

Reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning

Includes advice on teaching online

Introduction

This page provides an overview of the most common reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning that are recommended in Student Support Plans. It also includes comprehensive advice on how to improve the accessibility of online teaching for disabled students.

Reasonable adjustments are central to the concept of disability equality. Where a disabled student suffers, or would suffer, a substantial disadvantage, the University is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to overcome that disadvantage. The intention is that the adjustments should level the playing field for the disabled student.

Note that sometimes very specific recommendations are given in an SSP that are particular to an individual and do not fall within the categories below. These recommendations are driven by that student's particular need based on their unique experience of their impairment, and may not be shared by others with the same or a similar condition, but are likely to be important for them. For example, a student with dyspraxia finds that she needs notes to be left on a whiteboard for longer to enable her to process the information and to take notes.

Teaching remotely: support for disabled students

The Centre for Teaching and Learning, with the Disability Advisory Service, has produced advice for staff on supporting disabled students whilst teaching remotely during the coronavirus pandemic:

- [Making your remote teaching inclusive](#) has ideas and suggestions designed to ensure that all students are able to fully access learning.
- [Teaching remotely: supporting disabled students](#) provides advice for teaching staff on how to approach planning their support for a disabled student. It also highlights the inclusive steps that can be

taken to improve learning for everyone, as well as promoting inclusion for disabled students.

- There is also specific advice for delivering remote teaching to those with [Visual Impairments](#), [Hearing Impairments](#) or [Autistic Spectrum Condition](#).
- There is detailed advice on [creating accessible digital learning materials](#), including this [Creating Accessible Videos](#) resource, and an FAQ on [accessibility in online learning](#).
- The University has subscribed to the [SensusAccess tool which is now available on the Bodleian Library website](#). SensusAccess enables students and staff to convert files into a wide range of alternative formats: including audio books (MP3 and DAISY), e-books (EPUB, EPUB3 and Mobi) and digital Braille. It can also be used to create accessible documents from inaccessible files. For example, an image-based pdf or .jpg can be converted into an accessible Word document.
- There is a blog article for students on the [accessibility features of the learning platforms](#) used by the University of Oxford.

The resources above complement the advice available in the [teaching remotely webpages](#) and the [Canvas resource on Flexible and Inclusive teaching](#).

Access to lecture capture

This [guide to lecture capture](#) below is for tutors who need to implement lecture capture as a reasonable adjustment, or who want to make it available for all their students.

Advance notice of changes to study venues

Students who have a mobility impairment, or who need teaching to take place in an accessible building, will need to be given as much notice as possible if there is a change of venue. This is because they will need to plan their journey to the new venue, and identify accessible entrances, etc. It is vital that all teaching staff know of this requirement.

Students may also need a new Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan if they are accessing a building for the first time, so Disability Coordinators

should also be made aware of the change so that they can put these arrangements in place.

Flexibility with formative assessment deadlines

Where appropriate, students with this recommendation should be given flexibility with formative assessment deadlines, to enable them to manage particularly busy periods in term-time, or to manage fluctuations in their condition. It is important that all teaching staff are aware of this recommendation when it is included in an SSP.

Students should understand that this recommendation does not apply to summative assessment deadlines, and applications for extensions to these deadlines should be made well in advance of a deadline, each time an extension is needed.

Note-takers

Permission for a note-taker to attend lectures. Disability Coordinators should inform lecturers when a note-taker will be present at a lecture series or course. It is helpful for the note-taker to receive lecture materials in advance of the session to aid effective note-taking.

Recording teaching sessions

Many disabled students need to have the option of recording teaching sessions, and this is often as an alternative to a note-taker attending sessions. Students with this recommendation in their Student Support Plan will receive equipment and training via their Disabled Students' Allowance to enable them to record sessions effectively. If available, lecture capture is likely to be the preferred option, but a minority of students need to have their own recordings in order to use their preferred Assistive Technology software. It is the student's responsibility to inform the lecturer that they are recording the session, but they do not need to seek permission, if this has been recommended in their SSP. Please see our guide for tutors on [student recordings of teaching](#).

Permitted absence

If their Student Support Plan recommends that absence should be permitted for disability-related appointments (medical, therapeutic), it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their tutor has been informed in good time ahead of the session, to enable the possibility of re-scheduling (in the case of tutorials). In the case of seminars or classes, prior notice will enable the tutor to provide the student with the teaching materials used in the session.

Provision of teaching materials in advance

[Provision of reading lists, teaching materials and lecture handouts in advance.](#)

Provision of materials in alternative formats

Recommendation: provision of written materials in electronic or alternative format. Students with this recommendation will either require teaching materials to be provided in an electronic, accessible format and/or printed handouts to be formatted to meet their needs. Some students are supported by the Accessible Resources Unit at the Bodleian Library (ARACU), which can produce alternative formats of teaching materials, books and articles. Tutors need to provide details of readings lists to ARACU as soon as possible, so that work can be undertaken in time for the new term. It is also helpful to have readings lists broken down into reading for each week, so that production of materials can be prioritised accordingly.

Disability Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that tutors are aware of the requirement for alternative formats and the format the student requires. More information about [producing accessible Word and PDF documents and PowerPoint slides](#) (so that they can be read by screen-reading software) can be found on the CTL website.

Reading lists

A recommendation for a targeted reading list means providing information about which chapters/sections to prioritise and also distinguishing between 'essential' and 'further' reading for a course. It is important that readings lists are available in good time before a course begins to enable those with print disabilities to arrange for alternative formats to be

produced, and to take account of the fact that reading is a much more time consuming task for the student. ORLO can now provide an effective service for departments in producing fully accessible reading lists which also gives easy access to electronic versions of texts and the location of the item in libraries. It is a Disability Coordinator's role to ensure that all the relevant tutors are aware of a student's requirement for these reading lists. Please see our [targeted reading list guide](#).

Review of teaching locations

Recommendation: review of teaching locations to ensure accessibility. For students with mobility impairments, Disability Coordinators need to ensure that before each term begins, they have coordinated with the relevant tutors and administrators to ensure that the teaching locations used will be accessible for the student. Locations should be changed whenever possible to ensure the student can access the session.

Designated seating arrangements

Recommendation: designated seating in lectures/classes. Some students need to be seated near the front of a lecture or seminar room, others need to be close to an exit or next to an aisle. These requirements can normally be met without any action needing to be taken from a Disability Coordinator or tutor. However, where space is very limited, reserving an appropriate seat for the student may be necessary.