

Accessible Email Tools and Guidelines for Pittsburg State University

Microsoft Outlook Tools: At PSU our email system is the Microsoft Outlook Email product. [You can access Microsoft has Outlook tools](#) that assist with digital accessibility.

Accessible Email Guidelines: Email is one of our most used communication tools that we use at Pitt State. Making your messages digitally accessible ensures that everyone in the Gorilla community - students, faculty, and staff - can read and understand them without barriers. Here are some practical tips to help you create emails that work for everyone.

1. Keep Your Layout Simple

- Use a clean, easy-to-follow design. If you use a third-party platform (such as MailChimp, Emma, etc) remember that a single-column or two-column layout works best for all devices.
- Avoid overly complex formatting or decorative tables. If you must use tables for layout, mark them as decorative so screen readers skip them.

2. Make Colors Work for Everyone

- Choose text and background colors with strong contrast so your message is easy to read.
- Don't rely on color alone to share meaning. Add text labels or icons so the message is clear for people with color vision differences.
- Try to use a color contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1. Meaning that the lighter color has a 4.5 times brighter (ie: higher luminance) than the darker color.

3. Describe Your Images

- Add short, meaningful descriptions (alt text) to images that convey important information.
- If the image is purely decorative, you can leave the alt text blank.
- Any text that appears in an image should also appear in the email body so no one misses it.

4. Write for Clarity

- Use fonts that are easy to read, like Arial or Calibri, and keep the size at least 12 points.
- Align text to the left and break content into short paragraphs.
- Use plain language - avoid jargon and keep sentences simple.
- Make links descriptive. Instead of “Click here,” use “View the Fall Course Schedule.”

5. Organize Your Content

- Present information in a logical order so screen readers can follow along easily.
- Use headings when possible to break up sections and make scanning easier.
- Keep your main message and call-to-action clear and easy to find.

Quick Checklist

- Simple layout (1–2 columns max)
- Strong color contrast
- Alt text for meaningful images
- Readable fonts and sizes
- Descriptive link text
- Logical structure and headings

By following these steps, you'll help ensure that every email from Pittsburg State is inclusive and accessible to all.