



Guide for PDF Accessibility

Creating accessible PDFs ensures that all users, including those with disabilities, can access and interact with your documents effectively. Based on updated regulations in [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), our current focus is to ensure that Radford University's web presence is accessible to all audiences. As part of this initiative, we are making a concerted effort to update our PDFs to meet accessibility standards and provide an inclusive experience for all users.

PDF Evaluation Questions

Before using the guide, use the questions below to evaluate the PDF and make necessary changes before checking for accessibility:

- Is the PDF still relevant or needed?
- Is the contact information current? (name, e-mail, phone, location etc.)
- Have there been any name changes to anything mentioned in the PDF? (department, college, club, organization etc.)
- Does the PDF contain copyrighted material and, if so, can a link be provided to the external source in place of having a PDF?
- Is this a scanned document?

Accessibility Checker

Adobe Acrobat Pro DC is a tool used for checking and improving PDF accessibility. It provides an accessibility check and tools to address identified issues.

To use Accessibility Checker:

1. Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat.
2. In the top left, select **All tools** and then select **Prepare for accessibility**.
3. Select **Check for accessibility**.
4. Select **Start Checking**.
5. The **Accessibility Checker** pane will open and describe items that have passed or failed the accessibility checker.

Guide to Fixing Common Accessibility Issues in PDFs

Setting a Title and Language

Issue: The document title is not showing in the title bar and/or a language has not been set.

- Select **Menu** in the top left-hand corner and choose **Document Properties**.
- Check to make sure a title is in the **Title** field under the Description tab.
- Select the **Advanced** tab and then make sure **English** is language is selected under Reading Options.

Alternative Text (Figures, Images, and non-text elements)

Issue: Figures in the document lack alternate text.

Issue: Non-text elements (e.g., buttons, form fields) missing alternate text.

Issue: Alternate text not linked to any content.

Issue: Alternate text hiding annotations.

Issue: Unreadable alternate text.

- Right-click and choose **Edit Alt Text**.
- Enter a descriptive text that conveys the meaning of the figure.
- Repeat for all figures in the document.
- Ensure that each alternate text is associated with a relevant non-text element.
- Review and adjust alternate text so it does not obscure annotations.
- Ensure all alternate text is meaningful and can be read by screen readers.

Tables

Issue: Tables missing header rows or columns.

- Select the table in the PDF.
- Right-click and choose **Table Editor**.
- Designate the first row or column as a header.
- Ensure the headers are correctly tagged.

Issue: Inconsistent column and row numbers in tables.

- Edit the table to ensure uniformity in the number of columns and rows.

Issue: Table headers (TH) and cells (TD) incorrectly placed.

- Ensure that all 'TH' and 'TD' elements are nested within 'TR' tags.

Issue: Table rows (TR) incorrectly placed.

- Ensure that all 'TR' elements are nested within 'Table', 'THead', 'TBody', or 'TFoot' tags.

Lists

Issue: Incorrect list structure.

- Ensure that all 'Lbl' and 'LBody' elements are properly nested under 'LI' tags.

Issue: List items (LI) incorrectly placed.

- Ensure that all 'LI' elements are nested within 'L' tags.

Tags/Nesting

Issue: Some page content is not tagged.

Issue: The document is not a tagged PDF.

Issue: Untagged annotations.

Issue: Untagged form fields.

Issue: Incorrect nesting of elements

- Open the **Tags** pane in Adobe Acrobat Pro DC.
- Right-click and select **Add Tags to Document**.
- Review and correct any tagging issues manually.
- Ensure elements are correctly nested according to the document's logical structure.
- Tag all annotations in the document.
- Tag all form fields in the document.

Reading Tab Order

Issue: Inconsistent tab order.

- From the **All tools** menu, select **Prepare for Accessibility** and then **Fix reading order**.
- In the Reading order menu, select **Show Order Panel**.
- Drag the item tags in the panel to the correct location in the list.

Bookmarks (Large Documents)

Issue: Missing Bookmarks

- Bookmarks must be included if the document has 21 or more pages.
- Scroll to the page you want to bookmark and select the area on the page to place the bookmark.
- Click the add bookmark button and name the bookmark.

Form Field Descriptions

Issue: Form fields missing descriptions.

- From the Prepare Form Panel, right click the field and select Properties.
- On the General Tab, ensure the Tooltip box is completed with the information that describes what needs to be entered to complete the field.

Document is Not Image-Only PDF

Issue: Document is image-only. Screen readers cannot read any of the document since it is scanned or saved as a images.

Solution:

- Use OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to convert images to text.
- Find the original document and save this original as PDF using the native tool that was used to create the document.
- Create a new document.

Contact the Technology Assistance Center or put in a **Get Help** ticket online at www.radford.edu/itonestop if you have any questions or need additional assistance.