



AAT DIGITAL SECTION 37 DOCUMENTS

AAT ONLINE SERVICES PORTAL

The AAT [Online Services portal](#) allows parties to send us documents in any case that has already been lodged with the AAT, including the documents that the decision-maker must lodge under section 37 of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975* (Section 37 documents).

In accordance with the [COVID-19 Practice Directions](#) that took effect on 29 April 2020, Section 37 documents must be lodged using the Online Services portal to the extent possible.

The Online Services portal can be used to lodge Section 37 documents up to a maximum size of 50MB. For files larger than 50MB, please contact your local registry to make arrangements to lodge the documents via our registered Sigbox account.

AAT Online Services portal user guidelines are available at: <https://www.aat.gov.au/online-services/user-guide-to-sending-us-documents-online>

AAT INTERIM SPECIFICATION FOR DIGITAL SECTION 37 DOCUMENTS

The following interim specification outlines the AAT's expectations for the preparation of Section 37 documents that will be lodged electronically. A full specification will be developed in due course.

File format

Digital Section 37 documents lodged with the AAT must be in Portable Document Format (PDF). They should be saved in the latest specification – presently PDF 1.7. The minimum acceptable format is PDF 1.5.

https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/pdf-conversion-settings.html#pdf_compatibility_levels

Searchable text

Text must be machine readable and searchable. For documents created in MS Word, searchable text will be preserved when exported to PDF. Where documents are scanned from hardcopy, optical character recognition will need to be used to convert to searchable text.

Other content

Images should be at a sufficient resolution for screen viewing and printing, generally 300dpi, with appropriate compression and down-sampling to reduce overall file size.

Although PDF files may contain interactive elements such as annotations, form fields, video, 3D and rich media, the AAT does not permit interactive elements.

File size and compression

To the extent possible, digital Section 37 documents should be contained in a single PDF file with the highest amount of compression and not have a file size larger than 50MB. If necessary, multiple volumes can be created as separate PDF files.

Supplementary Section 37 documents should be created in the same manner.

Structure and navigation

The *Lodgement of Documents under Sections 37 and 38AA of the AAT Act Practice Direction* continues to apply, in particular section 4.

- Each document must be identified with a number commencing with the application for review as 'T1'. Subsequent documents will bear 'T' numbers in sequence. Each page must be numbered sequentially.
- The Section 37 documents must be accompanied by an index, which sets out the date and a brief description of each document. The pagination must be set out in the index.

To ensure the section 37 documents can be navigated quickly, each T-document must be:

- hyperlinked from the index, and
- bookmarked.

Multiple volumes and supplementary documents should be created as separate PDF files each with its own index and bookmarks.

Document security

Use of password to restrict access is not required. The file does not require a digital signature.

Accessibility

Accessibility can be assisted by the use of a screen reader application. Though PDF is a standard, the content and structure of PDF documents vary widely. Accessibility is affected by four types of PDF documents: image only files, untagged documents, tagged documents and electronic forms.

The aim of this interim policy is to facilitate the rapid uptake of digital Section 37 documents. It is acknowledged that due to a wide variety of page layouts, document structures and a low degree of tagging for documents that screen readers may have difficulty extracting words, sentences and paragraphs in a coherent order.

The method of service of Section 37 documents on applicants and any other parties is a matter for the relevant decision-maker. To the extent possible, the PDF version should be provided having regard to potential accessibility and security issues.

PDF Resources

- Acrobat User Guide <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/user-guide.html>
- Kofax Power PDF <https://www.kofax.com/Products/power-pdf/power-pdf-how-to>
- Accessing PDF Documents with Assistive Technology: <https://www.adobe.com/content/dam/acom/en/accessibility/pdfs/accessing-pdf-sr.pdf>