Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS)

Accessibility Center for Education, Consultation, and Support Services (ACCESS)

PDF Document Accessibility Testing Checklist

Each level requires document creators to develop their accessibility skillset by adding more manual testing and validation. Each level includes and builds off of the items in the preceding levels (e.g., Level 2 encompasses the items in Levels 1 and 2, Level 4 encompasses the items in Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4).

- Level 1: Run automated tests and fix any errors found
- Level 2: Manual verification of visible content
- Level 3: Manual verification of document properties
- Level 4: Preparing to finalize

PDFs

Level 1:

- ☐ Was the automated accessibility checker used?
- ☐ Were any errors found fixed?

Level 2:

- ☐ Is there only one Heading 1 present?
- ☐ Are all headings in order and nested properly?
- ☐ Is the reading order of each page logical?
- ☐ Are the font choices clear, legible, and do they adhere to font size recommendations (12 pts minimum)?
- ☐ Are sans serif fonts used for the body text?
- ☐ Is all hyperlink text unique and descriptive?
- ☐ Is the use of color only to indicate meaning avoided?
- ☐ Do all images have meaningful alt text and graphics irrelevant to the content set as decorative?
- ☐ Are clear completion instructions including identification of required fields for forms included at the top of every form?
- ☐ Do all tables have a header row and/or a header column?
- ☐ Are tables avoided for visual formatting of content?

Level 3:

- ☐ Does the document contain proper metadata (e.g., title, language)?
- ☐ Is the content visible in high contrast mode and dark theme?
- ☐ Are images of text avoided?
- ☐ Are the tags accurate for the content and the order of tags accurate?
- ☐ Are all tables simple with no merged, split, or empty cells or multiple header rows?
- ☐ Does each table have a descriptive caption or associated title?
- ☐ Do form fields have appropriate tooltips, descriptions, and tags?
- ☐ Do form field tooltips match visible labels for form fields?
- ☐ Are all interactive components actionable using just a keyboard? (tab to navigate, space/enter to activate and typing or using arrow keys to complete fields)
- ☐ Is keyboard focus visible with an outline around the element such as a link or button?
- ☐ Do focusable elements receive focus in a meaningful order left to right, top to bottom?
- ☐ Does the color contrast between text and background, link text and background, and graphics and background meet 4.5:1 for text and 3:1 for large text and images minimum contrast requirements?

Level 4:

- ☐ Are text alternatives provided for complex charts and graphs?
- ☐ Are empty paragraphs and empty tags removed?
- ☐ Are graphics clear and understandable in grayscale?
- ☐ Is language translation provided for critical information?

Document Change Control

Version No.	Revised by	Effective Date	Description of Changes
1.0	ACCESS Team	August 1, 2025	Initial document