# Making online learning accessible for those with Visual Impairments

The information below is designed to complement the information given in the ‘Remote learning: Supporting disabled students’ and ‘Making your remote teaching inclusive’ documents.

In addition to this guidance, and the specific information about a student's study needs in the Student Support Plan, the Disability Advisory Service is always available to offer guidance in individual cases.

The suggestions below are steps that you can take that will make learning more accessible for those with Visual Impairments. However, the student will also have needs and preferences that are unique to them, which may not be included here. Asking the student themselves what they need will be your main guide in deciding what steps to take. If they are happy to do so, ask them discretely about the impact of their disability and what might be helpful in a remote learning context (never ask or expect a student to discuss personal or medical details with you).

## Planning an online teaching session or recording

* Provide a well-defined timetable to enable support worker matching in advance.
* Provide any learning materials at least 24 hours in advance of the session. This enables the student and the support worker (if applicable) to become familiar with the main subjects to be covered, and to read any text beforehand that will be referred to during the session.
* Provide an outline of lectures in advance: the learning objectives, main topics to be covered, and further learning.
* Learning materials should be accessible i.e., they can be read by 'assistive' or 'enabling' technologies such as screen-reader programs. Accessible documents can also be more readily converted into other formats more suitable for the student. To learn how to get the most out of accessibility in Word and to how to create accessible pdfs and PowerPoint presentations, read the [available guidance](https://ctl.ox.ac.uk/accessibility-teaching).
* Consider breaking up teaching sessions into shorter segments to aid concentration and make revisiting content more straightforward.
* Grant access to Support worker, note taker, palantypist, BSL interpreter.

## Delivering a screencast or online meeting

* Consider the sensory environment: are there distracting background noises that can be eliminated?
* Ensure audio quality is good. As Visually Impaired students are reliant on sound, good quality audio is particularly important. Students may be using screen-reader software simultaneously, so audio disturbances and distortions are very distracting/will reduce comprehension levels. Using a free-standing microphone or headset tends to produce better audio quality than a laptop microphone. Carrying out a test recording or practice Teams meeting with a colleague will help assess the quality of the audio.
* Provide an audio description for any additional video content.
* Ensure any instructions for follow-up work are written down and circulated afterwards.