

Accessible Communications and Content Guidelines

For Non-Teaching Teams

These guidelines support inclusive practice across all non-teaching functions, including marketing, website services, student experience, academic coordination, careers, wellbeing, governance, HR, operations and finance.

They are based on Metanoia's accessibility principles for teaching and learning, adapted for everyday communications, systems and services.

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Core Principles

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility. Across all roles

- Use clear, simple language
- Present information in a structured and logical way

- Avoid unnecessary complexity or information overload
- Ensure content is easy to read and navigate
- Provide information in multiple formats where possible
- Design with inclusion in mind from the outset, not as an afterthought

1. Written Communications (Emails, Documents, Policies)

Whether communicating with students, staff or external audiences:

- Use plain English and avoid jargon
- Keep sentences short and focused
- Break content into headings, bullet points and sections
- Avoid dense blocks of text
- Use sans serif fonts (e.g. Arial, Calibri) and readable sizes
- Ensure strong contrast between text and background

When sharing documents:

- Ensure files are accessible (not image-based PDFs)
- Use clear file names and structure
- Provide alternative formats where needed

2. Presentations and Internal Materials

When creating slides or internal decks:

- Use the Metanoia accessible template where available
- Keep slides simple (one idea per slide)
- Use large, readable text (minimum 24pt)
- Avoid overcrowding or overly complex visuals

- Use clear headings and logical flow

For any shared presentations:

- Ensure slides are accessible in advance where possible
- Add alt text to images
- Avoid relying on colour alone to convey meaning

3. Digital Content (Website, Moodle, Portals)

For website and digital platform content:

- Structure content using clear headings and sections
- Keep pages clean and uncluttered
- Break information into short, manageable chunks
- Use descriptive link text (avoid 'click here' or raw URLs)
- Ensure consistent navigation and layout

For media:

- Caption all video and audio content
- Avoid auto-play
- Ensure downloadable content is accessible

4. Forms, Processes and Systems

For application forms, internal processes and student systems:

- Use clear instructions and labels
- Break processes into simple, step-by-step stages
- Avoid unnecessary complexity or duplication
- Make expectations explicit (what to do, when, and how)

Where possible:

- Provide examples or guidance
- Use inclusive language
- Ensure processes are accessible to those using assistive technologies

5. Visual Content (Graphics, Charts, Marketing Materials)

Visuals should support understanding, not create barriers.

- Use simple, clear visuals
- Avoid cluttered or overly decorative design
- Ensure high contrast and readability
- Do not embed essential text within images

Where visuals are used:

- Provide alternative text
- Ensure meaning is clear without relying on colour alone

6. Supporting Neurodiverse Users

Across all communications and systems:

- Maintain consistent layouts and formats
- Signal structure clearly (e.g. headings, steps, sections)
- Avoid overwhelming users with too much information at once
- Provide information in advance where possible
- Allow time and flexibility for processing

7. Supporting Visually Impaired Users

When creating and sharing content:

- Ensure compatibility with screen readers
- Use proper document structure (headings, reading order)
- Avoid scanned or image-based text

For resources and documents:

- Check whether materials are available in alternative formats via the library
- Be aware of resources such as RNIB Bookshare for eligible users
- Avoid complex PDF formatting where possible (e.g. tables, columns)
- Provide Word versions where needed, as these are often more accessible

Early planning is essential to ensure materials are usable for all users.

8. Multimedia and Events

For webinars, recordings, and events:

- Provide captions or subtitles
- Clearly introduce speakers
- Describe key visuals or content
- Avoid fast, flashing or distracting elements

Where content is recorded:

- Ensure audio is clear
- Provide summaries or key takeaways

9. Collaboration and Shared Documents

When working in shared documents or cross-team environments:

- Use clear headings and consistent formatting
- Provide instructions at the top of the document
- Indicate where input is required
- Avoid using colour alone to assign meaning

10. Final Accessibility Check

Before publishing or sharing content, ask:

- Is this clear, structured and easy to read?
- Is the formatting accessible and consistent?
- Are links, documents and media usable by all audiences?
- Have I avoided unnecessary complexity?
- Would this work for someone using assistive technology?

Quick Checklist

- ✓ Clear, simple language
- ✓ Structured and easy to navigate
- ✓ High contrast and readable fonts
- ✓ Accessible documents and links
- ✓ Captioned media
- ✓ Minimal complexity
- ✓ Inclusive from the start

Accessibility is not just a teaching issue – it underpins every interaction, system and communication across Metanoia.

Done well, it improves:

- Student experience
- Staff experience
- Engagement and trust
- Equity and inclusion

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Section 2 - to be completed by receiving committee.

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