



Guide to producing Accessible and Alternative Formats

Disability Advice

If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact

disabilityadvice@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Alternatively you may be able to use [SensusAccess](#) to convert this document in to your preferred format:

<http://bit.ly/librarydisability> and click the 'Accessible Resources' tab

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An Introduction to Accessible and Alternative Formats

Our University has a legal and moral responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to provide all information in an alternative format if requested by a disabled person. We also have a duty to anticipate the needs of disabled people by ensuring all information is produced in the most accessible way possible.

It is impossible to make anything 100% accessible to everyone, as making alterations in one way may make materials accessible for one person but inaccessible for another. In addition, the requirements of disabled people, including those with similar disabilities may be significantly different.

Top tip:

In order to account for this it is important that **all** information (e.g. marketing material, documents, minutes, agendas, etc.) contains the following tagline:

'If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact [insert: name and contact details]. Alternatively you may be able to use [SensusAccess](#) to convert this document in to your preferred format: <http://bit.ly/librarydisability> and click the 'Accessible Resources' tab'

The contact details provided should be the name of the individual responsible for the creation and maintenance of the document. If you as the creator receive a request for an alternative format and you are unsure of what to do, please contact the Disability Advice Team; we will be happy to help you.

Examples of Alternative Formats

Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of the types of alternative formats that may be requested are:

- Large Print
- Braille
- Text to be displayed on a coloured background
- An electronic copy of a hardcopy resource or vice-versa

The individual requesting the alternative format will generally have a good idea of what they require, but if you are unsure how to make an item accessible or what action you need to take, please contact the Disability Advice Team; we will be happy to advise you.

Who is responsible for covering any additional cost?

The University is responsible for providing and paying for any additional costs incurred when information needs to be provided in an alternative format. The individual requesting the alternative format should never be asked to pay additional costs incurred.

It is likely that you will save both time and money if information is created with accessibility in mind. We have therefore produced some self-help guides to creating information in accessible and alternative formats.

Top tip:

Produce documents in Microsoft Word rather than PDF whenever possible, as this is more accessible and offers the user more flexibility to change the settings as required

Alternative Formats

SensusAccess

Our University subscribes to SensusAccess, a self-service web based tool which Leeds Beckett students and staff can use to automatically convert inaccessible documents into a range of alternative formats, including MS Word, accessible PDF, audio, eBooks and digital Braille. For full details of SensusAccess go to <http://bit.ly/librarydisability> and click the 'Accessible Resources' tab.

If you would like a demonstration of SensusAccess, you can book an appointment with the Library Learning Support Officer by clicking the 'Book an Appointment' link at <http://bit.ly/librarydisability>.

Providing Information in Large Print

This is a commonly requested alternative format and is relatively cheap and easy to produce when you follow a few simple steps.

1. Firstly ensure you keep a MS Word version of all information produced as it is easier to alter the font size in Word than when the document is presented in another format, e.g. PDF
2. Check what font size (and font type) the individual requires
3. Open your Word document, highlight all text and then press the 'Increase Font Size' button (next to the font size drop down menu) until all text is at least as big as the size that has been requested (any titles which are larger will remain proportionately larger than the rest of the text)
4. Check that the line spacing and formatting of the document is as you would like it to appear
5. Email or send a printed copy of the document to the individual who has requested the alternative format

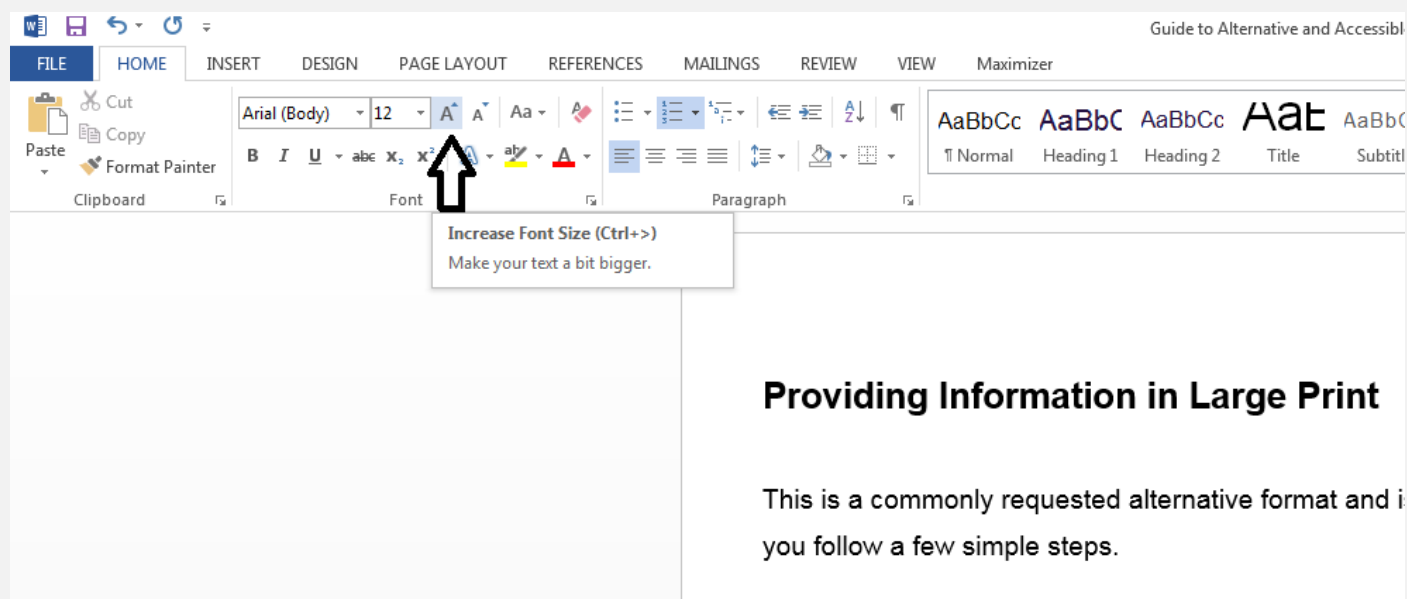


Figure 1: Screenshot of page when 'Increase Font Size' button is selected

Providing Information in Braille

The number of requests for providing information in Braille has decreased as technology has developed and the use of screen readers has become much more popular. Screen readers enable users to read any text on a computer screen.

However, there are still a number of visually impaired people who only use or prefer to use Braille.

The process for converting a document into Braille is fairly complex and the University does not have the in-house facilities to produce Braille documents so outsources all requests. If you receive a request for a Braille document, contact Disability Advice who will be able to assist you.

Providing Information in Audio Format

Leeds Beckett University has a site licence for Texthelp Read & Write, this software can be used to read aloud text presented on-screen and there is also a 'Speech Maker' option which allows any text to be converted in to a sound file and saved on a CD or as an MP3 file. (Remember: SensusAccess can also be used to create audio versions of text documents.)

The software is available to students on all PC's and Laptops in the Library. Staff can install the software via the software centre or by contacting the IT Service Desk.

The Disability Advice team, Disability Assessment Centre staff and the Library Learning Support Officer are able to show staff and students how to use this software. You can book an appointment with the Library Learning Support Officer by clicking the 'Book an Appointment' link at <http://bit.ly/librarydisability>.

Providing Information on a Coloured Background

This is a commonly requested alternative format and is relatively cheap and easy to produce when you follow a few simple steps.

Electronic Documents

If you are sharing a relatively small number of documents and you know which colour is required by the individual requesting the alternative format, you could change the background colour within the individual MS Office document using the 'design' tab.

Adobe Reader has accessibility settings which can be used to change the background colour of PDF documents if they were created in an accessible way. An instructional guide is available at <http://bit.ly/librarydisability> on the Software tab.

Leeds Beckett University has site licences for Texthelp Read & Write and Pro-Study software, both of which have a screen masking tool which can be used to change the background colour of any information displayed on the screen.

The Disability Advice team, Disability Assessment Centre staff and the Library Learning Support Officer are able to show staff and students how to use this software. You can book an appointment with the Library Learning Support Officer by clicking the 'Book an Appointment' link at <http://bit.ly/librarydisability>.

Hardcopy Information

1. Ask the individual which colour they require and whether they would prefer a brighter or a pastel shade
2. Source the paper from your departmental stock, the University Print Room or order from the University stationery supplier
3. Print the document on the required paper and pass it to the individual who requested the item

Leeds Beckett Library Alternative Formats Service

Some students cannot access printed text due to a print impairment. This is often a visual impairment or physical condition or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

For these students the Library offers the Alternative Formats Service. The Alternative Formats Service works in partnership with students and their course team to obtain books on reading lists in an accessible format from publishers and other organisations (it is not always possible to source everything on a reading list).

These are usually PDF files which can be modified by the student to ensure that they meet their access requirements. The Library Learning Support Officer can show students how to do this. It can include having files read aloud using screen reading software, changing formatting such as text size, font style and colour, scanning and converting them into audio files.

The Alternative Formats Service is only available to students who have a recommendation for it in their Reasonable Adjustment Plan. The Library Learning Support Officer will contact these students with further information about the service. If you know a student who you think would benefit from the Alternative Formats service and they are not yet aware of it, please encourage them to contact Disability Advice (disabilityadvice@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) to enquire if they are eligible.

This video "[The Alternative Formats Service at Leeds Beckett University Library: A Student Perspective](#)" is a short interview with an Alternative Formats student, who explains how the service has supported him with his academic studies.

Accessible formats

Word Documents

Accessibility Checker

Use the Microsoft Word 'Check Accessibility' tool on the Review tab of the toolbar before publishing. More information is available on the [Microsoft Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker page](#).

Styles and headings

Use the styles and formatting toolbar in Word when structuring your document as this will make it easier for users to adapt the document to meet their needs and to navigate around the document if using a screen reader.

Where possible, avoid using textboxes, this can interfere with the accessibility of the information for those using screen readers.

Font size

Use a minimum font size of 12pt

Font type

Use Sans Serif Fonts (i.e. Arial or Calibri) and ensure use the same font consistently

The more ornate the font, the fewer the number of individuals who will be able to read it. For example, 'Word Art' is not compatible with some screen readers.

Capitals, bold, underlining and italics

Avoid using italics, colour or underlining for emphasis – use **bold** instead

Contrast and text colour

- Ensure that text is in a dark font and that the background is pale in order to provide a clear contrast
- Use an off-white or cream background rather than a white background to ensure that the contrast is not so stark that it causes discomfort

Alignment

- Use left alignment
- Do not use justified text as this makes the spaces between words uneven which can make it difficult for some individuals to read. By aligning to the left you ensure the spaces between words are equal

Line spacing

- Double or 1.5 spacing between lines can make a document more accessible
- One line space at least should always be left between paragraphs
- If you are creating a form; the larger you make the response areas the better

Paper type

- Avoid the use of glossy paper or laminating documents
- Ensure paper is thick enough that the text doesn't show through when printed on both sides or avoid printing on both sides

Document Navigation

- Page numbering: To ease accessibility (and usability) ensure all pages are numbered in the same place
- Adding in contents and summaries can make longer documents easier to navigate

Content

- Limit the amount of information to what is absolutely necessary and avoid long sentences
- Ensure the language used and information presented is appropriate to the intended recipient
- Use bullet points and short sentences
- Use plain and unambiguous language, avoiding the use of abbreviations, where possible
- Break up large amounts of text with clear headings and subheadings

Pictures, Graphs and Images

- Avoid putting text over images – if this is unavoidable ensure you use a gradient or a semi-transparent layer between the text and the image to 'smooth' the image so that the text can be read more clearly
- Provide text-descriptions for pictorial elements or graphs

PowerPoint Presentations

Content

Top tips to ensure accessibility when writing your slides are:

- Limit the amount of information on each slide and avoid long sentences
- Use bullet points
- Use plain and unambiguous language, avoiding the use of abbreviations, where possible
- Provide text-descriptions for pictorial elements or graphs
 - To do this, right click on 'Image', select 'format picture', click 'web tab' and then add in the description and click 'OK')
- Provide subtitles/written script for any audio elements

Design

The way slides look and the order of the information on the slide is very important. Top tips to ensure accessibility when designing your slides are:

- Check the order of information in the 'outline view' to ensure the information flows correctly when accessed via a screen reader
- Avoid using textboxes, this can interfere with the accessibility of the information for those using screen readers
- Avoid animations or sounds if they are not crucial to conveying the content of the presentation, this can interfere with the accessibility of the information for those using screen readers or those individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing
- Ensure that text is in a dark font and that the background is pale in order to provide a clear contrast
- Use an off-white or cream background rather than a white background to ensure that the contrast is not so stark that it causes discomfort
- Use a sans serif style font (e.g. Arial or Calibri)
- Ensure font size 24+ is used for the content of the slide and that titles are size 45+ and bold
- Avoid using italics, colour or underlining for emphasis – use **bold** instead
- Avoid placing text over images

Handouts

It is good practice to ensure PowerPoint slides are available to view in good time (at least 48 hours) prior to the session. This will enable those who require additional time to read, process and understand written information sufficient time to prepare for the session.

This allows each individual to highlight key pieces of information and annotate the slide with important points or topics without requiring them to attempt to write everything down.

This will also allow them to ensure that the format of the presentation is accessible and enable them to make any necessary adaptations or to request an alternative format, if needed.

Delivering Accessible Lectures/Tutorials/Presentations

Before the lecture/talk

- Ask those individuals due to attend the session if they have any access requirements to enable full participation in the session
- When cancelling sessions or making room changes it is good practice to give this information in two or more ways, e.g. email, notice on the door, etc. and to give as much notice as is practicable
- Ensure the room is accessible by lift/ramp and that there are seats/spaces available on the floor (if in a lecture theatre)
- Ensure the hearing induction loop is switched on (if there is one)
- Try and limit background noise as much as possible
- Be familiar with the lighting in the room and ensure there is always sufficient light to enable note taking
- Ensure PowerPoint presentations are created with accessibility in mind and that they are available to all attendees prior to the session

During the lecture/talk

- Advise attendees of any scheduled fire alarms
- Make attendees aware of where they can find the nearest toilet facilities
- Advise attendees of the approximate time of any planned breaks and allow individuals to take a break and leave the room if they need to
- Give a warning prior to exposing individuals to auditory or visually stimulating information (e.g. sudden/loud noises and/or strobe/flashing lights)
- Use a microphone
- Aim to remain in a static position facing the class
- Provide an overview at the beginning and a summary at the end
- Summarise at regular intervals and if you detract from the main topic, or if there is anything you are unable to cover, offer individuals the opportunity to talk to you about it after the session
- Repeat key pieces of information and any questions or comments received from the floor
- Allow attendees to make an audio recording of sessions
- Utilise the University's facilities for lecture capture

- Provide a written back up of any key pieces of information (e.g. deadlines, information relating to assignments, etc.)

Multimedia

- Ensure any video clips are audible and can be clearly seen from the back of the room
- Ensure any audio information is subtitled or a written transcript is provided

End of the lecture/talk

- Summarise the session
- Allow attendees to ask questions
- Provide contact details so that attendees can contact you with any future queries

Inclusive Assessment and Individual Reasonable Adjustments

Our University has a legal and moral responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to anticipate the needs of disabled people by ensuring all modules and associated assessment methods are designed in the most accessible way possible.

It is, however, impossible to make anything 100% accessible to everyone, as making alterations in one way may make a module or assessment method accessible for one person but inaccessible for another. In addition, the requirements of disabled people, including those with similar disabilities may be significantly different.

Should a disabled student be unable to access and fully participate in a module and/or demonstrate their knowledge/ability via the chosen assessment method, we also have a duty to make individual reasonable adjustments.

It is important to note that there is no duty to make any adjustment to the application of a 'competence standard', but the duty does apply to the process by which competence is assessed. Competence standards are usually linked to a regulatory or professional body requirement and are defined as 'an academic, medical or other standard applied by or on behalf of a [Higher Education Institution] for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.'

For example, Nursing students need to demonstrate the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requirements that a qualified nurse is capable of independent practice.

Reasonable Adjustments must not affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes, but may involve, for example: changing usual assessment arrangements; adapting assessment materials; providing adjustments or support during assessment; re-organising the physical environment for the assessment and using assistive technology.

It is recommended that course teams work in collaboration with the student and the University's Disability Advice Team to explore options which will satisfy the requirements of the course and the needs of the individual student.