

VPAT Accessibility Conformance Report

(Based on ITI VPAT®)

Name of Product	Elsevier.com
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Completed by	Nicola Richardson (Elsevier Digital Accessibility Team)
Applicable Standards/Guidelines	This document rates Elsevier.com according to the W3C WCAG 2.1 A and AA requirements.
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Testing Tools and Methods	• Hands-on keyboard operation • DevTools/Code inspection • Mozilla Firefox 128.13.0 on MacOS Sequoia 15.7.2 • Chrome 138 on Windows 11 • Safari 26.1 on MacOS Sequoia 15.7.2 • NVDA screen reader 2025.3.1 • VoiceOver screen reader on MacOS Sequoia 15.7.2 • axe DevTools extension 4.10.3 • ARC Toolkit extension 5.7.10 • IBM Equal Access Accessibility Checker 4.0.8 • HeadingsMap extension 4.8.7 • Color Contrast Analyzer
Document Sections	This review document includes all WCAG 2.1 A and AA checkpoints, organized into 7 logical sections: • Visuals • Keyboard • Headings and Structure • Labeling • Multimedia • Usability • Mobile User Experience
Pages Covered	• Homepage, Search, Journal catalog, Complete Anatomy articles, Accessibility overview, ACR directory, ScienceDirect contact page
Terms	• Supports: The functionality of the product has at least one method that meets the criteria without known defects or meets with equivalent facilitation. • Partially supports: Some functionality of the product does not meet the criteria. • Does not support: Majority of functionality of the product does not meet the criteria. • Supports (N/A): According to W3C on conformance, "If there is no content to which a success criterion applies, the success criterion is satisfied."
Notes/Terminology	• "AT" stands for Assistive Technology such as screen readers, voice input, etc.

Conformance Summary

WCAG 2.1 Success Criterion	Level	Evaluation
1.1.1: Non-text Content	A	Partially supports
1.2.1: Audio-only and Video-only (Prerecorded)	A	Supports (N/A)
1.2.2: Captions (Prerecorded)	A	Supports
1.2.3: Audio Description or Full Text Alternative	A	Does not support
1.2.4: Captions (Live)	AA	Supports (N/A)
1.2.5: Audio Description	AA	Does not support
1.3.1: Info and Relationships	A	Partially supports
1.3.2: Meaningful Sequence	A	Supports
1.3.3: Sensory Characteristics	A	Supports
1.3.4: Orientation (2.1)	AA	Supports
1.3.5: Identify Input Purpose (2.1)	AA	Partially supports
1.4.1: Use of Color	A	Supports
1.4.2: Audio Control	A	Supports (N/A)
1.4.3: Contrast (Minimum)	AA	Supports
1.4.4: Resize text	AA	Supports
1.4.5: Images of Text	AA	Supports
1.4.10: Reflow (2.1)	AA	Supports
1.4.11: Non-Text Contrast (2.1)	AA	Partially supports
1.4.12: Text Spacing (2.1)	AA	Partially supports
1.4.13: Content on Hover or Focus (2.1)	AA	Supports (N/A)
2.1.1: Keyboard	A	Supports
2.1.2: No Keyboard Trap	A	Supports
2.1.4: Character Key Shortcuts (2.1)	A	Supports (N/A)
2.2.1: Timing Adjustable	A	Supports (N/A)
2.2.2: Pause, Stop, Hide	A	Supports
2.3.1: Three Flashes or Below Threshold	A	Supports (N/A)
2.4.1: Bypass Blocks	A	Supports
2.4.2: Page Titled	A	Supports
2.4.3: Focus Order	A	Partially supports
2.4.4: Link Purpose (In Context)	A	Supports
2.4.5: Multiple Ways	AA	Supports
2.4.6: Headings and Labels	AA	Supports
2.4.7: Focus Visible	AA	Partially supports
2.5.1: Pointer Gestures (2.1)	A	Supports (N/A)
2.5.2: Pointer Cancellation (2.1)	A	Supports
2.5.3: Label in Name (2.1)	A	Partially supports
2.5.4: Motion Actuation (2.1)	A	Supports (N/A)
3.1.1: Language of Page	A	Supports
3.1.2: Language of Parts	AA	Partially supports

WCAG 2.1 Success Criterion	Level	Evaluation
3.2.1: On Focus	A	Supports
3.2.2: On Input	A	Supports
3.2.3: Consistent Navigation	AA	Supports
3.2.4: Consistent Identification	AA	Supports
3.3.1: Error Identification	A	Supports
3.3.2: Labels or Instructions	A	Supports
3.3.3: Error Suggestion	AA	Supports
3.3.4: Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, Data)	AA	Supports (N/A)
4.1.1: Parsing	A	Supports
4.1.2: Name, Role, Value	A	Supports
4.1.3: Status Messages (2.1)	AA	Supports

WCAG 2.1 A and AA Success Criteria

Visuals

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
1.1.1: Non-Text Content (A) Provide text alternatives for non-text content (e.g. images)	Partially supports	Many images and icons have appropriate text equivalents which indicate the purpose of the graphic. Exceptions: Homepage: Decorative images may be provided alternative text which may either provide redundancy or inaccurate information, instead of being hidden from AT.
1.3.3: Sensory Characteristics (A) Do not rely on sensory characteristics of components such as shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound	Supports	There are no instructions or areas of content which rely solely on sensory characteristics.
1.4.1: Use of Color (A) Color is not used as the only visual means of conveying info	Supports	When color is used as a means of conveying information, another visual method is typically used to convey the information without color. Inline links, for example, often have accompanying icons. Where inline links do not have accompanying icons, the color contrast ratio with surrounding text meets the minimum requirement of 3:1.
1.4.3: Color Contrast (Minimum) (AA) Text has enough contrast with the background (4.5:1 for small text and 3:1 for large text)	Supports	Text has sufficient contrast with its corresponding background. Where text is overlayed onto an image background, a deep gradient has been applied to the image to preserve a good contrast ratio at a variety of viewport sizes, zoom levels, and with text spacing properties applied.
1.4.4: Resize Text (AA) Text can be enlarged up to 200% without loss of functionality.	Supports	Text may be enlarged to 200% while preserving functionality of content.
1.4.5: Images of Text (AA) Text is used rather than images of text, except where the presentation of text is essential, such as logos	Supports	No images of text are used other than for logos or essential presentation.
1.4.10: Reflow (AA) Content can be presented without loss of information or	Supports	Pages utilize a responsive view where content reflows into a single column. Pages may be zoomed to 400% without necessitating scrolling in two directions to access blocks of content, nor loss of functionality or content.

functionality, and without requiring scrolling in two dimensions for: • Vertical scrolling content at a width equivalent to 320 CSS pixels; • Horizontal scrolling content at a height equivalent to 256 CSS pixels..		
1.4.11: Non-Text Contrast (AA) User interface components and graphical objects have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1 against adjacent color(s).	Partially supports	Non-text UI components and graphical objects have at least a 3:1 contrast ratio against surrounding colors in most instances. Exceptions: • Homepage: The focus indicator on the 'Find out more' button in the mid-page carousel does not have sufficient contrast due to being orange, on an orange background.
1.4.12: Text Spacing (AA) In content implemented using markup languages that support the following text style properties, no loss of content or functionality occurs by setting all the following and by changing no other style property: • Line height (line spacing) to at least 1.5 times the font size; • Spacing following paragraphs to at least 2 times the font size; • Letter spacing (tracking) to at least 0.12 times the font size; • Word spacing to at least 0.16 times the font size.	Partially supports	Users may adjust the text spacing of content on pages to the minimum baseline properties without causing loss of content or functionality in most instances. Exceptions: • Homepage: When text spacing properties are applied at a small viewport size, it is possible for the button in the hero carousel to drop behind other content and be unreadable.
1.4.13: Content on Hover or Focus (AA) Where receiving and then removing pointer	Supports (N/A)	No applicable instances of content that may appear on hover or focus.

hover or keyboard focus triggers additional content to become visible and then hidden, the following are true: • Dismissible • Hoverable • Persistent		
2.3.1: Three Flashes or Below Threshold (A) No more than three flashes in a 1-second period, or the flashes are below the defined thresholds	Supports (N/A)	No flashing content exists.

Keyboard

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
1.3.2: Meaningful Sequence (A) The correct reading sequence can be programmatically determined	Supports	The correct reading sequence is typically logical and programmatically determinable, with the DOM order according with the visual order.
2.1.1: Keyboard (A) All functionality is available from a keyboard, except for tasks such as drawing	Supports	Standard web page content and functionality is keyboard operable across pages.
2.1.2: No Keyboard Trap (A) The user can use the keyboard to move through page elements and is not trapped on a particular element	Supports	No pages have a keyboard trap.
2.1.4: Character Key Shortcuts (A) If a keyboard shortcut is implemented in content using only letter (including upper- and lower-case letters), punctuation, number, or symbol characters, then at least one of the following is true: • Turn off • Remap	Supports (N/A)	The site does not use any character key shortcuts.

Active only on focus		
2.4.3: Focus Order (A) Users can tab through the elements of a page in a logical order	Partially supports	Tab order is largely logical across the site and preserves the meaning and operability of content in most instances. Exceptions: Accessibility overview: When navigating to the overview page via keyboard, focus is not reset to the top of the page at page load, remaining in the footer instead.
2.4.7: Focus Visible (AA) The page element with the current keyboard focus has a visible focus indicator	Partially supports	Almost all elements across the site have a decent visible indication of focus – the focus indicator is typically a prominent solid blue or orange outline. Exceptions: Homepage: Both the play/pause and 'Find out more' buttons on an auto-progressing carousel have no visible focus indicator at 400% browser zoom.
3.2.1: On Focus (A) When a UI component receives focus, this does not trigger unexpected actions.	Supports	Focusable elements do not cause unexpected actions/changes of context when receiving focus.

Headings and Structure

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
1.3.1: Information and Relationships (A) Info, structure, and relationships can be programmatically determined	Partially supports	Most content is distinguishable via semantic structure and relationships. A logical heading order reflecting page organization and content is programmatically determinable on most pages. List markup is used appropriately in many instances. Most input elements have programmatically determinable labels. HTML sectioning elements/landmark roles demarcate content regions. Exceptions: - Header: List semantics are excessively applied to items in the language switcher menu when in a responsive view. - Homepage: Visual relationships within the hero carousel are not programmatically available. - Search – results, Journal catalog – search results, Complete Anatomy articles - search results: Search results are structured as lists, but this information is not surfaced to VoiceOver users on Safari. - Journal catalog: Journal statistics are grouped and presented in key/value pairings, but this information is not surfaced to VoiceOver users on Safari.

		- Complete Anatomy articles: Where items are presented as a list, this information is not surfaced to VoiceOver users on Safari. - Accessibility overview: The main page heading, 'Accessibility', is marked up as a level two heading instead of being more appropriately represented by a level one heading.
2.4.1: Bypass Blocks (A) Users can bypass repeated blocks of content.	Supports	Each page features a "Skip to Main Content" skip navigation link. On most pages, a logical heading order and landmarks demarcating various content regions allow AT users to conveniently jump to different areas of content. Skip links are available on search result pages to jump directly to pagination components.
2.4.6: Headings and Labels (AA) Headings and labels are clear and consistent.	Supports	Headings and labels used are typically clear and descriptive. For example, most pages feature visually distinct and programmatically determinable main and secondary headings to help distinguish content.
3.1.1: Language of Page (A) The language of the page is specified	Supports	The default page language is typically and appropriately defined as lang="en".
3.1.2: Language of Parts (AA) Specify the language of text passages that are in a different language than the default language of the page.	Partially supports	Where sections of text do not match the default language of the page, the language of these sections is sometimes programmatically identifiable. Remarks: Site-wide: When content is presented in a language other than English, not all text is translated, and the language of the non-translated text is often not programmatically determinable.
4.1.1: Parsing (A) Use valid, error-free HTML	Supports	HTML and CSS typically pass concerning these 4 specific criteria: (i) elements have complete start and end tags, (ii) elements are nested according to their specifications (iii) elements do not contain duplicate attributes (iv) any IDs are unique, except where the specifications allow these features. Note: There may be other general HTML validation errors outside the scope of this criterion. WCAG 2.1 Errata notes: "This Success Criterion should be considered as always satisfied for any content using HTML or XML."

Labeling

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
1.3.5: Identify Input Purpose (AA) The purpose of each input field collecting information about the	Partially supports	Where pages collect information about the user, typically on product contact pages, some fields have appropriate autocomplete attributes applied. Exceptions:

user can be programmatically determined when: • The input field serves a purpose identified in the Input Purposes for User Interface Components section; and • The content is implemented using technologies with support for identifying the expected meaning for form input data.		• Site-wide forms: Some fields may expose invalid autocomplete attribute value, using the field label text as the value rather than a valid token.
2.4.2: Page Titled (A) The page has a title describing its topic or purpose	Supports	A descriptive page title that identifies content/purpose is present on all pages allowing the user to quickly identify where they are within the Elsevier.com website.
2.4.4: Link Purpose (In Context) (A) The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text or surrounding context.	Supports	An identifiable purpose may be deduced for all links from the link text or surrounding context.
2.5.3: Label in Name (A) For user interface components with labels that include text or images of text, the name contains the text that is presented visually.	Partially supports	Most user interface components that have visible text contain that text consistently within the accessible name. Exceptions: • Site-wide: The accessible name of some links which open in a new window (denoted via an arrow icon) may not match the visible text and may instead be 'opens in new tab/window'.
3.2.4: Consistent Identification (AA) UI components used across the web site are identified consistently on every page.	Supports	Components are typically consistent across the site and identified consistently where they perform the same function across pages. Note: The language switcher functionality is available via both the header and footer. While both buttons provide the same functionality, they have different visual appearances and accessible names due to available space. This presentation is consistent across the website.
3.3.1: Error Identification (A) Input errors are clearly marked and described to the user.	Supports	Errors are identified and presented well visually. Error messages are typically displayed adjacently to the relevant input as well as in a form-level summary. Messages are visually distinguished via different text color (red) with an error icon.
3.3.2: Labels or Instructions (A)	Supports	Labels or instructions are provided for individual form elements.

Items requiring user input are clearly labeled or have clear instructions.		
3.3.3: Error Suggestion (AA) When the user makes an input error, give suggestions for valid input.	Supports	Relevant helpful suggestions are provided in text both adjacent to the field in error and in form-level error summaries.
4.1.2: Name, Role, Value (A) For all UI components, the name, value, and role can be programmatically determined.	Supports	UI components communicate their state programmatically and have accessible names that are appropriately defined. ARIA attributes are present where appropriate.
4.1.3: Status Messages (AA) In content implemented using markup languages, status messages can be programmatically determined through role or properties such that they can be presented to the user by assistive technologies without receiving focus.	Supports	Status messages are automatically announced by assistive technology. Error message summaries are announced without requiring a move of focus, and updated search results are announced along with the result count.

Multimedia

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
1.2.1: Audio-only or Video-only (Prerecorded) (A) Provide alternatives for pre-recorded audio-only or video-only content.	Supports (N/A)	There is no pre-recorded audio-only or video-only content.
1.2.2: Captions (Prerecorded) (A) Provide captions for pre-recorded audio	Supports	Captions are provided for audiovisual content. Note: Where media content presents people speaking in languages other than English, this information is available aurally but may not be communicated in the provided captions.
1.2.3: Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded) (A)	Does not support	Neither audio descriptions nor suitable textual alternatives are provided as alternatives for video in audiovisual content.

Provide alternatives for pre-recorded synchronized audio/video		
1.2.4: Captions (Live) (AA) Provide captions for live audio in synchronized audio/video.	Supports (N/A)	There is no synchronized audio/video content nor live audio.
1.2.5: Audio Description (Prerecorded) (AA) Provide an audio description of pre-recorded video.	Does not support	No audio descriptions are provided for video in audiovisual content. See supporting remarks for 1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded).
1.4.2: Audio Control (A) Audio can be paused and stopped, or the audio volume can be changed.	Supports (N/A)	No pages feature audio that plays automatically.
2.2.2: Pause, Stop, Hide (A) Users can stop, pause, or hide moving, blinking, scrolling, or auto-updating information.	Supports	Moving, scrolling, or auto-updating information, such as auto-progressing carousels, have a mechanism to pause, stop, or hide the motion.

Usability

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
2.2.1: Timing Adjustable (A) Users are warned of time limits shorter than 20 hours and time limits can be turned off or extended	Supports (N/A)	Pages are not subject to session time limits.
2.4.5: Multiple Ways (AA) More than one way is available to navigate to other web pages.	Supports	All pages (except steps/results of a process) may typically be located and accessed in multiple ways. For example, main navigation is consistently available across pages, and secondary navigation is often present in the form of breadcrumb trails representing page hierarchy. Global search functionality that comprehensively indexes content across the site allows users to find specific pages. A sitemap is also available.
3.2.2: On Input (A) Changing the setting of a checkbox, radio button, or other UI	Supports	User input, such as changing the values of form elements, does not initiate unexpected actions or changes in context.

component does not trigger unexpected changes in context.		
3.2.3: Consistent Navigation (AA) Navigation menus are in the same location and order on every web page.	Supports	Navigation menus are consistent across pages. For example, global navigation links in the header are consistent across pages, occurring in the same order; secondary navigation is consistently positioned across appropriate sets of pages.
3.3.4: Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, Data) (AA) For web pages with legal or financial commitments, input can be reviewed and corrected before final submission, and submissions can be reverted.	Supports (N/A)	There are no submissions which require legal or financial commitments.

Mobile User Experience

WCAG 2.1 Checkpoint	Conformance Level	Remarks
1.3.4: Orientation (AA) Content does not restrict its view and operation to a single display orientation, such as portrait or landscape, unless a specific display orientation is essential.	Supports	Pages do not restrict view and operation of content to a single orientation.
2.5.1: Pointer Gestures (A) All functionality that uses multipoint or path-based gestures for operation can be operated with a single pointer without a path-based gesture, unless a multipoint or path-based gesture is essential.	Supports (N/A)	Pages do not utilize or require multipoint or path-based gestures for any functionality.
2.5.2: Pointer Cancellation (A) For functionality that can be operated using a single pointer, at least one of the following is true:	Supports	All interactive content functions through the Up-Event, allowing users to potentially move their pointer off the component to cancel.

• No Down-Event • Abort or Undo • Up Reversal • Essential		
2.5.4: Motion Actuation (A) Functionality that can be operated by device motion or user motion can also be operated by user interface components and responding to the motion can be disabled to prevent accidental actuation, except when: • Supported Interface • Essential	Supports (N/A)	There is no content that utilizes device or user motion.