Converting Files to PDF/A Format

What is PDF/A?

PDF/A is an archival format of PDF that embeds all fonts used in the document within the PDF file. This means that a user of your file will not have to have the same fonts that you used to create the file installed on their computer to read the file. The solutions provided below will ensure that all fonts, including common system fonts, are embedded and provide compliance with PDF/A standards.

Note that the NSF Public Access Repository (NSF-PAR) system requires users to upload a PDF/A file format for purposes of long-term preservation and archiving and to satisfy 508 compliance requirements of the [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](#) ↗.
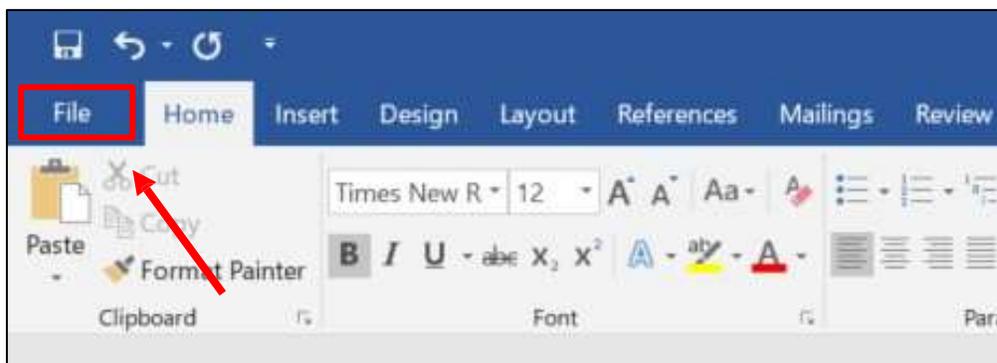
How do I create a PDF/A file?

Microsoft Word documents can be saved in the PDF/A format. In addition to fee-based software such as Adobe Acrobat Professional, there are also other third party applications and services that are free or have free versions with limited functionality (e.g., [PDFTron](#) ↗, [DocuPub](#) ↗, [PDFCreator](#) ↗, and [Ghostscript](#) ↗) that can convert documents to the PDF/A format.

If you choose not to convert the file yourself, NSF recommends working with your publisher to obtain a properly formatted version of your publication. Another valuable resource is your organization's library staff, who often have tools to help you manage your deposits.
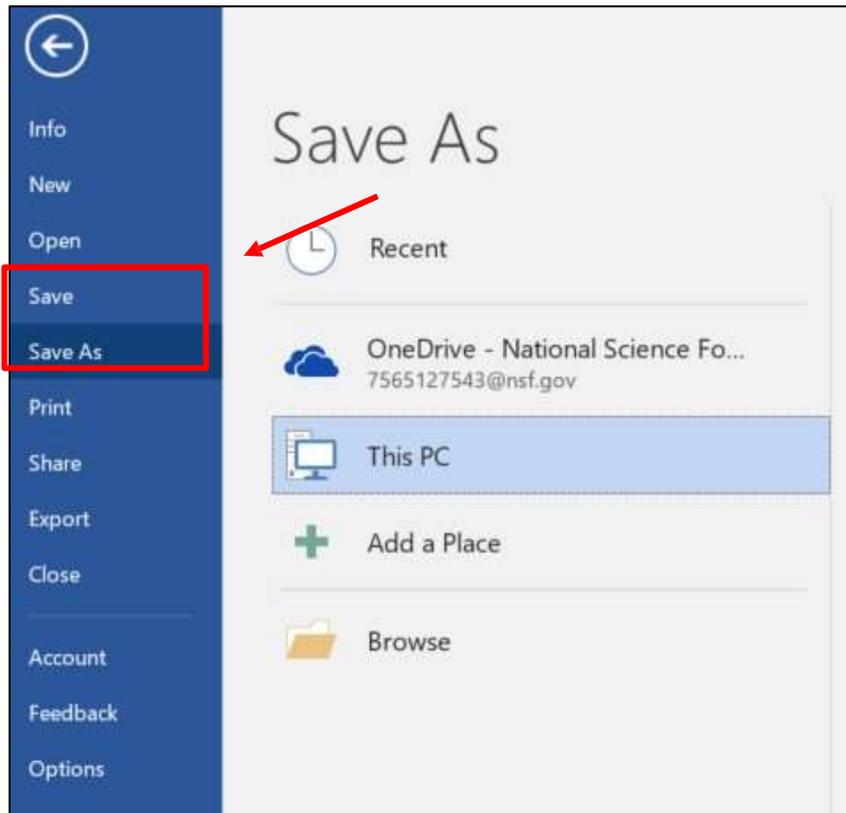
Step-by-step instructions on converting Microsoft Word documents and PDFs using Adobe Acrobat Professional to the PDF/A format are included below.

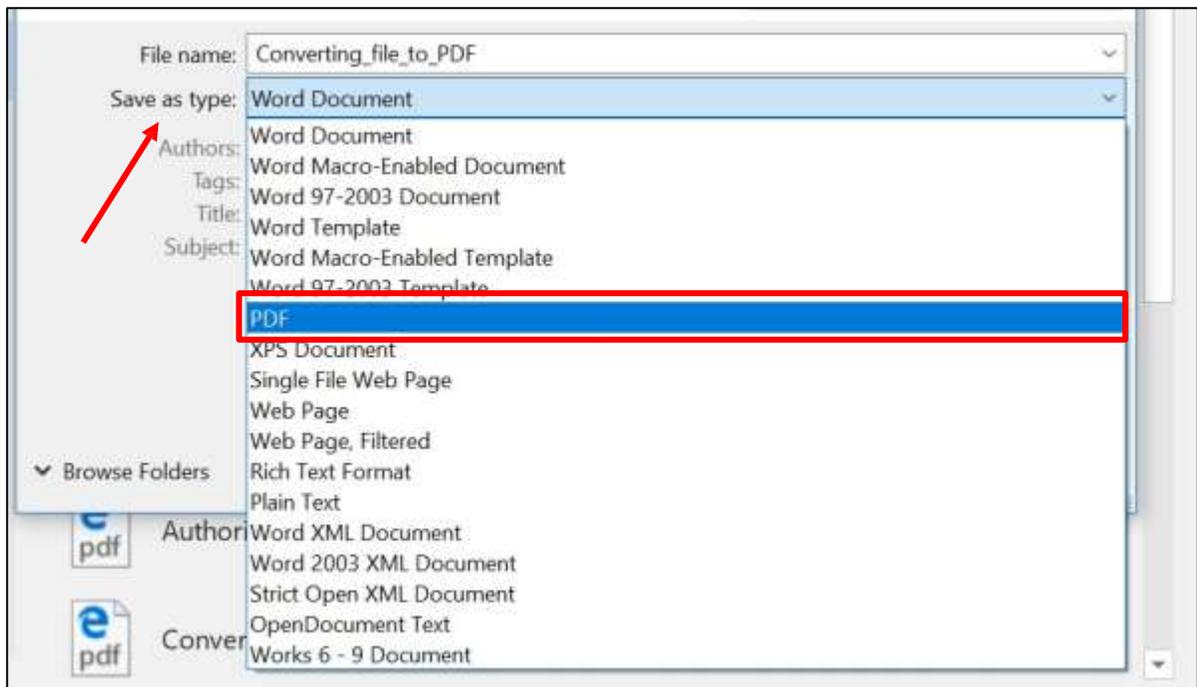## Converting Microsoft Word Documents to PDF/A Format
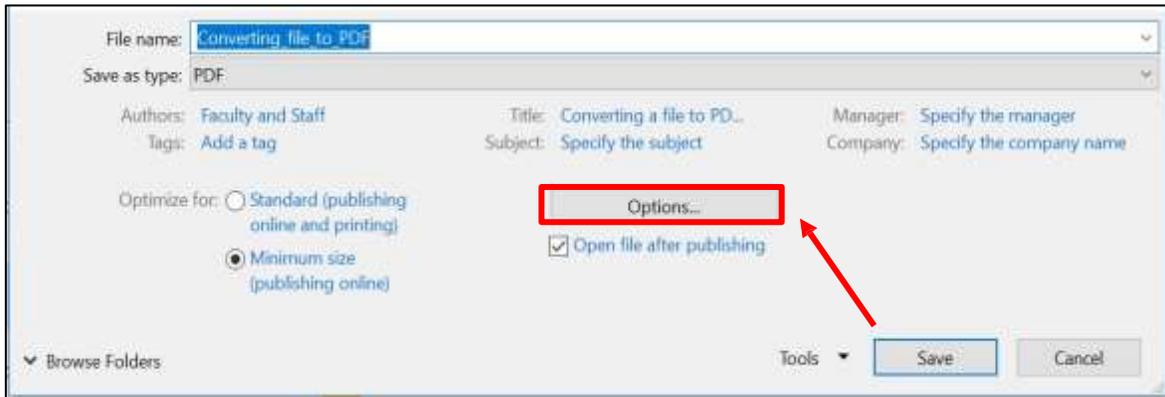
- Click the **File** tab in the upper left corner

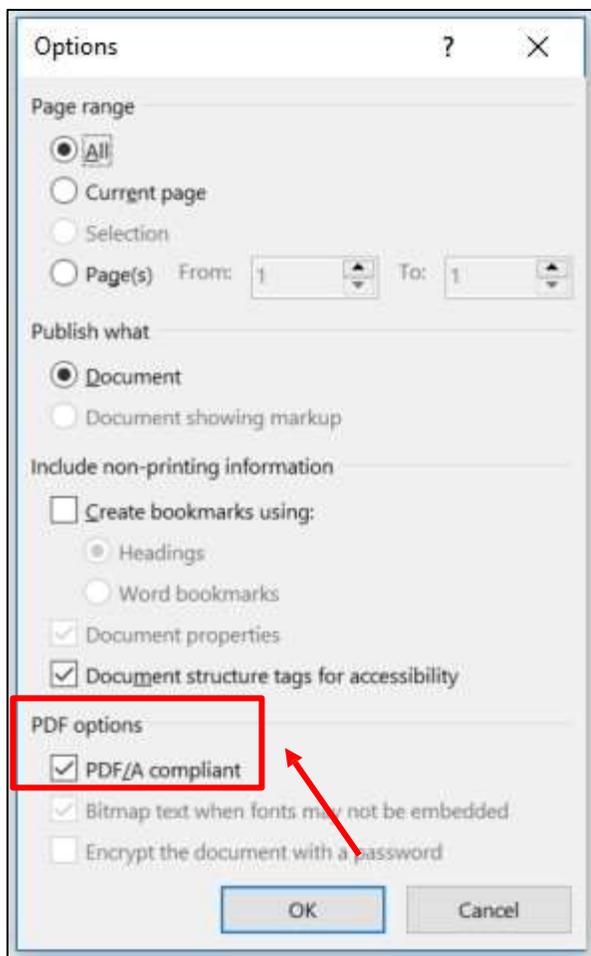- Choose **Save** *or* **Save As**

- Change the **Save as Type** to **PDF**
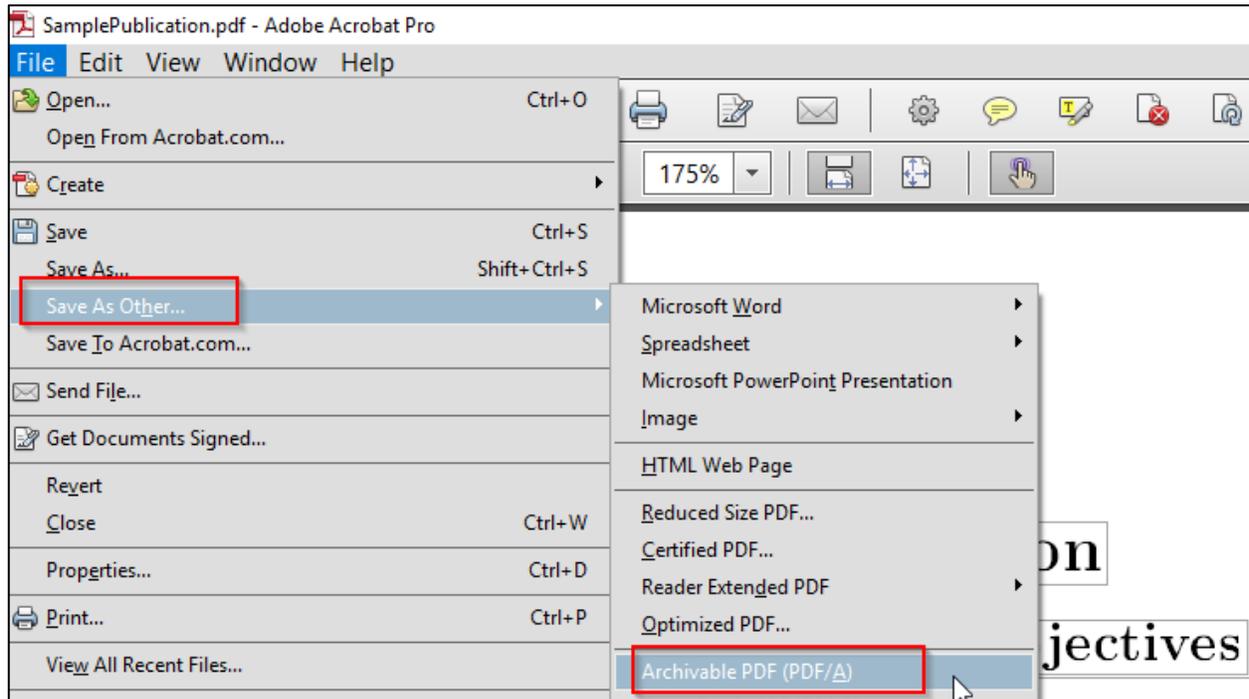
- Click on **Options**

- Check **the PDF/A compliant** box under **PDF options** and click **OK**

- Click **Save**

Converting Adobe Acrobat Professional (XI Version 11.0.23 or later) Files to PDF/A Format

- Click **File→ Save As Other → Archivable PDF (PDF/A)**

- Once the file is saved, text is displayed to indicate that the file is now PDF/A compliant