

MS Office Accessibility for Word, Excel & PowerPoint course syllabus

Learn to create accessible and 508 compliant PDFs from PowerPoint, Word, & Excel

Creating Accessible PDFs from Microsoft Office

This comprehensive course teaches a complete approach to creating accessible PDFs from Microsoft Office applications: PowerPoint, Word, and Excel. Gain the knowledge and hands-on practice needed to ensure documents are accessible before and after export. Learn to format and build documents that meet accessibility requirements, use document structure, headings, tables, lists, images, and alt text. Learn how to export files into accessible PDFs and use Adobe Acrobat to test, verify and repair structure. This course teaches repeatable workflow for producing compliant, user-friendly PDFs.

Course Topics

1. Foundations of Document Accessibility

- Principles of accessibility in professional communications
- WCAG 2 overview and legal/compliance drivers
- Key differences between Office file accessibility and PDF accessibility
- Why accessible source documents are essential

2. Tools for Accessibility Across Office

- Accessibility Checkers in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Automated vs. manual testing
- Interpreting common accessibility errors and warnings
- Introduction to Adobe Acrobat for verification and repair

3. Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

- Using Accessibility Assistant checker and manual review
- Slide structure and reading order
 - Correct use of layouts and sections
 - Adjusting reading order with the Selection Pane
 - Managing global design with the Slide Master
- Images and alternative text
 - Writing meaningful alt text for images and charts
 - Handling decorative images correctly
 - Managing complex images, SmartArt, and PDF conversion
- Tables and lists in slides
 - Creating structured tables that remain accessible in PDF
 - Using lists for clarity and accessibility
- Links, columns, and language settings
 - Descriptive hyperlinks

- Managing multi-column layouts
 - Setting document language for assistive technology
- Exporting PowerPoint to accessible PDF
 - Save As vs. Export vs. Acrobat PDF Maker
 - Preserving tags, reading order, and headings

4. Creating Accessible Word Documents

- Accessibility Checker in Word
- Headings and styles
 - Applying built-in heading styles
 - Ensuring logical hierarchy for navigation in Word and PDF
- Images and alternative text
 - Writing alt text for inline and floating graphics
 - Handling decorative images
- Tables and lists
 - Creating accessible tables with header rows
 - Avoiding merged or split cells
 - Using bulleted and numbered lists correctly
- Links, columns, and language settings
 - Writing descriptive hyperlinks
 - Managing multi-column layouts
 - Defining document language
- Exporting Word to accessible PDF
 - Best practices for retaining structure, tags, and alt text
 - Troubleshooting export errors

5. Creating Accessible Excel Workbooks

- Accessibility Checker in Excel
- Worksheet structure and navigation
 - Logical tab and sheet order
 - Naming worksheets clearly
 - Defining titles and headers
- Tables and data presentation
 - Creating structured tables with header rows
 - Using named ranges for navigation
 - Avoiding blank rows, merged cells, and inaccessible layouts
- Charts and alternative text
 - Writing alt text for charts and graphs
 - Adding descriptive labels for data visualizations
- Links and language settings
 - Creating descriptive hyperlinks
 - Setting worksheet language for screen readers
- Exporting Excel to accessible PDF
 - Preserving headers and tags
 - Adjusting print areas and scaling for accessibility
 - Testing output for accuracy

6. Cross-Application Best Practices & Verification

- Consistency of accessibility practices across Office programs
- Writing effective alt text across documents, slides, and spreadsheets
- Ensuring headings, lists, and tables remain usable across applications
- Troubleshooting export issues specific to each Office program
- Verifying final PDFs in Acrobat Pro
 - Checking structure and reading order
 - Repairing tags and tables when needed
 - Hiding decorative content properly
- Building a repeatable workflow for Office-to-PDF accessibility

[Custom, private, and corporate accessibility courses](#)

This MS Office accessibility course is also available as a private class. Curriculum can be customized for your specific needs. Classes can be delivered at your location, online, or in our classrooms. For more information, call 781-376-6044 to speak with an American Graphics Institute training consultant or [contact us](#).

Learn more about this [MS Office accessibility course](#).