University of BRISTOL

The provision of material to taught students in advance of a lecture or other teaching activity

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out an expectation with regard to the provision of material to taught students in advance of a lecture or other teaching activity and provides accompanying guidance on implementation. The provisions within this document will be implemented during 2016/17, such that the expectation can be met from the start of the 2017/18 academic year.

1.2 The form that this material will take will depend upon the nature of what is being taught, for example, the provision of a summary of the content (e.g. lecture notes or slides) in advance of a lecture will not always be academically desirable, particularly where the focus of a teaching activity is on the 'live' solving of problems by students; however it may be that a summary of the purpose of the teaching and/or an introduction to the concepts that will be utilised, can be appropriately provided in advance to students to help them prepare themselves for the activity.

1.3 Realising this expectation will help support the fulfilment of the one of the key priorities in the University Vision and Strategy to: "*review all curricula to ensure that they are inclusive in scope and delivery*", as well as specifically meeting the objective in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy: "*to develop an institutional approach to inclusivity in our teaching, learning and assessment practices, including establishing an expectation on the provision of material in advance of teaching activities for all taught students*".

2. Expectation on the provision of material in advance of a lecture or other teaching activity

2.1 **Material* for a lecture or other teaching activity should be provided in advance of a lecture for all students in a taught unit, in accordance with the guidance, unless there is a good pedagogic reason for not doing so. Where this is the case, the relevant member of staff should make a request to the Programme Director and, if agreed, students should be informed with a rationale provided.**

* The material provided to students may constitute: (i) an overview of a teaching activity or series of activities, and/or outline of the purpose of the teaching activity, which will enable students to prepare for the teaching that they will receive, and/or (ii) a summary of the teaching that will be delivered in the teaching activity (see 3.3 in the guidance for details).

2.2 The advance provision of a summary of the teaching that is due to be delivered is not always academically desirable in certain forms of teaching. This expectation does not intend to dissuade staff from using other forms of teaching that do not lend themselves to the advance provision of material on the forthcoming teaching, but establishes a norm for this provision, where it is applicable.

2.3 This expectation is established on the basis that the provision of material in advance of a teaching activity will:

- Provide a good prompt and guide that students can use to prepare for a teaching activity; although the onus remains on the student to access and engage with the material.
- Be inclusive by design and help all students in their studies, including those students who have difficulty in note-taking.

- Enable all students to work with the material in a format that is familiar to them – either on a remote device or in print form.
- Sets a consistent model for the student experience across the University and is a clear marker to students on what they should expect to receive.
- Complement the Mediasite project on the recording of lectures.

2.4 Schools may need to consider arrangements for uploading material in advance of the teaching activity; although there is facility in Blackboard to upload the material once and then time-release it.

3. Guidance on the provision of material in advance of a lecture or other teaching activity

3.1. This guidance relates to lectures or other activity where teaching is being delivered to a group of students by a member of staff or external lecturer where material or information on the teaching is provided in advance of the activity, except in approved cases where there is a good pedagogic reason for not doing so.

3.2. The nature and extent of the material will depend on the discipline and the teaching that is being delivered.

3.3. The material may constitute:

i. An overview of the activity or series of activities that will prepare a student for the teaching they are due to receive. Where provided, this overview should be uploaded and made available to students no later than one week prior to the teaching activity.

ii. Any information that would ordinarily be disseminated to students throughout the course of the teaching activity (e.g. slides from a lecture presentation). Where provided, such materials should be uploaded and made available to students no later than 48 hours prior to the commencement of the lecture.

3.4. Material should be accessible to all students that are being taught and normally made available from the University's VLE (Blackboard).

3.5. The material should be legible and conform to the necessary accessibility requirements (see Appendix A for further information).

3.6. It is the responsibility of the individual delivering the teaching to prepare the material and to ensure it is uploaded and available to students by the deadlines outlined above. It is the responsibility of the Unit Director to oversee this activity.

3.7. Academic staff retain the right to make modifications to the materials relating to their teaching both before, during and after the teaching activity.

Approved by University Education Committee
June 2016

Appendix A

PROVISION OF MATERIAL TO STUDENTS IN ADVANCE OF TEACHING:
Guidance on Accessibility Requirements

Material made available on Blackboard should be accessible and inclusive. In the case of students with disabilities, the Equality Act 2010 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents] requires the University to ensure that reasonable (anticipatory) adjustments are in place so that disabled students are not disadvantaged. Providing accessible learning materials is part of meeting this requirement.

Student diversity extends beyond disability. Given the University's aspirations towards greater internationalism and widening participation, we can expect that significant numbers of students using Blackboard will not have English as a first language and/ or may be from non-traditional backgrounds. Additionally, we have students with low-level, undiagnosed or undisclosed disabilities, students whose mental health and wellbeing fluctuates, and injured or ill students. Thus, **making Blackboard materials accessible and inclusive is good practice which will benefit a wide diversity of students**.

Jisc provides regularly updated guidance on Using assistive and accessible technology in teaching and learning [www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/using-assistive-and-accessible-technology-in-teaching-and-learning]. Note in particular the Jisc guidance on:

- Documents, presentations and spreadsheets [www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/using-assistive-and-accessible-technology-in-teaching-and-learning/documents-presentations-and-spreadsheets];
- Learning platforms (such as Blackboard) [www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/using-assistive-and-accessible-technology-in-teaching-and-learning/learning-platforms].

This Appendix is drawn substantially from and should be read in conjunction with the Jisc guidance linked above.

1.0 Accessible word processed documents

This guidance applies to Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or open source software such as Libre- or OpenOffice. It will not be possible to make word processed documents accessible to all possible students, just as Blackboard itself cannot be made universally accessible. **Students who cannot access word processed documents, even those designed to be widely accessible, should be signposted to Disability Services [www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/] and/ or to the Library's alternative formats service [www.bris.ac.uk/library/using/disabledusers/services.html#altformats] for further information and advice.**

1.1 Document layout

- Text should be left-aligned for ease of reading by the widest diversity of readers; text should not be justified because this varies the space between words, which is difficult for some readers
- Break up the text with white space; leave space between paragraphs
- Double or 1.5 spacing between lines can make a document easier for some readers to use
- Use numbers to add structure
- Use bulleted lists where appropriate
- Use in-built HEADING STYLES to add structure and aid navigation
- Include page numbers
- For longer documents, use meaningful headers and footers to flag content and include a table of contents

1.2 Make it readable

- Use a simple font that is large enough and easy to read; 12 point Arial or Calibri is a good choice; if you are not using 12 point Arial or Calibri, compare your choice to 12 point Arial or Calibri and critically assess the size and readability in relation to 12 point Arial or Calibri
- Avoid serif fonts, such as Times New Roman; these are less easy to read for some readers
- Do not use ornate or 'script' fonts; these reduce the number of people who can easily read the text
- Good font choices are: Arial (especially), Calibri (especially), Helvetica, Universe and Verdana
- Do not use 'Word Art', which is incompatible with many screen readers
- Avoid Italics and underlining where possible; some readers struggle with these
- Do not present text in continuous capitals; this reduces shape contrasts and makes the text difficult to read
- Use bold for emphasis as this is the most accessible way to highlight content

Use the in-built ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER to highlight potential accessibility issues. In Microsoft Word 2013, the ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER is accessed via the File menu:

File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility

1.3 Using tables

- Keep the structure simple, remembering that SCREEN READERS read content from left to right
- Specify the header rows and make sure they are repeated if the table crosses multiple pages
- Add meaningful ALT TEXT to explain your table to visually impaired readers

1.4 Using images

- Use only relevant, necessary images
- Resize and crop images to focus the reader's attention and to keep files to a manageable size
- Add meaningful ALT TEXT and useful captions to images
- Use SCREEN TIPS if you need extra information
- Make sure that images are positioned such that they do not interfere with the text

1.5 Using graphs

- Colour schemes may not be accessible to all viewers
- Wherever possible, replace colour contrasts with differences in line or texture (e.g., dotted vs. solid line instead of red vs. brown)
- Add meaningful ALT TEXT and use captions to summarise the main points

1.6 Using hyperlinks

- Use SCREEN TIPS to indicate where the link takes the reader

2.0 Accessible .pdfs

There are accessibility features built in to Adobe Reader software to make .pdfs easier to read. If a document has been created using a word processing tool and is accessible, many of the accessibility features will be present in the .pdf after conversion. However, if you did not create the document, or it was not created using Word or similar, you may need to amend it to ensure that it is accessible.

2.1 Creating a .pdf

- Convert from a Word or PowerPoint document (using 'save as')
- Scan from hard copy (e.g., a book)

If scanning from a hard copy, you must use optical character recognition (OCR) so that you create machine-readable text, rather than an image of the text which can't be accessed by SCREEN READERS; contact the

[Library's alternative formats service](www.bris.ac.uk/library/using/disabledusers/services.html#altformats) [www.bris.ac.uk/library/using/disabledusers/services.html#altformats] for further guidance.

- Use the ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER to check for issues
- Set the language specification so that it is appropriate for screen readers
- Add BOOKMARKS to longer documents

2.2 Using images

- Add meaningful ALT TEXT and use SCREEN TIPS for extra information
- Include only images that are relevant and necessary

2.3 Using tables

- Use as simple a structure as possible
- Remember that SCREEN READERS read content from left to right
- Add a meaningful table summary to explain your table to visually impaired readers

3.0 Accessible presentations

These can be a valuable resource for learners.

3.1 Creating the presentation

- Give each slide a unique title
- Keep layouts simple and clear
- Use the notes field to expand on and summarise slide content
- Use the ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER to check for issues
- Avoid backgrounds which are overly 'busy'
- Use a sans serif typeface (24 point Arial or Calibri; 45 point for titles)
- Do not use colour as the only indicator of meaning, e.g., to distinguish between 'positive' and 'negative' factors
- Avoid animations and sounds if not crucial to presentation content

3.2 Using images

- Resize large images to keep file sizes manageable
- Crop images to focus the viewer
- Add meaningful ALT TEXT to images
- Caption images and use SCREEN TIPS to add further information

3.3 Using multimedia

- If you include sound files, add a transcript for hearing impaired users
- If you use videos, these should be captioned (ideally) for hearing impaired users; alternatively, a transcript should be provided

3.4 Using hyperlinks

- Use SCREEN TIPS to indicate where the link takes the reader

4.0 Accessible spreadsheets

Spreadsheets can be daunting especially for people with DYSLEXIA, DYSPRAXIA, DYSCALCULIA or a visual impairment. Such learners may be better able to make sense of data presented both numerically and visually (i.e., numerical data supported by graphs and charts).

4.1 Creating accessible spreadsheets

- Use colour or shading to highlight key areas (but not as the only indication of a contrast, e.g., between positive and negative numbers)
- Use POP UP COMMENTS to give explanations or instructions
- Use DATA VALIDATION to reduce the likelihood of learners accidentally adding the wrong values
- Use CONDITIONAL FORMATTING to highlight key values

5.0 Creating accessible materials for the VLE (Blackboard)

General guidance for creating Blackboard materials such that the materials meet the needs of disabled students. Accessible content is likely to be more useable and so will benefit a wide diversity of users.

Creating accessible materials for Blackboard should not, in the main, be costly or onerous. The best way to ensure accessibility is by making sure that documents and content are accessible before they go online (see sections 1.0 to 4.0, above).

It will not be possible to make all materials completely accessible for all users. **Students who report that they cannot access material on Blackboard should be signposted to their academic School/ Faculty (in the first instance) and/ or to [Disability Services](), who can liaise on the student's behalf.** Schools/ Faculties requiring advice on alternatives for students who cannot access Blackboard should contact Disability Services.

In addition to the guidance in sections 1.0 to 4.0 (above), please see the following guidance for materials on Blackboard:

5.1 Blackboard guidance

- All images should be meaningfully captioned
- Audio should be transcribed
- Where videos are central to learning outcomes, these should be subtitled or provided with a transcription
- Supplementary videos (non-essential to the course) should be subtitled, transcribed or a content summary provided
- Note that some media providers will provide a subtitled version on request
- Do not use colour as the sole method of conveying information, e.g., red for priority items
- Do not use moving, flashing or scrolling text

6.0 Useful links

- [Jisc guidance on using assistive and accessible technology in teaching and learning]() [www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/using-assistive-and-accessible-technology-in-teaching-and-learning]
- [Microsoft Office accessibility features]() [www.microsoft.com/enable/]
- [Accessibility in Google docs, sheets and slides]() [www.google.com/accessibility/all-products-features.html]
- [Sensory trust guidance on clear and large print]() [www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/connect/infosheet_clearlargeprint.pdf]
- [RNIB guidance on accessible spreadsheets]() [help.rnib.org.uk/help/employment-work/accessibility-at-work/accessible-spreadsheets]

7.0 Glossary

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKER

Accessibility Checker in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint provides information about possible accessibility issues in your Office file [support.office.com/en-us/article/Check-for-accessibility-issues-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f].

ALT TEXT

Alt text (alternative text) is a word or phrase that can be inserted as an attribute in an HTML document to tell Web site viewers the nature or contents of an image [support.office.com/en-us/article/Add-alternative-text-to-a-picture-shape-chart-SmartArt-graphic-or-table-52327e7c-cecb-45d4-9367-f911aa442371].

BOOKMARKS

Bookmarks help readers find content in a .pdf file [acrobatusers.com/tutorials/how-do-i-add-bookmarks-to-a-pdf-document]

CONDITIONAL FORMATTING

Conditional formatting quickly highlights important information in a spreadsheet (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet). There are in-built options or you can set your own conditions using a formula [support.office.com/en-us/article/Use-a-formula-to-apply-conditional-formatting-fed60dfa-1d3f-4e13-9ecb-f1951ff89d7f]

DATA VALIDATION

You can use data validation to control the type of data or the values that users enter into a cell on a spreadsheet (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet) [support.office.com/en-gb/article/Apply-data-validation-to-cells-29fecbcc-d1b9-42c1-9d76-eff3ce5f7249]

DYSLEXIA, DYSPRAXIA, DYSCALCULIA

Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia are specific learning difficulties affecting reading skills, fine motor skills (such as writing) and arithmetic skills, respectively. Specific learning difficulties may involve relative weaknesses in working memory capacity or processing speed and may have associated effects such as problems with time management, planning and personal organisation.

HEADING STYLES

Using heading styles can help to bring order and visual consistency to a document [support.office.com/en-us/article/Add-a-heading-8a361157-3705-45c7-b90a-feab81cb3b2f].

POP UP COMMENTS

Pop up comments display in spreadsheets (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet) when the mouse hovers over a cell [www.howtogeek.com/162231/add-comments-to-formulas-and-cells-in-excel-2013/].

SCREEN READERS

A screen readers supports blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on a computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display. A screen reader is the interface between the computer's operating system, its applications, and the user. Popular readers include JAWS, Google ChromeVox (a Chrome browser extension) and Apple VoiceOver (integral to Apple computers since OS X and works with iOS). JAWS is offered by the Library's disability service.

SCREEN TIPS

Screen tips can be entered when setting up hyperlinks so that useful information is displayed when users hover over a link. This information is also readable by screen readers. The Microsoft support pages for setting up hyperlinks include instructions for screen tips.