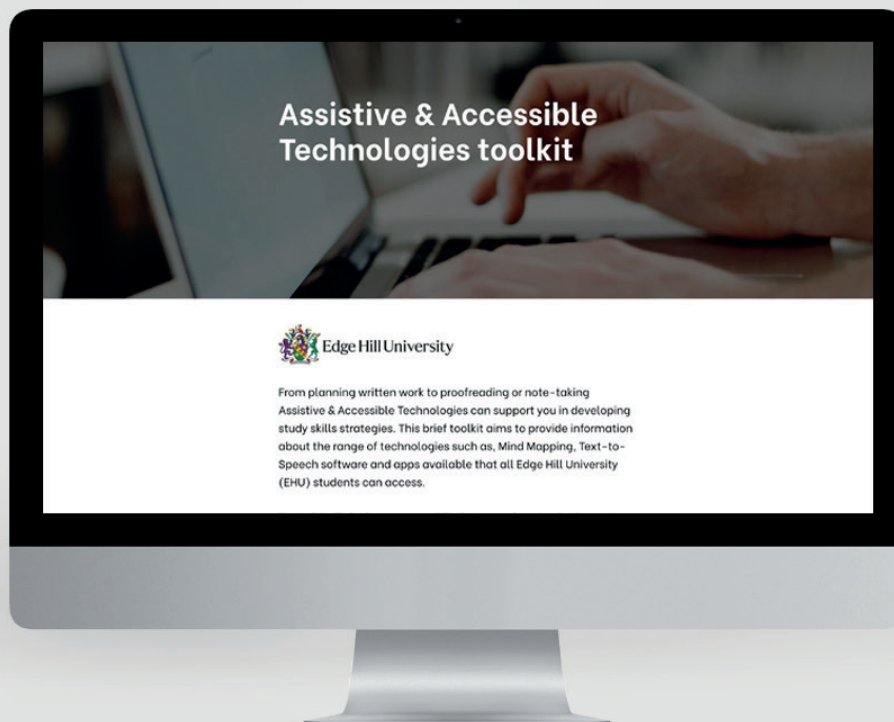
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Introduction

Accessibility is an important consideration for staff and students at the university. This guidance aims to collate some useful information and resources to support students to develop in their accessibility practices.

Content created accessibly using universal design principles benefits all users and enables those using specialist software to access the content using a variety of tools that support multisensory and metacognitive learning.

The university has a range of accessible technologies available to staff and students, [The Accessible and Assistive Technologies Toolkit](#) provides an overview of these helpful productivity tools.





Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word has many features built-in that help people with different abilities to read and author documents. It is important you understand how to make your documents accessible at the point of creation.

The following guidelines will help you make your documents more accessible from the outset:

- Use **built-in headings and styles** to add structure to your documents in a logical order (Heading 1, Heading 2 etc.) [Microsoft video tutorial 'Don't change font use Quick Styles'](#).
- Add descriptive **Alternative Text** ([alt text](#)) to images, shapes and charts to help those who use screen readers (right click on image and select edit alt text).
- Ensure there is sufficient [contrast between the font colour and the background colour](#). A black font on a pale background provides a good contrast.
- **Font size:** use good contrasts and a readable font size, 14 point is recommended (fonts of 12 point size are considered small) and choose a 'sans serif' font which is easier for most people to read such as Arial, Verdana, Calibri, Universe and Helvetica ([AbilityNet provides more information about Point size](#)).
- Use [meaningful hyperlink text and screen tips](#). Links should convey clear and accurate information about the destination rather than saying 'click here' or similar. For example: 'Visit the [Making MS Word Documents Accessible](#) page for more information'.
- Use a [simple table and structure](#), specify column and header information.
- Use **Bold** to emphasise items and avoid italics and underlining.
- Use [accessible file names](#) in Microsoft Word.
- Use **bulleted** or **numbered** lists to help break up text.
- Do not [use colour](#) or [spatial position](#) as the only way to convey content or meaning.



Microsoft PowerPoint

You can make your PowerPoint slides accessible by following a few best practices. PowerPoint comes with a large selection of accessible templates; these can save you lots of time as accessible templates already have the right colours for contrast and have simple easy to read fonts.

Learn more about accessible PowerPoints through the resources below:

- [Using colour, style, and templates to improve PowerPoint accessibility.](#)
- [Use readable fonts and good design for clearer and easier comprehension.](#)

Further Information

- **Microsoft Office Video Tutorials** – [Getting started with Microsoft 365.](#)
- Microsoft Office 365 [Accessible Templates.](#)



Ally Alternative Formats

[Ally Alternative formats](#) provide greater opportunities for everyone to access the information they need in the way they need or want it. With alternative formats all students can access resources that are built to target the needs of the individual student. For example, students have converted lecture slides to audio, listening to them during their commute to help with revision.



Microsoft Accessibility Assistant

Another useful tool to support the creation of accessible documents and content is the Microsoft Accessibility Assistant. This is available throughout the suite of Office 365 applications and is enabled by default at the university.

The Accessibility Assistant can support you in creating accessible documents from the point of design and this approach will ensure people can utilise content using a wide range of assistive and accessible technologies.

[Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker - Microsoft Support](#)



Emails

It is important to consider accessibility in our communications to ensure all recipients can access content equitably. People may read emails in different ways on different devices, and it is useful to think about some key considerations when composing emails.

- Make your subject line relevant to the email content.
- Add structure to emails using descriptive headers. This enables all users to navigate content quickly and breaks down information so users can visually scan information or use assistive technology to navigate effectively.
- Font size: use good contrasts and a readable font size, 14 point is recommended (fonts of 12-point size are considered small) and choose a 'sans serif' font which is easier for most people to read such as Arial, Verdana, Calibri, Universe, and Helvetica
- Avoid using all capital letters and excessive use of italics or underlines as this can be difficult to read and impact on the comprehension of the content.
- Ensure there is sufficient colour contrast between the foreground text and the background colour.
- When including a hyperlink use meaningful text to convey clear and accurate information about the destination. Avoid using phrases such as click here or see this page when including hyperlinks as this does not convey any meaning for users accessing via Screen Readers or Text to Speech technologies.
- If you're including images in your emails, make sure you add descriptive alternative text to your image. Disabled users may be accessing this content using Screen Readers or Text to Speech software that will read out the alt tags on the images.
- When writing your email, please ensure you use clear simple language so all recipients can understand. Use shorter sentences that are concise. Avoid using jargon and abbreviations or explain any terms that may be unfamiliar when they are first used.

[Video: Improve email accessibility - Microsoft Support](#)



Further Guidance and information on accessible tools and practices:

- [Google Workspace user guide to accessibility - Google Workspace Admin Help](#)
- [Accessibility - Apple \(UK\)](#)
- [Accessibility - Microsoft \(UK\)](#)