# Writing Expectations for the Air Quality Research Program (AQRP) Reports

*For writing final reports and other documents as requested*

## Consistency

Be consistent throughout documents. Choose a method and stick to it. This includes aspects such as, but not limited to:

- o references and in-text citations,
- o how tables and figures are titled and captioned (choose one method to use throughout the document),
- o how figures and tables are referenced and labeled (e.g., "Fig. 1" versus "Figure 1" versus "Fig 1"), and
- o web addresses: all hyperlinked or none hyperlinked.

## Formatting

- Use one font throughout the document, including the font used for axes labels, or titles in figures.
- Use font size consistently for body, headings, titles, subtitles, etc.
- Subscript or superscript chemical formulas as appropriate (e.g., $CH_3O^-$, $NO_x$).

## Tables & Figures

- Produce legible visual aids.
- Ensure that axis labels, words, and numbers are large enough to read.
- Avoid breaking a table across pages; repeat the header row if a page break is necessary.

## Acronyms

- Define acronyms the first time introduced in any section.
  - o Chemical species are included in this request. Define a chemical formula before using. For example, sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$). Then use with chemical formula. (i.e., if ozone has been defined as $O_3$, use $O_3$ thereafter.)
- Do not define an acronym unless:
  - o it is used again in that section, or
  - o it is more commonly known by its acronym than the spelled-out version, such as PVC. For example, you would write: "… polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a common plastic, was used to…"
- This article may be helpful: https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-to-find-acronyms-in-a-word-document/

## Proofreading

- Proofread for typographical, grammar, punctuation, and citation errors.

# Accessibility Guidance for AQRP

## *For writing all deliverables*

This is not a comprehensive guide, but a short list of the most important points. All deliverables submitted to the TCEQ are expected to be fully accessible according to the grant agreement:

> "16.13 Accessibility. All electronic content and documents created as deliverables under this Contract must meet the accessibility standards prescribed in 1 Texas Administrative Code §§ 206.50 and 213 for state agency web pages, web content, software, and hardware, unless TCEQ agrees that exceptions or exemptions
> apply."

Word and Adobe Acrobat programs have accessibility checkers. Generally, if a document passes these built-in checkers, it is accessible.

## *Alt Text*

- All figures require alternative text to thoroughly explain the contents of the figure to an individual who may be visually impaired. This should be more thorough than the caption.

## *Tables*

- Do not the merge cells of a table.
- Simplify tables. If needed, break into multiple tables so that a screen reader knows which column and row headers correspond to each cell.

## *Formatting*

- Use the heading styles available in Word.
    - o Be consistent with which style you use for each level throughout the document. These headings assist with navigation for users with different levels of ability.
- Use the emphasis and strong styles in Word *not* just italics or bold (even though they look the same, they are not interpreted the same by a screen reader).
- Use bullets or numbers to mark lists, where appropriate (the list icon, should be highlighted).

## *Exporting to PDF*

- Ensure that the method used to export to portable document format (PDF) from Word retains all the accessible features (alt text, headings, etc).
- Here is one website explaining how to do this: https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/documents/pdf-word/#:~:text=Word%20(Windows),tags%20for%20accessibility%E2%80%9D%20is%20checked.