

Author Guidelines for Working Papers and Research/Thematic Reports

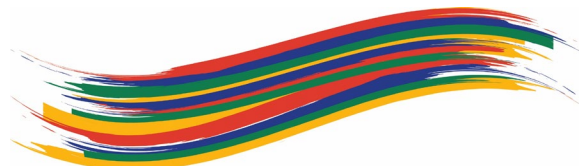
Thank you for your interest in submitting working papers or research/thematic reports to the EDID-GHDI partnership. To streamline the process, we have provided the following guidelines for authors. As an Ontario-based website, we need to ensure that all website documents comply with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) to ensure accessibility for all users. Please let us know if you have any questions as you are drafting your document.

Information to provide

- Authors' names and affiliations in the order that you would like them included
- Contact info for authors (to be published with the document if desired)
- Title of the document
- Date of copyright

Formatting the document

- We will provide a cover page and back page with the EDID-GHDI design and logo.
- We encourage you to use fairly simple formatting—excessive design and formatting may prevent the document from being accessible by a screenreader.
- Your document certainly can include detailed tables and images/graphics, but please follow the guidelines below for ensuring the tables and images are accessible.
- If you create the document in Word, please provide us with the MS Word file rather than a PDF so that we can remediate for accessibility before we convert it to a PDF that also meets accessibility requirements.
- If you do choose to have your paper designed in a program such as InDesign and saved as a PDF, please ensure that you work with a designer who is familiar with and can follow accessibility guidelines for designing documents. If we find that the designed document does not meet accessibility standards, we may have to request that you go back to the designer to correct it.
- Avoid using underlining for emphasis as the underlined text could be confused with a hyperlink.
- Reference any citations using the author's name and year in APA style: see [APA Style](#).



- If needed, use footnotes for information, but not for referencing.
- **Create your Word document following accessibility guidelines provided in this document under “Creating an accessible MS Word document.”**

Please check your submission carefully for

- Accuracy of spelling of names and organizations
- Spelling out an abbreviation the first time it is used
- Accuracy of references
- Inclusion of hyperlinks when possible to improve access to references
- Inclusion in the reference list of all items cited in the text

Creating an accessible MS Word document

Creating an accessible MS Word document allows the document to be more easily converted to an accessible PDF. To ensure that the Word document is accessible, use Word’s Accessibility Checker (see Review > Check Accessibility on the Word menu). Caution: The Accessibility Checker does not flag all of the following guidelines, so follow this list as you create the document to ensure it is as accessible as possible.

File Title

Give the file a more meaningful title than the filename to allow a user to be aware of the document’s intent or content. Go to File > Info and enter the title in the space labelled “Title” on the right side of the screen. Note: This does not have to be the same as the actual title at the top of your document, but it may be.

Headers and Footers

Screenreaders may not be able to read the content in headers and footers, so do not use them for important information. An exception is that you should use footers for page numbering at the top or bottom right.

Headings

Use Word’s heading styles for all headings. Use Heading 1 for the main title at the top of the document, then use Heading 2 for the main heading levels in the document, Heading 3 for the next levels, and so on.

Make sure all heading levels are styled (avoid bolding a lower-level heading without a Word style).

Note: Do not use Word’s Title style.



Hard Returns

Do not use multiple hard returns to provide space between headings or paragraphs or to move content to a new page. Instead, modify the Heading or paragraph (Normal) style to include that space, and use Insert > Page breaks to move content to a new page.

Lists

Use Word's numbered and bulleted lists rather than just indenting items to make a list.

Images and alt-text

Use the Alt-text (alternative text) function to describe all images OR mark them as Decorative (right click on the image and "View Alt text"). Alt-text can be typed under the image in the document (clearly marked as alt-text rather than a caption) or included as alt-text in the image itself. [More information about writing alt-text](#) can be found in the University of Guelph's LibGuide Create an Accessible Word Document.

In addition, the image layout option needs to be "Inline with text" rather than using any of the wrapping options.

Tables

Do not use complicated tables with merged or empty cells. Mark the first row as a Header Row using the Table layout function.

Do not use tables to format regular text into columns—instead, use the Column feature.

Text Boxes

Screen readers may not read the content in Text Boxes. Instead, use the Borders feature on the Word menu (as we've done here) to put lines around a paragraph that you want to highlight.

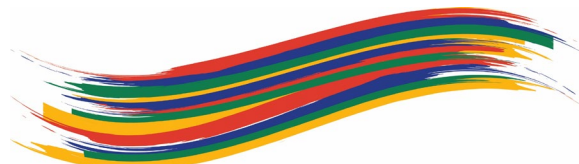
Colour

Make sure colour contrast is sufficient for text to be readable. Use a colour contrast analyzer such as [WebAIM's Contrast Checker](#) to ensure that coloured text is readable, and that coloured text and a coloured background are sufficiently contrasted.

Do not use colour alone to indicate meaning, as some users may not be able to distinguish the colours.

Hyperlinks

A screen reader can skip from link to link to help a user find meaningful resources. Hyperlink meaningful text rather than using the full URL, as the screen reader will read out every letter of the URL (e.g., Use "Read about how to [create accessible hypertext links](#)" rather than "Read <https://www.nysed.gov/webaccess/create-accessible-hypertext-links>").



Do not repeat uninformative hyperlinks such as “Check this out” or “Learn more” in a document as they provide no distinguishing information when the user skips through the links.

If you want to provide the full URL for a printed document so users can go to the URL, hyperlink the meaningful text and then provide the URL, but make sure the URL itself isn’t hyperlinked. E.g., “Read about how to [create accessible hypertext links](https://www.nysed.gov/webaccess/create-accessible-hypertext-links) (https://www.nysed.gov/webaccess/create-accessible-hypertext-links).”

Further Resources

- [UofG’s Create an Accessible Word Document](#)
- [AODA Compliance for Documents - The Ultimate Guide](#) (by accessiBe)

