# **Temple University Center for the Advancement of Teaching Logo**

# **Accessibility How-To:**

# **Ensuring Consistent Navigation in PDFs**

WCAG 3.2.3 requires consistency of navigational elements in digital documents. In PDFs, this includes headers/footers, page numbers, layout, and headings.

Consistency in these elements reduces cognitive load, ensures logical screen reader progression, enables effective keyboard navigation, and beneﬁts all students by improving document usability.

## **Best Practices for Ensuring Consistent Navigation in PDFs**

### **Headers, Footers, and Page Numbering**

* Include running headers and footers using the Headers and Footers function to help users locate themselves within a document. See the next page of this handout for more detailed implementation information.
* Headers/footers can include:
  + Document title
  + Current chapter or section
  + Page numbers (e.g., “Page 3-4” or “Page 9 of 15”)
  + Author and/or date information
* Ensure page numbers are consistent across the document.
* Tag all headers/footers as artifacts (so screen readers don’t repeat them on every page)

### **Consistent Navigation and Labeling**

* Maintain a consistent structure for repeated navigation patterns.
* Use clear, descriptive, and unique section titles.

**Implementation Guide on Next Page**

## **Creating Section-Specific Headers in Acrobat**

Section-specific headers in PDFs are customized headers that change based on different parts of the document, displaying relevant information like chapter titles or section names. This feature significantly improves navigability for all users, especially those with disabilities, by providing clear content and location cues throughout the document, making it easier to understand the structure and quickly locate specific content.

Headers and Footers could include:

* Current chapter or section
* Page numbers (e.g., “Page 3-4” or “Page 9 of 15”)
* Author and/or date information

1. Creating Section-specific Headers in Adobe Acrobat
   * Go to “Edit PDF” → “Header & Footer” → “Add”
   * Create headers for first section (e.g., “Chapter 1: Introduction”)
   * Click “Page Range Options” to apply to specific pages (e.g., pages 1-10)
   * Save as template, then repeat for each section with updated text
   * For each new section: “Update” existing headers → select new page range → change text
2. Making Headers/Footers Accessible:
   * Tag them as “artifacts so screen readers don’t repeat them on every page
   * Include important header/footer information in the main content
   * Test with screen readers to verify they don’t interrupt reading flow