Word Document Accessibility Checklist

Guidance	Description	Test
File name is descriptive	Descriptive file names are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial to all users to find your document.	1. In the File tab, select "Save As." 2. At the top of the window, select "Enter file name here." 3. Type in a descriptive file name.
Document title is descriptive	Descriptive file names are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial to all users to find your document.	1. In the File tab, select "Info." 2. Find the "Properties" section on the right-hand side. 3. Select "Add Title." 4. Type in a descriptive title.
File is in .docx format	The .docx format is required for users who rely on assistive technology and a best practice for all users across devices.	1. At the top of the Word window, click on the document's name. 2. In the pop-up window, ".docx" should appear to the right of your file name. 3. If your document is not a .docx file, click File. 4. Select "Save As." 5. In the file type, select the drop down menu and select "Word Document (*.docx)"
File is not protected	Unprotected files are necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and easier to use for all users.	1. In the ribbon, select the Review tab. 2. On the far-right side, click "Protect." 3. Select "Restrict Editing." 4. Uncheck all boxes in the pop-up window.

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Document headings use Microsoft Styles	Stylized headings are necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and a best practice for all users to easily navigate your document.	1. Place cursor in front of the text. 2. In the Home tab on the ribbon, navigate to Styles. 3. Select a Style for the appropriate content (example: Heading 1 style should only be used for H1s).
Headings follow a logical order	Logical headings are required for users who rely on screen readers to navigate a document and a best practice for all users.	1. Click the Search bar at the top of the window. 2. Search "Navigation Pane." 3. Click "Navigation Pane." The pane will appear on the left side of the screen. 4. Ensure all headings, subheadings and other content is organized in the pane based on the correct reading order and organization.
Visual headings match Word styles	Stylized headings are necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and a best practice for all users to easily navigate your document.	1. To set Style appearance before typing content, right-click Style and select "Modify." Enter preferences into the pop-up window and click "OK." 2. To change appearance to match pre-typed content, right-click the selected Style and select "Update to Match Selection."

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Empty headings are avoided	Empty headings are misleading for users who rely on assistive technology and distracting for all users.	1. Click the Search bar at the top of the window. 2. Search "Navigation Pane." 3. Click "Navigation Pane." The pane will appear on the left side of the screen. 4. Confirm that no blank items appear in the Navigation Pane. 5. If empty/blank items appear in the Navigation Pane, click on them and delete them from the document.
Font is easy to read	Easy-to-read font is necessary for users with disabilities to engage with your content and preferred by all users.	1. Visually confirm that all content is easy to read. 2. Adjust font type, size and spacing as required in the Home tab of the ribbon.
Plain language text is used	Language at the third-grade reading level is the standard for all users and preferred by all users, regardless of education level.	1. Write simply, in short sentences and active voice. 2. Avoid jargon, abbreviations and terminology. If they must be included, explain them. 3. Check your reading level using the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Evaluation.
Content is free of spelling and grammar issues	Correct content is necessary for all users to understand and engage with your document.	1. Proofread all of your content to ensure it is clear and accurate. 2. Make corrections as needed.

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Line spacing is at least 1.5	Line spacing is necessary for users with visual impairments and beneficial for all users' readability.	1. In the ribbon, navigate to the Home tab. 2. Find the Paragraph section. 3. Click the "Line and Paragraph Spacing" icon. 4. Select 1.5 or higher from the drop-down menu.
Text shadows are avoided	Unshadowed text is necessary for users with visual impairments and beneficial for all users' readability.	1. In the ribbon, navigate to the Font section. 2. Select the "Text Effects and Typography" icon. 3. Hover over the Shadow option in the drop-down menu. 4. Click or ensure "No Shadow" is selected.
Sans-serif fonts are used	Sans-serif fonts are necessary for users with cognitive or visual impairments and beneficial for all users' readability.	1. In the ribbon, navigate to the Home tab. 2. In the Fonts section, click the dropdown arrow beside the line that displays a font name. 3. Select a sans-serif font from the list. Auburn recommends Arial font. Other sans-serif fonts include Aptos, Calibri and Helvetica.
Font size is 11+	Large font size is necessary for users with visual impairments and beneficial for all users' readability.	1. In the ribbon, navigate to the Home tab. 2. In the Fonts section, click the dropdown arrow beside the line that displays a number. 3. Select a font size of 11 or higher from the dropdown list.

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Lists are formatted correctly via ribbon	Formatted lists are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for all users when navigating a document.	1. Find the Paragraph section of the ribbon. 2. Click or visually check that the List option is highlighted.
Columns are formatted correctly via ribbon	Formatted columns are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for all users when navigating a document.	1. In the ribbon, navigate to the Layout tab. 2. Select Columns. 3. Select the desired Column type from the dropdown. 4. For existing columns, select the column and ensure the Columns option is highlighted in the ribbon.
Tables are not used for layout purposes	Tables used for layout purposes are confusing for users who rely on screen readers and bad form for all users' readability.	1. Remove Tables used for layout purposes. 2. Refer to formatting Columns.
Table layouts are formatted correctly	Correctly formatted tables are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for all users' understanding of the content.	1. Right-click the table. 2. Select "Table Properties." 3. Find "Text Wrapping." 4. Select or ensure "None" is selected. 5. Test reading order by using the Tab key to navigate the table. The cursor should move from left to right, up to down.

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Table headings are designated	Table headings are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for all users' understanding.	1. Select full heading row or column. 2. Right-click full heading row or column. 3. Select "Table Properties." 4. Select Row or Column tab. 5. Check "Repeat as header."
Table rows do not break	Unbroken table rows are necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and beneficial for all users' readability.	1. Select full heading row or column. 2. Right-click full heading row or column. 3. Select "Table Properties." 4. Select Row tab. 5. Uncheck "Allow row to break."
Table does not contain split, merged or empty cells	Split, merged or empty cells are confusing for users who rely on assistive technology and misleading for all users.	1. Find split, merged or empty cells within the table. 2. Right-click cells. 3. Select "Delete."
Table is accompanied by Alt Text	Alt text is required for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for content transference.	1. Right-click the table. 2. Select "Table Properties." 3. In the pop-up window, select the Alt Text tab. 4. Input a descriptive title. 5. Describe the contents and purpose of the table in the Description box. 6. Click OK.

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Text is formatted for the intended language	Correct language formatting is necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for content creation.	1. In the Ribbon, select the Review tab. 2. Click the Language icon. 3. Select "Language Preferences." 4. In the pop-up window, confirm that the listed languages match the intended language. 5. To add a new language, select the "Add New Language" button.
Link names are descriptive	Descriptive link names are necessary for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for all users.	1. Find a hyperlink in your document. 2. Draft a phrase or sentence that describes the destination or description of the link. 3. Highlight your descriptive phrase. 4. Navigate to the Insert tab of the Ribbon. 5. Select the Link dropdown arrow. 6. Select "Insert Link." 7. Paste the link or email address into the pop-up menu's corresponding tab. 8. Click OK.
Vital information in headers, footers and watermarks are duplicated in the document	Vital information is required to appear in the document to be read by screen readers and easier to note for all users.	1. Identify any vital information contained only in headers, footers or watermarks. 2. Include this information in the text of the document.

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Data tables are created using built-in features	Data tables that are built accessibly are necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and preferred by all users.	1. To insert a table, select the Insert tab on the Ribbon. 2. Click "Table." 3. In the dropdown menu, use the grid tool to "draw" a table or select "Insert Table" to select the number of rows and columns.
Images and visual objects have alt text	Alt text is required for users who rely on screen readers and beneficial for content transference.	1. Right-click image or visual object. 2. Select "View Alt Text." 3. Write or edit Alt Text in the pop-up window.
Images and visual objects are accompanied by a caption	Captions are necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and beneficial to all users' understanding of the content.	1. Identify images and visual objects in the document. 2. Draft a caption that explains the purpose or importance of the image or visual object. 3. Position the caption logically near the visual object.
Decorative images must be marked	Unmarked decorative content is misleading for users who rely on assistive technology and bad practice for establishing branded content.	1. Right-click the decorative image. 2. Select "View Alt Text." 3. In the pop-up window, check "Mark as decorative."
Images, objects and text boxes are in line with text	In-line content is necessary for users who rely on assistive technology and preferred by all users.	1. Select the image, object or text box. 2. In the Ribbon, navigate to the Picture Format tab. 3. Select "Position." 4. Select "In Line with Text."

Guidance	Description	Test
Colors/visual characteristics that convey information are also described with text	Information conveyed only by color or visual characteristics is impossible to understand for users with visual impairments and harder to note for all users.	1. Identify where you use colors or visual elements to convey information. 2. Include this information in the written text of the document.
Color contrast ratio between text and background is sufficient	Adequate color contrast (4:5:1 for 13–16-point font and 3:1 for 18+ point font) is necessary for users with visual impairments and preferred by all users.	1. In the Ribbon, select the File tab. 2. Select "Print." 3. In the Print menu, select the "Grayscale" option. 4. Content that is hard to see in grayscale will likely not pass color contrast ratio standards. 5. Check specific color ratios by using a color contrast checker.
Color contrast between images/graphics and adjacent colors is sufficient	Adequate color contrast for images and graphics against adjacent colors (3:1) is necessary for users with visual impairments and preferred by all users.	1. In the Ribbon, select the File tab. 2. Select "Print." 3. In the Print menu, select the "Grayscale" option. 4. Content that is hard to see in grayscale will likely not pass color contrast ratio standards. 5. Check specific color ratios by using a color contrast checker.

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Embedded files (multimedia) have transcripts, text descriptions, synchronized captions and/or audio descriptions	Multiple versions of content can be necessary for users with disabilities and preferred by all users.	1. Identify all multimedia content in your document. 2. Instead of embedding multimedia content, consider hosting it on a website (such as YouTube or the college's news website) and linking to it in the document. 3. All video content must be accompanied by captions and a version that includes audio descriptions. 4. All audio content must be accompanied by a transcript or text description.
Forms are avoided	Forms are hard to navigate for all users in this format.	1. Avoid using Word to create a form. 2. Use Adobe Acrobat Pro to create an accessible form.
Flashing objects are excluded	Flashing objects are dangerous for users with disabilities related to epilepsy or seizures and disruptive for all users.	1. Visually confirm that your document contains no flashing objects. 2. If your document contains flashing objects, select and delete them.