

Alt text checklist

When in doubt, imagine removing the image entirely - does your alt text cover the essential information the student would otherwise miss?

Accuracy

- Describe the image truthfully – avoid adding meaning that isn't there.
- Ensure numbers, data, and visual details (e.g., graph labels, trends) are correct.
- Don't exaggerate or oversimplify key elements.

Brevity

- Aim for a single concise sentence (under ~125 characters if possible).
- Avoid filler words like "Image of" or "Picture showing."
- Break complex visuals into short, meaningful descriptions. Context
- Write with the learner's needs in mind: What would a student need to know about this image to understand the lesson?
- Connect description to surrounding text or lecture content.
- Skip details already explained in the caption or body text.

Relevance

- Focus only on elements that support learning outcomes.
- Omit decorative or purely stylistic details (e.g., background colour, unless relevant).
- Include relationships (e.g., "Professor pointing to the bar chart results"). Clarity & Readability
- Use plain, academic-appropriate language.
- Avoid jargon unless it's essential to the subject.
- Be mindful of cultural references or ambiguous wording.

Function & Purpose

- Ask: Why is this image here? Describe that purpose.
- For charts: state the trend or finding, not every data point.
- For diagrams: highlight the structure or main process.
- For photos: explain the subject's role in context. Inclusivity
- Avoid assumptions about the viewer's experience (e.g., don't say "obviously" or "clearly shows").
- Use respectful, neutral terms for people, identities, or conditions.