Georgia Tech · College of Design
Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation

Document Accessibility Checklist

MICROSOFT EXCEL

This quick guide was created by the Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI) to provide the key strategies to create accessible Microsoft Excel documents in a checklist format. For a full how-to-guide with screenshots and examples, refer to CIDI's Document Accessibility Guide: Microsoft Excel.

Checklist

1. Descriptive Labels and Titles

- ☐ Create titles that are clear and descriptive for data sets, tables, and worksheets.

  Example: Rename **Sheet1** as **Students by Program**.

2. Logical Reading Order

- ☐ Use a predictable reading order from left to right.
- ☐ Enter data in consecutive cells in a grid.
  - Avoid blank cells.
  - Do not merge or split cells.
- ☐ Add text to cell A1, such as a table title or an overview of the sheet contents.
  - Please note that screen readers begin reading on cell A1. If the cell is blank, the screen reader will read out "blank" or "empty cell."

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI)
512 Means Street | Suite 250 | Atlanta, GA 30318
Phone: (404) 894-8000 | Toll-Free: 866-279-2964

A Unit of the University System of Georgia • An Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Institution

3. Column Headers

- ☐ Provide descriptive column header and row header labels that clearly identify the data within the column or row.

4. Formatted Data Tables

- ☐ Use **Format as Table** under the Style section within the Home tab to create accessible tables.
  - Select the data range that is to be included in the table starting with the row that has the column headers.
  - Choose banded rows with sufficient contrast for readability.
  - Select the **My table has headers** option when creating a table.
- ☐ Center the data table's title across the data table without merging cells.
  - Enter a title in the row above the data table.
  - Select the range of cells where the title will be centered. Go to the alignment section and choose more alignment options. Under horizontal text alignment choose the option **Center Across Selection**.

5. Table Names

- ☐ Provide meaningful names for tables to help screen reader users navigate tables within a spreadsheet.
  - Click on a cell within a table.
  - Select the Table Design tab at the top of the workspace.
  - Enter a descriptive name for the table in the **Table Name** field located at the top left of the Table Design tab.

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI)
512 Means Street | Suite 250 | Atlanta, GA 30318
Phone: (404) 894-8000 | Toll-Free: 866-279-2964

A Unit of the University System of Georgia • An Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Institution

6. Color and Contrast

- ☐ Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background colors.
- ☐ Use Excel's **Color Contrast indicator tool** or **High contrast only** feature when choosing font and fill colors to ensure sufficient contrast between text and background.
- ☐ Check **Color and Contrast** within the Accessibility Assistant to improve the contrast of any text flagged with **Hard-to-read text contrast.**
  - Avoid using color alone to convey meaning.
  - Do not use red and green color combinations, which are problematic for people who have red-green color blindness.
- ☐ Insert borders around all cells to help with visual focus.

7. Font Selection and Symbols

- ☐ Use sans serif fonts such as Calibri, Aptos, or Arial.
- ☐ Use a font size of at least 12 pt.
- ☐ Use symbols that screen readers will read aloud, such as an asterisk (*) rather than a period (.) for redacted information.

8. Hyperlinks: Accessible Link Text

- ☐ Add descriptive link text to URLs to create accessible hyperlinks. Highlight or select the URL, go to the **Insert** tab and choose **Links > Insert Link**. Enter the descriptive text in the **Text to display** entry field. Example: **2023 SPP/APR Submission, Part B — Alaska**.
- ☐ Indicate if the link opens a new window or performs a function. Example: **Download Assessment Report**.
  - Avoid using "Click here" for link text.
  - Avoid using vague link text such as "Read More."
  - Do not display URLs in text.

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI)
512 Means Street | Suite 250 | Atlanta, GA 30318
Phone: (404) 894-8000 | Toll-Free: 866-279-2964

9. Alternative Text Descriptions

- ☐ Add concise, descriptive text to all images, charts, and graphs; this is called alternative text, or alt text.
- ☐ Mark images with no purpose other than visual decoration as “decorative.”
- ☐ Use 120 characters or fewer (approximately 1-2 complete sentences).
    - Avoid the phrases “image of” or “picture of.”

10. Accessibility Assistant

- ☐ Fix any issues flagged by the Accessibility Assistant.
    - To access the Accessibility Assistant, either select **Check Accessibility** under the Review tab or select the **Accessibility** icon  at the bottom left corner of the workspace.

Need additional assistance? Our team of accessibility experts is here to help. Whether you have questions, would like to schedule a training, or need guidance on the upcoming deadline for the new Title II regulations, please reach out to our Customer Support team at cidi-support@design.gatech.edu, call (404) 894-7756, or book a free consultation through CIDI’s online form. Our team can help assess options and determine level of effort and resources required to meet your needs.

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI)
512 Means Street | Suite 250 | Atlanta, GA 30318
Phone: (404) 894-8000 | Toll-Free: 866-279-2964