

PDF Accessible Check in Adobe Acrobat Pro

Version 3 posted 6/10/2026

Beginning Spring 2026, graduate students must submit their thesis, dissertation, or report with a passed accessibility check report. These checks ensure that manuscripts are accessible to a wider audience when published in the institutional repository.

Adobe Acrobat Pro's full accessibility checker includes 32 options, but for Spring 2026, only 10 checks are required. Adobe Acrobat Pro should be used primarily as a secondary checker to identify accessibility issues. Some checks, like document title or text language, can usually be fixed directly in Acrobat Pro. Other checks, like Figure Alt-text or tables, need to be fixed in the original Word document. To ensure long-term accessibility and prevent file corruption, accessibility issues should be resolved within the original (native) document whenever possible, such as Microsoft Word, rather than in the exported PDF alone. ETD coordinators should contact the students about these issues.

Any questions regarding ETD policies can be directed to the Graduate School at gradschool@uh.edu.

Other accessibility questions can be directed to the Digital Accessibility Team in the Office of Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) at eos@uh.edu or accessibility@uh.edu.

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Adobe Acrobat Pro Access

On-campus Adobe Acrobat Pro Access Location

Adobe Acrobat Pro can be used to run the Accessibility Checker and generate the accessibility report required for your submission. If you do not have access to Adobe Acrobat Pro on your personal computer, University of Houston provides Adobe Acrobat Pro at the following on-campus locations:

Writing Center

Adobe Acrobat Pro is installed on three computers in CBB 226.

Students can email John Ebersole directly at (jieberso@cougarnet.uh.edu) to set up date/times to use the computers, or students can simply make appointments using the [Writing Center self-service appointment system](#).

Graduate School Bates Law Suite 15

A computer is available in the Graduate School Office with Adobe Acrobat Pro installed. Inquire at the front desk about access during regular business hours.

Download Adobe Acrobat

If you have access to an Adobe Acrobat Pro license, here is the process for downloading and installing the software. Adobe Acrobat Reader and Adobe Acrobat Pro are the same installer; different licenses and login unlock the Pro features.

Steps:

1. Go to <https://helpx.adobe.com/download-install/kb/download-install-acrobat-subscription.html>
2. Select **Download Adobe Acrobat**.
3. Download the desktop version for your operating system (Windows or Mac).

Figure 1. Download Adobe Acrobat (Pro)

Let's get you the right app

Already an Acrobat Pro or Acrobat Standard subscriber?



Download Adobe Acrobat Pro or Adobe Acrobat Standard.

[Download Adobe Acrobat](#)

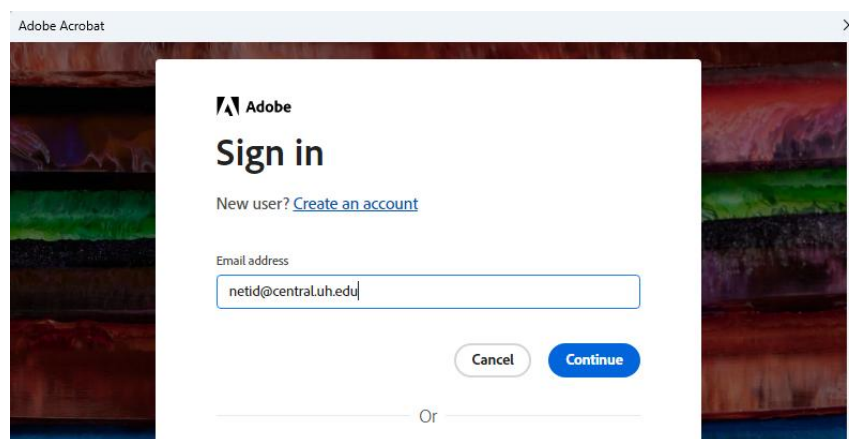
Follow the instructions to sign in and install your subscribed version of Adobe Acrobat. If you're on the free trial page, sign in to download your subscription version. Play a quick [video](#) to learn more.

Log in to Adobe Acrobat Pro

1. Open Adobe Acrobat.
2. Sign in using your Adobe account email address.

Note: Once logged in successfully, you will see the Home screen of Acrobat Pro.

Figure 2. Sign in Adobe Acrobat Using <Central.UH.EDU> Email as the Example



Additional Resources:

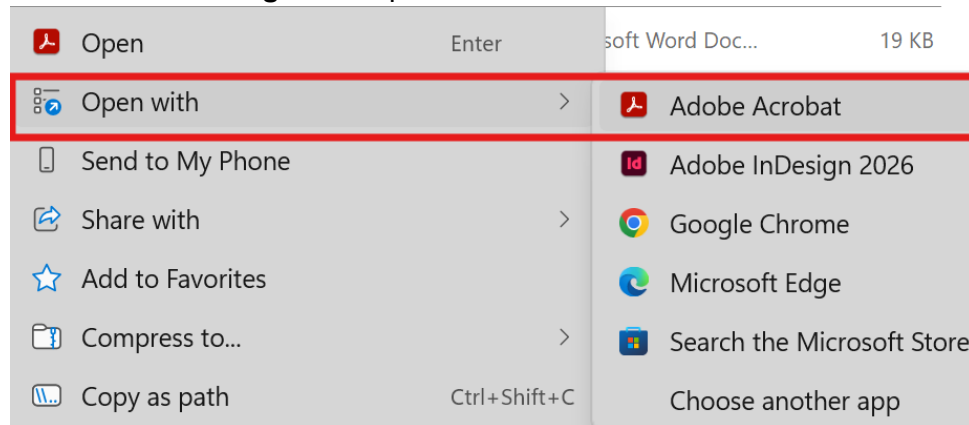
- [Adobe Acrobat Download and Instruction](#)
- [Cornell IT: Create Accessible PDFs](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat: Create and Verify PDF Accessibility](#)
- [W3C: PDF Accessibility Techniques for WCAG 2.2](#)
- [PDF/UA: Accessibility Checklist](#) [PDF]

Run Accessibility Checker in Acrobat Pro

Step 1: Open Your ETDs in Adobe Acrobat Pro

1. Locate the student's ETD's PDF version file or folder.
2. Right-click on the PDF file.
3. Select **Open with** > Select **Adobe Acrobat**.

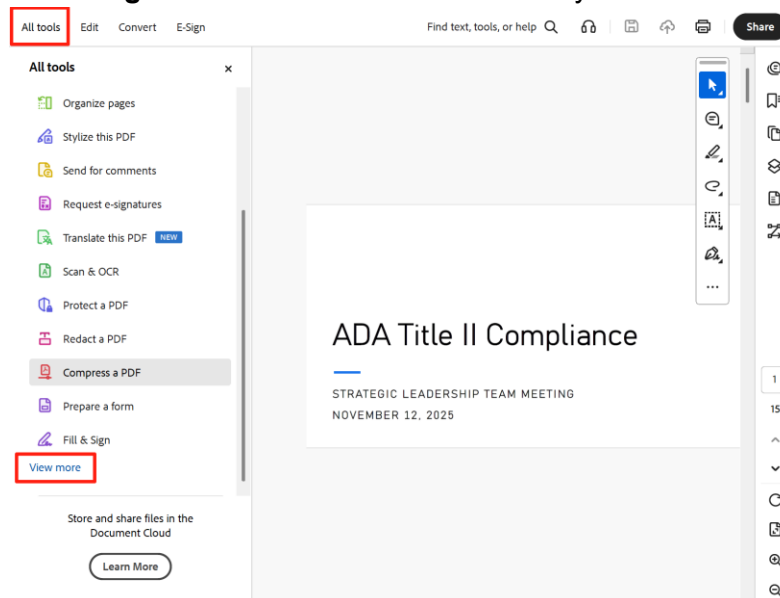
Figure 3. Open PDFs in Adobe Acrobat



Step 2. Location of the Accessibility Checker

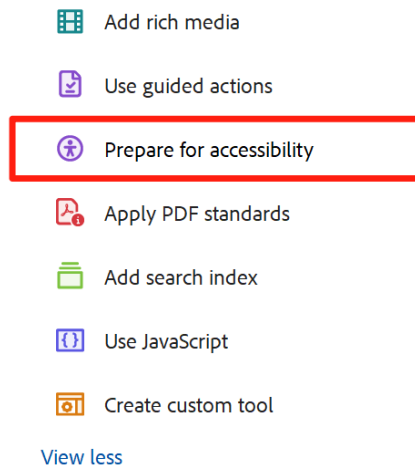
1. Open the ETD file in Adobe Acrobat Pro.
2. On the left/righthand side **All tool** menu.

Figure 4. Location of the Accessibility Checker



3. Scroll down and click on **View more**.
4. Click **Prepare for accessibility**.

Figure 5. Prepare for Accessibility



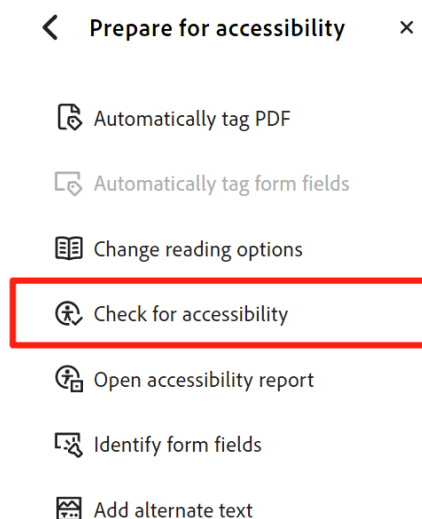
5. This opens the Prepare for accessibility pane

Step 3. Running the Checker and Exporting the Report

When you open the prepare for accessibility pane,

1. Click **Check for Accessibility**.

Figure 6. Check for Accessibility



2. This opens the **Accessibility Checker Options** dialogue box.

Figure 7. Setting for Accessibility Checker and Start Checking

The screenshot shows the 'Accessibility Checker Options' dialog box. It is divided into three main sections: 'Report Options', 'Page Range', and 'Checking Options'. Red boxes and numbers 1 through 5 highlight specific elements: 1. A red box around the 'Create accessibility report' checkbox. 2. A red box around the 'Choose...' button next to the 'Folder' field. 3. A red box around the 'Document' dropdown menu in the 'Category' field. 4. A red box around a group of five checked checkboxes: 'Accessibility permission flag is set', 'Document is not image-only PDF', 'Document is tagged PDF', 'Text language is specified', and 'Document title is showing in title bar'. 5. A red box around the 'Start Checking' button at the bottom right.

Accessibility Checker Options

Report Options

1 ☒ Create accessibility report

Folder: C:\Adobe\Acrobat\DC\AccReports 2 Choose...

☐ Attach report to document

Page Range

☒ All pages in document ☐ Pages from 1 to 1

Checking Options (10 of 32 in all categories)

3 Category: Document

4 ☒ Accessibility permission flag is set
☒ Document is not image-only PDF
☒ Document is tagged PDF
☐ Document structure provides a logical reading order
☒ Text language is specified
☒ Document title is showing in title bar
☐ Bookmarks are present in large documents
☐ Document has appropriate color contrast

Select All Clear All

☒ Show this dialog when the Checker starts

5 Start Checking Cancel

3. Report Options:

- Click **Create Accessibility Report**.
- Choose and save the accessibility report in a folder, where you can find it later and share it with the ETD Coordinator if necessary.

4. Page Range: Click **All pages in document**.

5. Checking Options: Change the category (Document, Page content, Forms, Tables and Lists, and Alternate Text and Headings) and select the 10 options in Checking Options.

6. Required 10 options in Checking Options in each category:

- Category 1: Document (5)
 - Accessibility permission flag is set.
 - Document is not image-only PDF.
 - Document is tagged PDF.
 - Text language is specified.
 - Document title is showing in title bar.

Figure 8. Document Category in Checker Dialogue

Checking Options (10 of 32 in all categories)

Category: Document

- ☒ Accessibility permission flag is set
- ☒ Document is not image-only PDF
- ☒ Document is tagged PDF
- ☐ Document structure provides a logical reading order
- ☒ Text language is specified
- ☒ Document title is showing in title bar
- ☐ Bookmarks are present in large documents
- ☐ Document has appropriate color contrast

Select All Clear All

- b. Category 2: Page content (1)
 - i. All page content is tagged.

Figure 9. Page Content Category in Checker Dialogue

Checking Options (10 of 32 in all categories)

Category: Page content

- ☒ All page content is tagged
- ☐ All annotations are tagged
- ☐ Tab order is consistent with structure order
- ☐ Reliable character encoding is provided
- ☐ All multimedia objects are tagged
- ☐ Page will not cause screen flicker
- ☐ No inaccessible scripts
- ☐ Navigation links are not repetitive
- ☐ Page does not require timed responses

Select All Clear All

- c. Category 3: Forms, Tables and Lists (3)
 - i. All form fields have description.
 - ii. Tables must have headers.
 - iii. Tables must have a summary.

Figure 10. Forms, Tables and Lists Category in Checker Dialogue

Checking Options (10 of 32 in all categories)

Category: Forms, Tables and Lists

- ☐ All form fields are tagged
- ☒ All form fields have description
- ☐ TR must be a child of Table, THead, TBody, or TFoot
- ☐ TH and TD must be children of TR
- ☒ Tables must have headers
- ☐ Tables must contain the same number of columns in each row and rows in each column
- ☒ Tables must have a summary
- ☐ LI must be a child of L
- ☐ Lbl and LBody must be children of LI

Select All Clear All

- d. Category 4: Alternate Text and Headings (1)
 - i. Figures require alternate text.

Figure 11. Alternate Text and Headings Category in Checker Dialogue

Checking Options (10 of 32 in all categories)

Category: Alternate Text and Headings

- ☒ Figures require alternate text
- ☐ Alternate text that will never be read
- ☐ Alternate text must be associated with some content
- ☐ Alternate text should not hide annotation
- ☐ Elements require alternate text
- ☐ Appropriate heading nesting

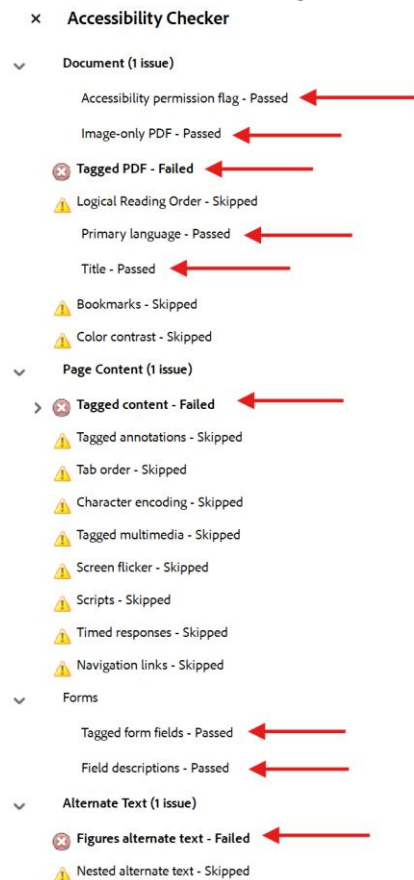
Select All Clear All

- 7. Click **Start Checking** in the Accessibility Checker Option dialogue box.

Step 4: View the Accessibility Check Results

1. Results appear in the **Accessibility Checker panel** on the **left/right**.
2. Review any flagged issues and investigate them carefully.

Figure 12. Example of the Accessibility Checker Report (Partial): Red arrows indicate the ten required checking options.



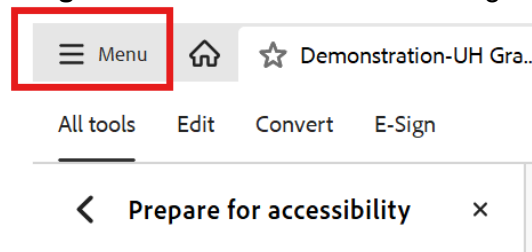
3. Each check will be marked as:
 - Passed:
 - The element meets accessibility standards.
 - **No action is needed.**
 - It will simply be marked as **Pass**.
 - **Failed (Red X)**
 - The element does **NOT** meet accessibility requirements.
 - **Action is required.**
 - Please revise the issue or contact the student to fix the issue.
 - Skipped (Yellow triangle):
 - The element was not evaluated at this time.
 - These can be **disregarded** for now.

- **Notes:** Yellow warning symbols **DO NOT block approval**. Spring 2026 submissions are **acceptable with warnings** present, as long as there are no **Red X** failures.
- 4. To students: Once the PDF passes the accessibility check, you may proceed to save the html report in PDF and share with your college ETD coordinators for further review.

Step 5: Add Your Name to the Accessibility Report

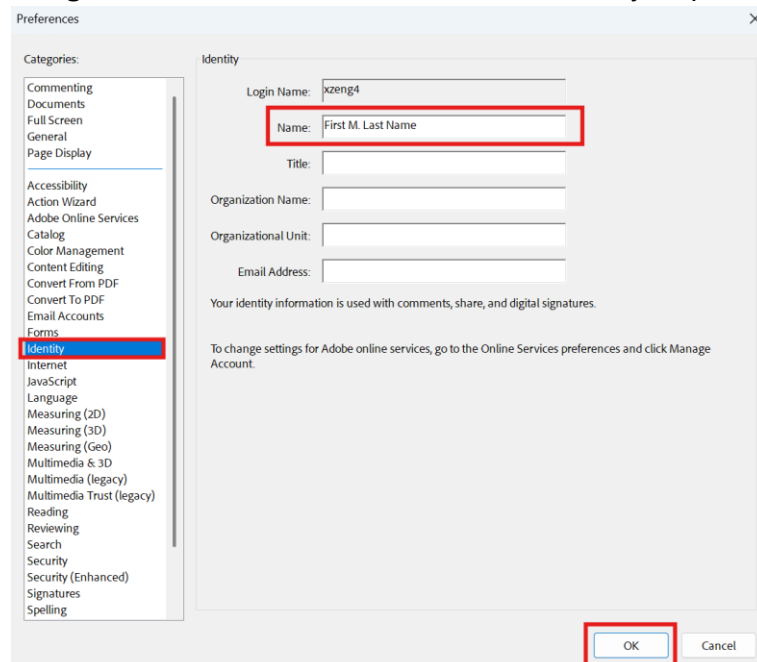
1. Click **Hamburger menu** button in the **upper left corner** of your screen.

Figure 13: Location of the Hamburger Menu



2. Select **Preferences** -> Open the Preferences dialogue box.
3. Select **Identity** -> **Type in your name** -> Click **OK** to close the dialogue box.
4. If you do not see that your name has been updated in the report, please rerun the accessibility check.

Figure 14: Add Your Name to the Accessibility Report



Step 6: View the Accessibility Report

1. You can view the accessibility report on Adobe Acrobat Pro.
2. Click **Three-dot Menu** on the **upper right corner** of the Accessibility Checker pane.
3. Select **Show Report**.
4. In the accessibility report, please check on the following:
 - a. **Report created:** Your name in First M. Last order.
 - b. **Summary:**
 - i. Skipped: The **maximum** number is 22.
 - ii. Passed: The **minimum** number is 10.
 - iii. Failed: **Always** stay at 0.
 - c. **Detailed Report:** Please double-check that all ten required options are listed as **Passed**.
5. To College ETD Coordinators: Once the PDF passes the accessibility check, you may give permission to students to upload to Vireo. The ten required options are listed on Page 8 of this document.

Figure 15: Steps for Showing the Accessibility Report

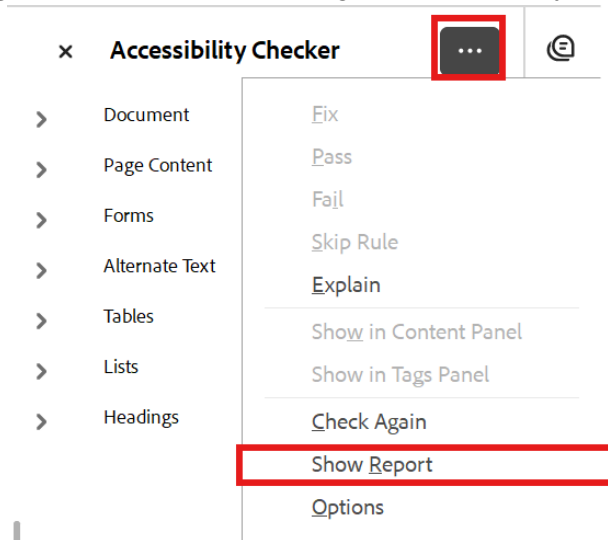


Figure 16: A Section of the Accessibility Report Generated by Adobe Acrobat Pro

Accessibility Report

Filename: Demonstration-UH Grad School
ETD Template.pdf

Report created by: First M. Last Name

Organization:

[Personal and organization
information from the Preferences > Identity
dialog.]

Summary

The checker found no problems in this
document.

- Needs manual check: 0
- Passed manually: 0
- Failed manually: 0
- Skipped: 22
- Passed: 10
- Failed: 0

Detailed Report

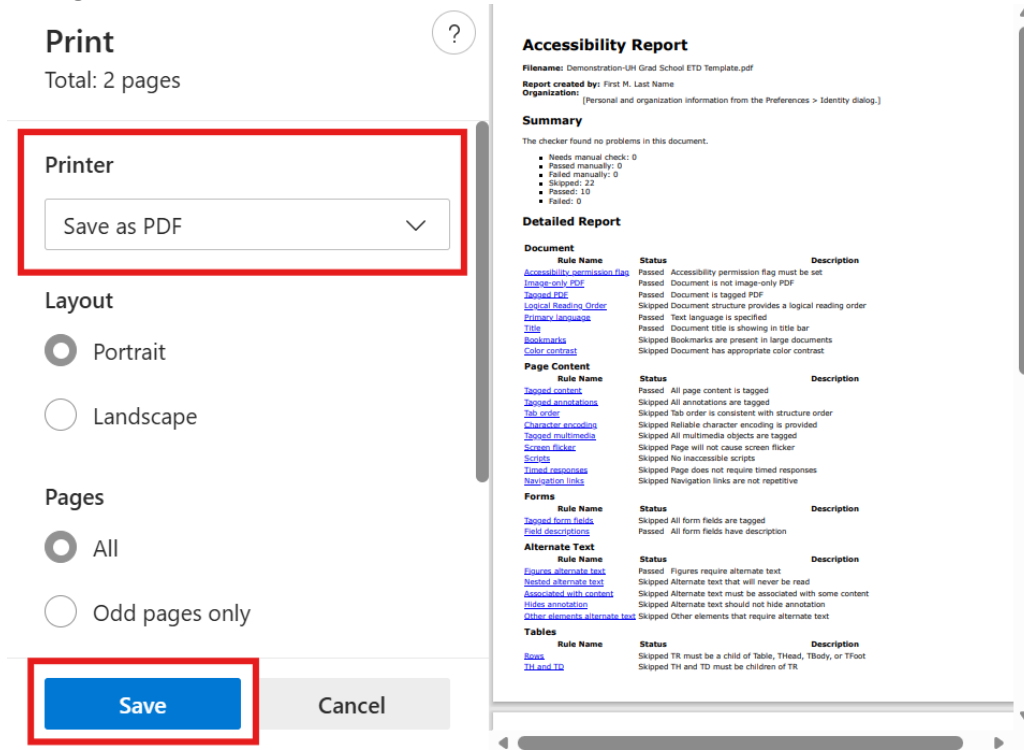
Document

Rule Name	Status	Description
Accessibility permission flag	Passed	Accessibility permission flag must be set
Image-only PDF	Passed	Document is not image-only PDF
Tagged PDF	Passed	Document is tagged PDF
Logical Reading Order	Skipped	Document structure provides a logical reading order
Primary language	Passed	Text language is specified

Step 7: Save the Accessibility Report in PDF Format

1. The accessibility report will be generated in HTML format.
2. Open the report in your web browser.
3. Print (CTRL + P / Command + P) to **Save as PDF**.
4. Save the report to your computer.
5. You can email or submit your ETD manuscript and accessibility report to your college's ETD coordinator.

Figure 17: Save the HTML as a PDF in Print Feature in the Web Browser



Remediation of Failed Checks

Document (5)

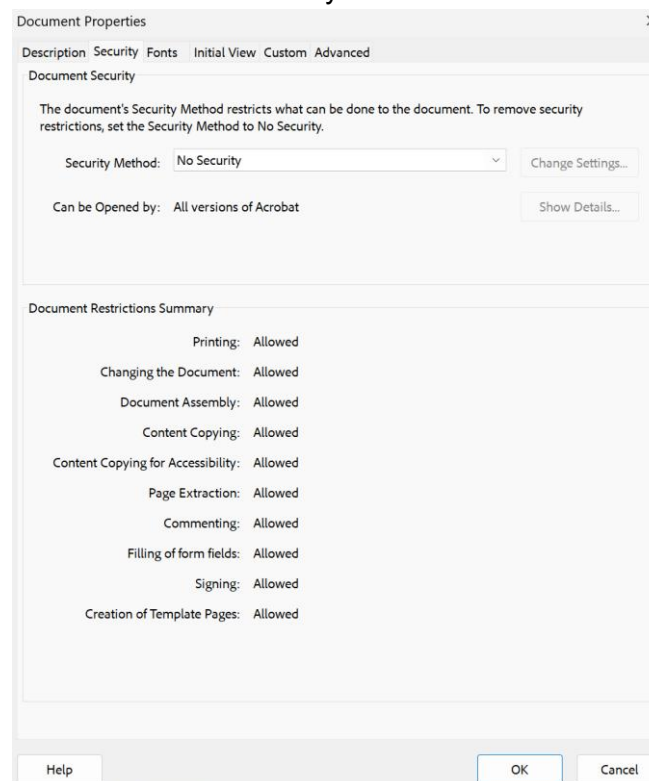
Accessibility permission flag is set

- Failure: A document's security setting can interfere with a screen reader's ability to read the document. Your current security settings may cause this check to fail.
- Fix: Select the hamburger menu pictured in Figure xxx (PC) or File menu (Mac) and go to **Document Properties**.
 - **Document Properties** dialogue box > **Security** tab > **Security Method** drop-down menu > **No Security** > **OK**

Figure 18. Hamburger Menu on the Upper Left Corner



Figure 19. The Document Properties Dialogue Box With 'No Security' Is Selected as the Security Method



Document is not image-only PDF

- Failure: An image-only PDF is a type of PDF file that contains scanned pages or images of text, rather than actual, selectable or searchable text.
- Fix: Make sure you did not use “Print to PDF” when converting your manuscript. Please go back to the original Word document to re-export your ETD.
 - **Export a PDF in Word for Window** ([How to Convert a Word Document to an Accessible PDF by TAMU](#)):
 - Select **File** in the ribbon
 - Select **Save as/Save a Copy**
 - In the document type dropdown, select **PDF (*.pdf)**
 - Select **More options...**
 - Set the radio button for **Optimize for: Standard (publishing online and printing)**
 - Select the **Options...** button
 - In the Options panel under **Include non-printing information**, check the box for
 - **Create bookmarks using: Headings**
 - **Document Properties**
 - **Document structure tags for accessibility.**
 - Select **Ok**
 - Select **Save**
 - **Export a PDF in Word for Mac**
 - From the File menu, select Save as...
 - In the dialog, change the File Format to PDF
 - Select the radio button for Best for electronic distribution and accessibility
 - Select Export

Document is tagged PDF

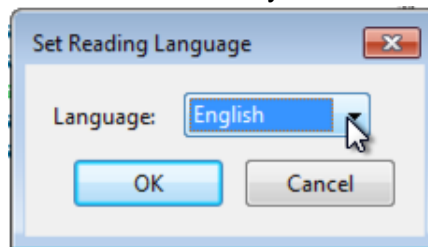
- Failure: The PDF is not a tagged document. A tagged PDF contains structural information that allows screen readers to correctly identify headings, paragraphs, lists, tables, and figures. Without tags, the document is not accessible.
- Fix: Please go back to the original Word document to re-export your ETD.
 - **Export a PDF in Word for Window** ([How to Convert a Word Document to an Accessible PDF by TAMU](#)):
 - Select **File** in the ribbon
 - Select **Save as/Save a Copy**
 - In the document type dropdown, select **PDF (*.pdf)**
 - Select **More options...**
 - Set the radio button for **Optimize for: Standard (publishing online and printing)**
 - Select the **Options...** button
 - In the Options panel under **Include non-printing information**, check the box for

- **Create bookmarks using: Headings**
- **Document Properties**
- **Document structure tags for accessibility.**
- Select **Ok**
- Select **Save**
- **Export a PDF in Word for Mac**
 - From the File menu, select Save as...
 - In the dialog, change the File Format to PDF
 - Select the radio button for Best for electronic distribution and accessibility
 - Select Export

Text language is specified

- Failure: The document does not have a primary language set.
- Fix: Right-click the failure in the report > Fix > English > OK.

Figure 20. Acrobat Accessibility Set Primary Language



- Note: The primary language is generally English. If the ETD is written primarily in Spanish, select “Spanish” instead.

Document title is showing in title bar

- Failure: The document is missing a title.
- Fix: Right-click the error > Description dialogue > Uncheck the “Leave As Is” > Enter the title of the ETD in the title box > OK.

Figure 21. Add Title in Description Dialogue Box



Page content (1)

All page content is tagged

- Some content on one or more pages is not tagged. Untagged content cannot be read by screen readers and makes the document inaccessible.
- Fix: Please go back to the original Word document to re-export your ETD.
 - **Export a PDF in Word for Window** ([How to Convert a Word Document to an Accessible PDF by TAMU](#)):
 - Select **File** in the ribbon
 - Select **Save as/Save a Copy**
 - In the document type dropdown, select **PDF (*.pdf)**
 - Select **More options...**
 - Set the radio button for **Optimize for: Standard (publishing online and printing)**
 - Select the **Options...** button
 - In the Options panel under **Include non-printing information**, check the box for
 - **Create bookmarks using: Headings**
 - **Document Properties**
 - **Document structure tags for accessibility.**
 - Select **Ok**
 - Select **Save**
 - **Export a PDF in Word for Mac**
 - From the File menu, select **Save as...**
 - In the dialog, change the File Format to **PDF**
 - Select the radio button for **Best for electronic distribution and accessibility**
 - Select **Export**

Forms, Tables and Lists (3)

All form fields have description

- Failure: One or more forms of fields does not have a description. Form field descriptions are required, so screen readers can identify the purpose of each field.
- Fix: ETDs should not contain interactive form fields. Please **REMOVE** all form fields and resubmit the PDF.

Tables must have headers

- Failure: One or more tables do not have header rows or columns. Table headers are required so screen readers can correctly associate data cells with their headers.
- Fix: Contact the student to revise the table in the original Word/LaTeX document.

- **MS Word:** Add a header row (and column if applicable) > Use Word's Table Design > Header Row option > Re-export the PDF with "Document structure tags for accessibility" (**Windows**) or "Best for electronic distribution and accessibility" (**Mac**) is selected.
- **Adobe Acrobat Pro:** Prepare for accessibility pane > Fix reading order > Right-click on the table > Select Table Editor > Select the cell(s) (hold Shift + click to select multiple cells) > Right-click on the selected cell(s) > Select Table Cell Properties > Select Header Cell or Data Cell > OK.

Figure 22. Select the Fix Reading Order in Prepare for Accessibility

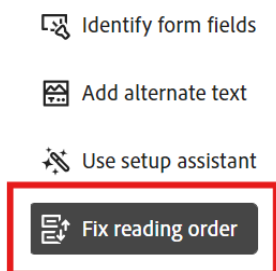


Figure 23. Add Header Cells to a Table by Selecting 'Table Editor'

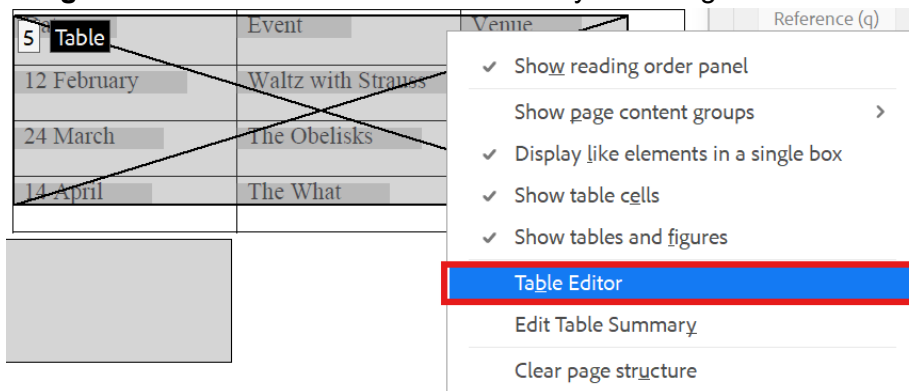
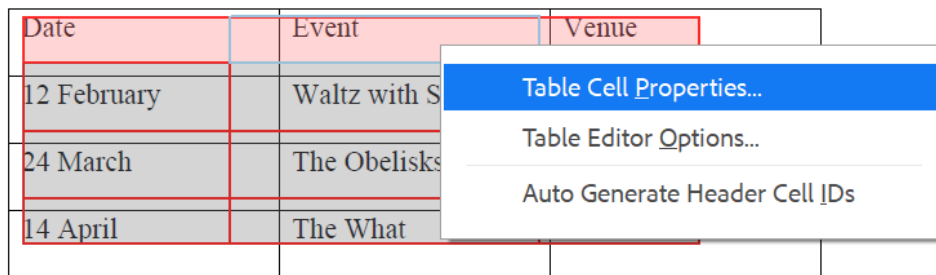


Figure 24. Change a Cell Property by Right-Click and Selecting 'Table Cell Properties'



- For MS Word, please follow the Data Table section in [UH ETD in MS Word Accessibility Training](#)

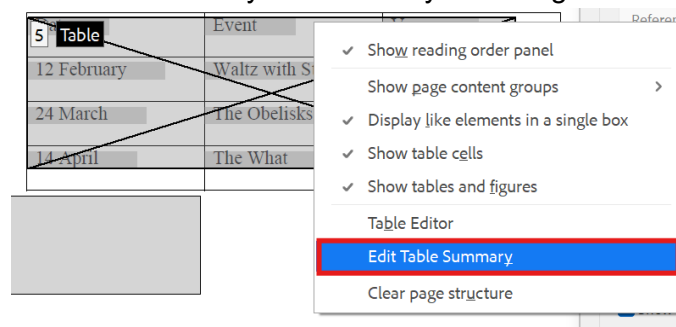
Additional Resource:

- YouTube Video Instruction:
 - [Adobe Acrobat Pro: Table Headers, Summary, and Accessibility](#)
 - [How to tag a table in Adobe Acrobat Pro | Full Walkthrough WCAG Section 508](#)

Tables must have a summary

- Failure: One or more tables do not have a summary. Table summaries provide screen reader users with a brief description of the table's purpose and structure.
- Fix: Contact the student to add a description of the table content in the original Word/LaTeX document.
 - MS Word: Select the table > Use Word's Table Layout > Select Table Properties > Select Alt-Text > Descriptions > OK.
 - Adobe Acrobat Pro: Prepare for accessibility > Fix reading order > Right-click on the table > Select Edit Table Summary > OK.

Figure 25. Add Table Summary to a Table by Selecting 'Edit Table Summary'



- For MS Word, please follow the Data Table section in [UH ETD in MS Word Accessibility Training](#).

Additional Resource:

- YouTube Video Instruction:
 - [Adobe Acrobat Pro: Table Headers, Summary, and Accessibility](#)
 - [How to tag a table in Adobe Acrobat Pro | Full Walkthrough WCAG Section 508](#)

Alternate Text and Headings (1)

Figures require alternate text

- Failure: Images or figures lack descriptive text.
- Fix:
 - Right click the Red X > Fix > Provide a short description of the image.
 - Contact the student to add a description of the table content in the original Word/LaTeX document.

- For MS Word, please follow the Images and Other Objects section in [UH ETD in MS Word Accessibility Training](#).

Additional Resource:

- YouTube Video Instruction:
 - [How to add alternate text to images in Adobe Acrobat Pro DC](#)

Common Questions:

Q1. The figures are low resolution in the PDF version.

Solution Option 1: Replace the Figure Directly in Adobe Acrobat Pro

- Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat Pro.
- Replace the low-resolution figure with a higher-resolution version.
 - YouTube Video Instruction: [How to replace Images in a PDF File using adobe acrobat pro dc](#)
- Re-tag the figure using: Prepare for Accessibility > Fix Reading Order > Select the figure > Click “Figure” button in Reading Order dialogue box.
 - YouTube Video Instruction: [How to Tag a PDF using Adobe Acrobat Pro DC 2025](#)
- Add alternate text to the figure: Right-click the figure > Edit Alternative Text > Edit your alt-text > OK to save.
 - YouTube Video Instruction: [How to apply alternate text to images in PDF using Adobe Acrobat Pro DC](#)
- Run the Accessibility Check again to confirm the figure passes.

Solution Option 2: Upload a High-Resolution Supplemental File

- Export another PDF version from Word using high-resolution image settings.
- Upload this version as a supplemental file in Vireo.
 - This supplemental version does not require accessibility remediation or accessibility checking.
- Please note:
 - The supplemental file will only be available in the institutional repository (UHIR).
 - The main ETD PDF still needs to meet accessibility requirements.

Q2. There is no table summary in the PDF version.

Please use the following resources to fix your table summary in Adobe Acrobat:

- [Tables must have a summary](#) written instructions in the previous section.
- YouTube Video Instruction:
 - [Adobe Acrobat Pro: Table Headers, Summary, and Accessibility](#)
 - [How to tag a table in Adobe Acrobat Pro | Full Walkthrough WCAG Section 508](#)
- ETDs in MS Word and Acrobat Pro Accessibility Workshop Recording on the [Grad School Thesis/Dissertation Info webpage](#).

After revising the table summaries in Adobe Acrobat:

- Save the document again as a tagged PDF.
- Re-run the accessibility check in Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Q3. The table header is messy.

Please use the following resources to fix your table summary:

- [Tables must have headers](#) written instructions in the previous section.
- YouTube Video Instruction:
 - [Adobe Acrobat Pro: Table Headers, Summary, and Accessibility](#)
 - [How to tag a table in Adobe Acrobat Pro | Full Walkthrough WCAG Section 508](#)
- ETDs in MS Word and Acrobat Pro Accessibility Workshop Recording on the [Grad School Thesis/Dissertation Info webpage](#).

After revising the table summaries in Adobe Acrobat:

- Save the document again as a tagged PDF.
- Re-run the accessibility check in Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Q4. The table is too wide. I used the Shape tool in Word to rotate the table, which failed the accessibility check on tables.

Please do not use the Shape tool to rotate tables in Word, as this breaks the table structure and causes accessibility failures. Instead, follow these steps:

- Go back to the **Word** document.
- Insert a **Section Break** before and after the table.
- Change only the table pages to **Landscape Orientation**.
- Re-create or paste the table using Word's built-in:
 - Insert > Table feature
- Double-check:
 - Page numbers are correct
 - The List of Tables is still accurate
- Save/export the document again as a PDF with:
 - **Export a PDF in Word for Window** ([How to Convert a Word Document to an Accessible PDF by TAMU](#)):
 - Select **File** in the ribbon
 - Select **Save as/Save a Copy**
 - In the document type dropdown, select **PDF (*.pdf)**
 - Select **More options...**
 - Set the radio button for **Optimize for: Standard (publishing online and printing)**
 - Select the **Options...** button
 - In the Options panel under **Include non-printing information**, check the box for
 - **Create bookmarks using: Headings**
 - **Document Properties**
 - **Document structure tags for accessibility.**
 - Select **Ok**
 - Select **Save**

- **Export a PDF in Word for Mac**
 - From the File menu, select Save as...
 - In the dialog, change the File Format to PDF
 - Select the radio button for Best for electronic distribution and accessibility
 - Select Export
- In Adobe Acrobat Pro
- Run the accessibility check again
- Fix all remaining accessibility issues first (e.g., add all table summaries and adjust table headers).
- Go to:
 - Edit > Rotate Pages
 - Rotate the landscape table page visually back to portrait orientation.
 - Save the PDF.
 - YouTube Video Instruction: [How do I rotate pages on PDF in Adobe Acrobat Pro DC](#)
- This approach preserves the actual table structure for screen readers while allowing the table to display properly in the final PDF.