Written exam linguistic verification tool

The following verification checklist may help improve the linguistics and inclusivity or your exam questions. Please use it as a guide when writing or reviewing written exam questions or papers.

	Area	Checked?
Question writing	**Basics**	
	Is the question written in the plainest allowable language?	
	Is the question direct and clear in what it is asking?	
	Check all spelling and grammar	
	Ensure the question is logically spaced and laid out	
	Question length	
	Remove all unnecessary information. Extraneous information complicates a question linguistically, not academically.	
	Follow institutional guidance on number of questions and length. A useful guide is that the **slowest reading student should be able to achieve a mark a minute** – ensure your questions are short and comprehensible enough to achieve this.	
	Stem and question	
	Avoid negative questions where possible.	
	If your question contains more than one sentence, ensure that it has a clear stem, with all relevant information and a separate, directly asked question at the end. **It is also a good idea to have the directly asked question on a new line and in bold.**	
	Options (MCQ/EMQ only)	
	Each option should be of a similar length and grammatically similar.	
	Ideally limit each option to a maximum of one line as it appears on the paper/screen to avoid scanning issues for dyslexic students.	
	If the start of each option is the same, can you move it into the question/stem?	
	Idea density	
	This is a measure of how quickly you introduce multiple concepts. Whilst maintaining a normal flow of writing, and providing sufficient context, ensure the following: • Keep to one (maximum two) concepts per sentence • Itemise lists (avoid long string sentences)	
	Technical language	
	Language used in all parts should be familiar to the student. Ensure that any technical language used is required/taught on the course, if not can it be re-worded or defined?	
Editing/compiling	**Font**	
	Font used should be sans serif and a minimum size of 12 (T = serif, T = sans serif).	
	Left align text **without** justification (justification causes scanning issues for some people)	
	Use 1.5 line spacing	
	Use **bold** to emphasise, rather than colours, *italics* or underlining as these can be confusing	
	Background	
	Use a plain, off-white background, with black text if possible.	