

## ADA and Title II Compliance for Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD's)

As you all may be aware, VCU is updating accessibility requirements for documents uploaded to Scholars Compass to be in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act per the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. Beginning April 24, 2026, all digital content created by VCU must meet [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#) standards for digital accessibility.

The VCU Libraries have supplied us with several resources to help faculty, staff, and students understand what is needed for submissions to Scholars Compass moving forward, including ETD's.

- [VCU Libraries: Creating Accessible Documents](#) - Please be sure to point your students to this website to answer their questions about how to create accessible documents for upload to Scholars Compass, including ETD's.
  - Please note that this is a working document, which the Library will update with new information as needed.

The Libraries recommend encouraging graduate students to write their theses/dissertations in Word over Google Docs. Word has better built-in accessibility tools than Google Docs, and converting to PDF from Word ensures that the accessible features are retained.

- [Accessible ETD Template](#) in Microsoft Word format

Here are instructions for converting from Word to PDF to retain accessibility settings:

After you have completed your manuscript in Word, do these two steps to create an accessible PDF:

1. Check your completed manuscript for accessibility using the Microsoft Accessibility Checker.
2. When you are ready to turn your Word document into PDF, use "Save As" and then choose "PDF" as your document type. Select the PDF type that is best for accessibility. This will ensure that you retain your accessibility settings when your document is exported as a PDF.

For additional information from the Libraries, including a recommended timeline, more resources and how Title II ADA compliance applies to ETD uploads, please click [here](#).

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