

Improving Accessibility in Your Thesis, Project, or Dissertation

Reach a wider audience by following a few simple steps for creating accessible pdf files for posting in ScholarWorks.

Best Practices

When you upload your Word document to ScholarWorks, the ScholarWorks platform converts your Word file to a pdf file. In most cases, reading order, tags, and other tools for accessibility are automatically inserted. But there are steps you can take to make sure your final document is as accessible as possible.

1. Use the Graduate Studies Full Manuscript Template when you format your thesis. Use the pre-formatted heading styles and update the table of contents using the auto update feature. Follow the template instructions for best results.
2. Add alternate text to images, such as figures, photos, and screenshots.
3. When you create tables, make sure to include header rows.

Adding Alt Text to an Image in Microsoft Word

- Right click on the figure or image. In the dialogue box, click on View Alt Text.
- This action will open a sidebar where you can add a description of the image or mark the image as decorative. When the document is converted to a pdf file, mousing over the image will reveal the alternate text.

Alt Text

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?

- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

Generate alt text for me

☐ Mark as decorative

Checking Accessibility in Acrobat Pro (pdf doc)

You can check accessibility and make corrections with the Check Accessibility tool in Adobe Acrobat Pro. This is recommended if you didn't use the Graduate Studies template to format your document. Follow the instructions provided by [Adobe Acrobat](#).

More Accessibility Tips

CSUSB is committed to making information accessible to all students. Below is a list of tips to help make your thesis, project or dissertation more accessible. Many of the tips listed are integrated into the Graduate Studies formatting template.

- Use the “Styles” function in Microsoft Word to create headings in your document. This automatically creates a reading order on the page that is used by screen readers.
- When you create the table of contents, use MS Word’s automated table of contents functions to automatically create links from the headings in your table to the document. This creates an easy way for readers to navigate your document and improves accessibility.
- When creating tables, use the “Insert, Table” function in MS Word.
- Add alt text to images.
- Use high-contrast colors in tables and figures. Stay away from red: this color is difficult for some people to see.

For more information, visit [Accessible Technology Services](#).