How can you make your e-mails more accessible?

Introduction

E-mail is used for contact with individual students, to communicate with groups of students, and for marketing purposes in general. Students and prospective students who struggle to process information – some students use screen readers – sometimes have problems understanding e-mail content. Below you will find a few tips to help you make your e-mails more accessible.

Tips for improving accessibility

- **Accessibility check.** If you copy the text of your e-mail and paste it in Word, you can run an accessibility check (Review > Accessibility Check).
- **Text.** Avoid walls of text. The longer the text, the harder it is to read it. Split long paragraphs into shorter paragraphs. Make sure each paragraph focuses on one thing. Use white spaces to separate paragraphs. Use a general title for group-related sections. Use simple words as much as possible.
- **Font type and size** Avoid changing font type and size to emphasise certain parts of the text. Preferably use fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, Verdana or Calibri, font size 12, line spacing 1.5.
- **Emphasis.** Use italics and bold for emphasis, but use them sparingly.
- **Alignment.** Align your text with the left margin.
- **Lists.** Use numbers to mark the items in a list.
- **Action points.** Repeat action points at the end of your e-mail.
- **Images.** Use images to help illustrate and support your text content, but make sure you include a descriptive alt text under your images. Avoid using text in images as the only method for conveying information. You can always use the alt text to provide a description of the image and point to the presence and function of the text.
- **Numbers.** Write figures as numbers, unless they do not refer to specific facts (a few hundred). The same applies to ordinal numbers (2nd and 3rd).
- **Formulas.** The best tool for writing formulas is MathML. If that does not work, you can also write out the formulas. •
- **Colour contrast.** Make sure there is enough contrast between foreground and background colours. Make sure colour is not the only tool you use to get your text across.
- **Links.** Add a short introductory link text to your links. Mention the link once, and avoid repeating it.
- **HTML.** E-mails that are sent for marketing purposes are often formatted in HTML code. The recipients of these e-mails sometimes use screen readers to read them. For these recipients, it is important that the language code is added in HTML, a character set is defined, and sections are defined in HTML.

More information:

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