# Author Guidelines

If not already, including accessibility requirements within author submission guidelines is recommended, and even if this is already something in place, then this guidance can help optimise the advice you give to authors. Authors are often the best person to handle many accessibility features, such as ALT text (especially for technical images), producing accessible charts and graphs, and structuring tables.

The following auditing checklist, from our manual checking guidance, has been modified and annotated with some specific requirements that authors can be asked to handle.

## Text

1. Do not include any images of text, but if this is absolutely essential, replicate the text in ALT text.
2. All text colours have to have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 to the background. You can check this with the WebAIM Contrast Checker.
3. Headings must use the style tags within the authoring software you are using (such as Heading 1 etc), not just highlighted using larger or bold text. They must be describe the section they title well enough to use them alone to navigate the document. Just use a single Heading 1 per document, don't skip levels, for example, a Heading 4 underneath a Heading 2, and do not use Heading 7 or higher.
4. If specifying fonts, they must be Unicode fonts.
5. Headers, footers, notes, page numbers and references use the function within the authoring software you are using, not just with visual adjustments on the page, such as inserting line dividers manually.

## Non-Text

1. Provide a separate document giving ALT text for all figures/images and charts/graphs, referencing their title and your chosen ALT text. Please see this guidance for support writing ALT text:

   - W3C Image Tips and Tricks

   - W3C ALT text decision tree

   - Alt-texts: The Ultimate Guide

2. Colours used in figures/images and charts/graphs have to have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1. You can check this with the WebAIM Contrast Checker.
3. Figures/images and charts/graphs have multiple ways of conveying meaning and do not just rely on one way, such as colour. Additional options include icons, symbols, shapes, patterns, dotted lines, or additional text.

4. Links should have unique text that ensures users understand the purpose, context and relevance of the link, either from the link text alone (ideally), or from the immediate surrounding context of the link. Exceptions are PIDs such as URLs and DOIs in references, which are shown in full. Do not include the word 'link' anywhere in this.
5. Do not use images of tables, but use the table function within the authoring software you are using.
6. Other non-text content, such as mathematical equations, are tagged using an appropriate method (e.g. LaTeX).
7. Any decorative artefacts, such as borders, line dividers, or repeating decorative images are tagged as such. The process for doing this will depend on the authoring software you are using (e.g. Microsoft Word).

# Navigation

1. Check that the reading order through the document is correct, using the tools provided by the authoring software you are using. The reading order should not impact on meaning in any way, for example, make a decision as to whether a table is best moved through row by row or column by column to maximise understanding.
2. Use consistent navigation elements, such as page numbers being the same on each page or a similar level of heading used for similar, repeating sections.

# Metadata

1. Provide effective titles and language choices (both the overall document, and if the language changes at any point within it) within the file metadata. You should be able to check and edit this in the authoring software you are using.