Accessible Materials Checklist

This checklist supports the creation of an accessible Microsoft Word document. The built-in Word accessibility checker will identify many issues, but not all, so using this checklist as a supplemental tool may be helpful.

Accessibility Checker

Run the accessibility checker

- ☐ Run the checker (Files, Check for Issues, Check Accessibility) on the completed document. This report will alert you to issues. Please note that this is only a tool. The tips below are essential in creating an accessible document.
- ☐ Identified issues have been addressed and corrected.

Text Formatting

Use Heading Styles to Convey Structure

- ☐ Major headings in the document are structured using **Heading styles**.
- ☐ Headings are used to divide content into meaningful sections, not to format text.
- ☐ Use **Heading Levels** in a logical order.
- ☐ If the **Heading 1** style has been used for the document title, it should be used only once in the document.
  - o The **Heading 2** style is used for each subsequent major heading.
  - o The **Heading 3-6** styles are used for each sub-heading and sub-sub heading.
  - o The heading styles must be used in order without skipping (ex. Heading 4 is a child of Heading 3, not Heading 2).

Use Short Titles in Headings

- ☐ Document headings are short (fewer than 20 words or limited to one line).

Generate a Linked Table of Contents and Add a Cover Page for Longer Documents

- ☐ An up-to-date and accurate linked table of contents has been provided if the document is more than eight pages.
- ☐ A cover page has been included when the document is more than eight pages.

Use List Formatting

- Styles have been used to create lists in the document.
- The **List Number** style was used for ordered lists (lists where an order is important).
- The **List Bullet** style was used for unordered lists (lists where an order is not important).

Use Breaks for formatting

- Page and section breaks are used instead of using the "**Enter**" key to create spacing and white space.

Non-Text Elements (Pictures, Images, Charts, etc.)

Provide Alternative Text for All Non-Text Content

- All non-text elements (pictures, images, clip art, shapes, SmartArt, charts) have alternative text descriptions that convey the same information to the user that the image or picture conveys except for the following:
  - The alternative text description for decorative images has been left blank.
  - If the non-text content is a test or exercise that would be invalid if presented in text, the text alternative should at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.
- Alternative text does not start with "Image of" or "Photo of." Instead, use clear and descriptive language to convey the content of the image.
- Alternative text has been put into the description field.
- Alternative text has been limited to 125 characters.

Provide Additional Descriptions for Complex Images/Charts

- Complex charts and graphs that require additional explanation (beyond what can be provided in the alternative text area) have been further described and explained in the surrounding text.

Place Graphics and Images "In Line With Text"

- The "wrapping style" of non-text elements has been set as "In Line with Text."

Watermarks: Ensure Adequate Contrast and Add Text in the Document

- Watermarks should only be used for a legitimate business purpose and must meet the following requirements:
  - When possible, text-based watermarks have been used instead of image-based watermarks.
  - The text of the watermark has been exposed by either adding the text of the watermark to the beginning of the document or by including the text in the file name.

- o Adequate contrast exists between the text color and the color of the watermark.

Avoid the Use of Images of Text

- ☐ Information has been presented as text rather than using images of text except where a particular presentation of text is essential to the information being conveyed (i.e., logotypes).

Tables

Do Not Use Tables for Layout Purposes

- ☐ Tables have been used to display truly tabular data and not for layout purposes.

Do Not Draw Tables

- ☐ Tables have been created using the **Insert Table** tool.
- ☐ The **Draw Table** tool was not used.

Do Not Use Heading Styles in Tables

- ☐ No heading styles have been used within a table.
- ☐ Decorative formatting of the table headings (larger, bold font, etc.) has been accomplished with the formatting buttons on the toolbar.

Split Complex Tables Up into Simpler Tables Where Appropriate

- ☐ Tables with complex structures (i.e., multiple heading rows) have been split up into smaller and simpler tables where appropriate.

Simple Table Structure Was Used

- ☐ Cells in the table have not been merged or split.

Control White Space in Tables Using Table Properties

- ☐ White space within tables has been controlled by adjusting the cell margins or cell padding within the table.
- ☐ The "**Enter**" key was not used to create white space.
- ☐ The use of blank cells to format the table was avoided.

Rows of a Table Breaking Across Pages

- ☐ Every effort has been made to ensure that table rows are not allowed to break across pages.

Set Header Row(s) to Repeat in Tables

- ☐ The header row(s) of a table has been set to "**Repeat as header row at the top of each page**" regardless if the table spans multiple pages.

Add Text Alternatives for Tables

- ☐ Alternative text for tables has been entered.
- ☐ All captions have been placed above their respective tables.

Hyperlinks

Use Text for Hyperlinks Rather Than URLs

- ☐ Links within the document have descriptive text that describes the target destination of the link rather than the URL.
- ☐ The URL has been included in parentheses (but is not an active link) after the descriptive text if the document is intended for both electronic and print distribution.

Ensure Link Text is Descriptive and Makes Sense When Read Out of Context

- ☐ The link text used to describe the link destination makes sense when read out of context.
- ☐ "**Click here**" or "**more**" have not been used as link text.

Ensure Link Text Is Identical for the Same Destinations and Unique for Different Destinations

- ☐ Multiple links that have the same target destination have the same descriptive link text.
- ☐ Links with different purposes and destinations have different descriptive link text except where two links that serve different purposes need to point to the same destination.

Do Not Use Text Boxes

- ☐ The visual effects of a text box have been achieved by using a bordered paragraph.

Do Not Use Drop Caps

- ☐ Drop caps (where the first letter of a paragraph is a large decorative letter) have not been used.

Headers and Footers

Observe the Following Rules for Header/Footer Content

- ☐ Content within the header/footer area conforms to the following criteria:
  - o Acceptable: running headers, logos, page numbers, and copyright messages.
  - o Unacceptable: document title, author or contact information, date of document update, or document version number (unless the information has also been included on the cover page or at the beginning of the first page of the document).

Appropriate Use of Text Miscellaneous Notes

Do Not Use Color Alone to Convey Information

- ☐ Information or emphasis conveyed with color is also available or expressed without color.

Text Has Adequate Contrast to Background

- ☐ Text and background colors have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 (large text that is ≥14 point and bold or ≥18 point can have a ratio of 3:1).

- ☐ If links are differentiated by color alone, the contrast ratio between the link color and the surrounding text color is at least 3:1.

Control White Space in the Document with Styles
- ☐ Document white space has been controlled through the use of styles and before/after paragraph spacing.
- ☐ The "**Enter**" key was not used to create white space within the document.

Appropriate Fonts Have Been Used
- ☐ Sans Serif fonts* are used throughout the document.
- ☐ Body text is adequately sized (depending on the font used, it should be no smaller than 12 point and when possible use 14 point).

Use Column Formatting Instead of Tabs and Spaces
- ☐ Columns have been created using the Column tool.
- ☐ Spaces and tabs were not used to create the appearance of columns.

Tagged PDF
Create a Tagged PDF
- ☐ The PDF creation process was followed to ensure the output of a tagged PDF.

*San Serif fonts are considered fonts that do not have dashes at the end of each letter. Times New Roman is not a San Serif font, but some popular san serif fonts are: Calibri, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica now, Public Sans, Open Sans, to name a few.