Accessible and Inclusive Learning Materials Policy

and

Inclusive and Accessible Learning Materials: Strategy, Implementation and Communication

Approved by Senate (February and April 2016 meetings)
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Accessible and Inclusive Learning Materials Policy

Prepared by: Dr. Sally Everett (on behalf of the Disability Working Group)
Date: Approved Senate 2 February 2016, (also QESC meeting 10/02/16).

Purpose

This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with other relevant strategies, plans and policies. These include our:

- Academic Regulations
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Annual Report
- Recording and streaming policy (to follow)

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we provide an accessible and inclusive learning environment which offers our learners the opportunity to maximise their academic potential. Our legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners requires that we anticipate likely needs and take positive steps to remove potential barriers to learning.

This policy aims to increase the accessibility and inclusivity of our learning and teaching practices by embedding into standard practice a small number of key adjustments which will benefit all learners. This will reduce the need for
individual adjustments, reduce stigma and help to ensure that all learners can participate fully in their learning.

This policy uses the term ‘learners’ to cover students, but also staff who may be undertaking internal CPD and training.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all staff of Anglia Ruskin who teach and support learners.

Unless there is a justified pedagogic or professional reason for not doing so, this policy applies to all learning materials. It is likely that any justified pedagogic or professional reason for exempting the requirements will apply to individual elements rather than the entire policy. These reasons must be agreed with the Head of Department and must be made clear to learners in advance. For example, some core lesson materials may require an unseen, surprise element and it would therefore not be suitable to publish these in advance.

**Key principles and processes**
1. Class presentations/outlines must be available to learners two working days in advance of the class.

1.1. Key purpose: to inform learners of what they will be taught and enable them to prepare in advance in their own time.

1.2. Where PowerPoint (or similar) presentation slides, or paper-based handouts, are used as the basis for the class, these will be available TWO working days in advance of the class, preferably on the VLE.

1.3. Where slides are not normally used, or where confidential or ‘spoiler’ information is contained in the material, an outline of the class will be provided in TWO working days in advance as an alternative.

2. Lecturer’s core materials will be available 2 weeks in advance.

2.1. Key purpose: to enable learners to prepare for the session, engage with the topic in their own time and undertake preparatory work.

2.2. Core materials will be available electronically, preferably available on the VLE. Examples of core materials might include key readings and multi-media files.
3. Our ARU accessible templates must be used for creating all teaching documents and presentations (currently Word and PowerPoint are available).

These templates are available on the staff and student desktop.
For Word: go to ‘Start’ – Word – ARU Templates
For PowerPoint: go to ‘Start’ – PowerPoint – ARU Templates

3.1. Key purpose: to provide teaching materials that are accessible and readable by all learners including those with sight or text impairments
3.2. Staff should also be familiar with the guides to accessible Word and PowerPoint documents and use the additional accessibility measures contained in these wherever possible.
3.3. The guides on accessible templates are also available on university desktops via the “Accessibility Options” folder shortcut icon.
3.4. Colour coding (e.g. RAG ratings) on all documents must also include an additional indication e.g. numbers or symbols to ensure that it can be accessed and interpreted by colour blind learners.
3.5. Staff training and development is provided through the ‘Inclusive Practices Continuing Professional Development’ programme.

4. Recording classes

Learners are permitted to audio record classes, tutorials and other teaching/supervision sessions using their own equipment for their own personal learning.
4.1. Key purpose: individual learners can audio record sessions for the sole purpose of personal study. It is expected that only the main presentation will be recorded (i.e. the tutor and key slides/media files).

4.2. Audio recording is only permitted within the following conditions:

4.2.1. All Intellectual Property Rights in the recording remain with the University and member of staff (includes copyright and performance rights).

4.2.2. The recording is only used by the individual learner for the purpose of personal study and must not be shared, published or distributed to others. An infringement of this condition may lead to disciplinary action.

4.2.3. The tutor is aware and the recording is done in an unobtrusive but overt manner by the learner using their own equipment.

4.2.4. If recordings are made of learners, consent must be provided by participants through an opt out policy, i.e. classrooms will have signs warning that recording may take place (see JISC for good guidance on this).

4.2.5. The recording is destroyed once its purpose has been met (this will always be before the learner leaves our University and will normally be by the end of the assessment period)

4.2.6. Teaching staff have the right to insist that recording stops in certain circumstances (for example to protect confidentiality where sensitive or personal information is being discussed).

4.2.7. Audibility : lecturers must use microphones in large teaching rooms where these are installed
5. ReadingLists@Anglia

5.1 Key purpose: to ensure readings and reading lists are available in advance of sessions.
5.2 Readings must all be in an accessible document format.
5.3 If readings need to be digitised then they must go through the digitisation process managed by the library (http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/academic/digitisation/index.html)
5.4 Further guidance on ReadingLists@Anglia is available at: http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/academic/readinglist.html
1. Background and scope

A paper from the Disability Working Group (a sub group appointed by SSIG chaired by Dr Sally Everett) on Inclusive and Accessible Learning Materials (QESC_16_11) was considered by Senate in February and a draft proposal for implementation and communication was requested for the April meeting of Senate (see Senate minutes 983.7). The six priorities in the proposed paper were:

1. A range of CPD for academic and support staff
2. The development of guidelines for inclusive materials
3. Ensuring that the VLE is accessible
4. Developing our existing work in recording lectures
5. Reviewing and enhancing the Statement of Reasonable Adjustment (SoRA) system
6. Developing a range of peer support for disabled students

This proposal for implementation and communication concentrates on priority items 1 and 2. Item 3 forms part of the current VLE enhancement programme, item 4 is under consideration by the Recording and Streaming Working Group chaired by Dr Peter Crabtree, and items 5 and 6 are the subject of meetings led by Student Services with other stakeholders in May and July.
Although the original proposed policy uses the term ‘learners’ in its widest sense, the current paper is concerned solely with student-facing resources. Subsequently, this will also encompass other learners, with the ultimate goal that all such resources and delivery systems will conform with accessibility and inclusion requirements. We also note that whilst Senate (983.7) raised the issue of other media for learning materials and teaching, this paper retains a focus on documents and slide sets (we anticipate this will be extended over time given the complexity of implementation and adoption).

2. Progress so far

- Templates for accessible Word documents and PowerPoint slide sets have been developed and are available through the staff desktop. The Word template has been used to prepare this paper.
- Anglia Learning & Teaching (AL&T) and IT Services have delivered training on the use of accessible learning materials, including three pairs of webinars in the AL&T monthly series, covering accessible documents in Word and PDF formats and accessible PowerPoint.
- The University Library has committed to preparing documents (papers and book chapters) digitized under CLA as accessible PDFs.
- Advice on the preparation of accessible documents and slide sets is available through the IT Services Word 2103 pages¹, and more detailed guidance on a wider range of resource types has been initiated by Anglia Learning & Teaching².

¹ http://web.anglia.ac.uk/it/software/office/index.shtml

² http://www.lta.anglia.ac.uk/practice.php/LTA-Practice-Inclusive-Teaching-5/
• Some faculties and services are already committed to preparing new materials in the templates (e.g. LAIBS by end May 2016).

• Some faculties and services are also migrating some existing materials to the new accessible style, and instructions are being developed to support this (see e.g. Appendix 1).

• Some faculties or individual academic departments already have policies for the timely delivery of learning materials online.

• The accessibility of the VLE is one of three core priorities in the current development programme.

3. Areas for development

The draft policy on Inclusive and Accessible Learning Materials (QESC.16.11) has key principles and processes, of which four are relevant here:

KPP 1. Class presentations/outlines must be available to learners two working days in advance of the class. Key purpose: to inform learners of what they will be taught and enable them to prepare in advance in their own time.

KPP 2. Core lesson materials will be available two weeks in advance of the class. Key purpose: to enable learners to prepare for the session, engage with the topic in their own time and undertake preparatory work.

__________________________

https://myplayer.anglia.ac.uk/Play/287

http://vle.anglia.ac.uk/sites/2013/incllt/Pages/Home3.aspx

https://vle.anglia.ac.uk/sites/LTA/GUIDE_OLM/Content/Using%20Media%20for%20Learning.aspx
KPP 3. Our ARU accessible Word and PowerPoint templates must be used for creating all teaching documents and presentations. Key purpose – to provide teaching materials that are accessible and readable by all learners, including those with sight or text impairments.

[KPP 4. Recording classes – not covered here but under consideration elsewhere with another working group]

KPP 5. ReadingLists@Anglia Key purpose: to ensure readings and reading lists are available in advance of sessions.

The goal of the first phase of the scheme for inclusive and accessible learning materials can be summarised as:

All text and presentation materials are available to students in a timely manner ahead of the time when they are needed (KPP 1 and 2) and are produced in a format that is accessible to all learners (KPP 3 and 5). In addition, the platforms used to deliver such materials (especially the VLE and ReadingLists@Anglia) should be accessible and usable.

From this, the following areas for development can be identified:

3.1 Appropriate prior delivery online of learning materials is implemented across all courses by the start of academic year 2016-17

The requirements set out in the draft policy (KPP 1 and 2) need to be implemented by teaching and support staff in all faculties for all courses, subject to the caveats recognised in that policy. This requires that:
• Policy for prior release of materials is approved at institutional level (April 2016).
• Faculty senior management cascade the policy to their departments and thus to course teams and individual staff (by June 2016).
• Any staff development on the use of online learning technologies, organised by faculties or centrally (e.g. by AL&T), should include the prior release requirements (June-September 2016).
• There is a checking mechanism which includes an annual audit by department learning leads/Director of Learning and Teaching (or nominee) and is a standing agenda item at the SSLCs.

3.2 New materials should be prepared in the appropriate templates

There is already momentum behind this development in parts of our University, but adoption is by no means universal. This requires that:

• Faculty senior management (FMT) cascade the policy to their departments and thus to course teams and individual staff (complete by June 2016).
• All stakeholders are aware of and know how to use the appropriate templates, and in the case of PDF files how to generate these in an accessible format (May-July 2016). Stakeholders in this sense are faculties plus those service units who produce student-facing materials, such as:
  o Student Services (especially Study Skills Plus),
  o University Library,
  o Academic Office (e.g. module documentation templates).
• Key stakeholders other than faculties required to compile inventories of student-facing learning materials that will need to be prepared in accessible formats (by July 2016).
• New accessible student-facing learning materials are produced by all stakeholders to agreed standards (May-August 2016).
• Provision of accessible student-facing learning materials becomes an audit item in validation and periodic review (August 2016 and continuing).
• Senate agreed all NEW materials must be accessible by September 2016.

3.3 Conversion of existing learning materials to accessible formats

There will be a very large amount of learning materials that exist already, and that will not conform to the proposed standards. Wherever feasible, these need to be updated to include the current styles, and conversations with IT Services (see Appendix 1) and with Student Services suggest that this will be feasible in most cases.

• Faculty senior management (FMT) cascade the policy to their departments and thus to course teams and individual staff (by June 2016).
• Stakeholders other than faculties should review their current provision and audit materials that are not yet accessible and need to be updated (July 2016). Stakeholders are those service units who produce student-facing learning materials, such as:
  o Student Services (especially Study Skills Plus),
  o University Library.
• All stakeholders are aware of and know how to apply appropriate styles (May-June 2016).
• All existing materials should be made accessible as soon as reasonably practicable, this is a more straightforward task than for others who may have technical or other material that would be time consuming to change.
• In all cases where it is feasible, Word and PowerPoint files are re-styled to meet accessibility requirements, against the audit (September 2016), confirming to SSIG and DWG and noting any issues that arise.
• Where such re-styling is not feasible, files should be replaced with updated versions prepared using the new template (by January 2017).

3.4 Reading lists

Online reading lists, using the ReadingLists@Anglia (Talis Aspire) platform, are a key way to deliver a range of learning materials and organizing and annotating these. According to the manufacturer, the platform is accessible (Appendix 2), and it is down to teaching and support staff to ensure that materials released through reading lists are meet accessibility standards. To realise this, staff should be aware that:

• Any module without an online reading list should be provided with one by the start of the module’s 2016-17 delivery, and this should be populated two weeks ahead of the start of the delivery (on a semester or trimester basis).
• Where they are available, online publications should be provided in reading lists, rather than reference to print copy (continuing).
3.5 Staff development

This paper and those that preceded it set out a broad agenda for the delivery of accessible learning materials to student learners, as a first and major step towards the implementation of an inclusive curriculum. This needs to be supported by staff development in a number of areas, and the scope of this will necessarily involve a number of different providers across our University, each contributing in their specialist area:

- Digitized papers and book chapters should be obtained from the University Library under CLA agreement, as accessible PDF files, and not from any other source (continuing)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Availability</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglia Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
<td>Accessible learning materials</td>
<td>Webinars (currently two), including recordings</td>
<td>Existing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglia Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
<td>Accessibility and usability in learning technologies</td>
<td>Webinar and/or workshop</td>
<td>In development – to ‘train the trainers’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglia Learning &amp; Teaching and Student Services</td>
<td>Inclusive Teaching</td>
<td>Workshops (various) for induction for new teaching staff</td>
<td>Existing</td>
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<td>Faculties (learning technologists, learning leads)</td>
<td>Accessibility and usability in learning technologies</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
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<td>Conferences Train the trainer events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Services, Access Centre</td>
<td>Needs of disabled students, including assistive technologies</td>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>Could build on previous staff development</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR, Student Services, AL&amp;T</td>
<td>Inclusive practice in teaching</td>
<td>Online training Face to face training</td>
<td>No current training offered</td>
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In order to realise the goals set out in 3.1-3.4 above, training will need to come on stream so that it is available to staff in time for implementation before, or early in, the forthcoming academic year. See separate CPD programme.
3.6 Supporting materials and online guidance

There is a large body of support materials on the preparation of document files and use of learning technologies, but these are unlikely to be consistent in their treatment of inclusivity and accessibility. There is a need to review existing relevant materials in order to make them consistent and to address any gaps. Key stakeholders are likely to be faculties, Anglia Learning & Teaching, IT Services and Student Services. In particular, there is inadequate guidance for teaching staff on usability and accessibility in the VLE and online materials, and awareness of disability and assistive technologies. This initiative may be an opportune moment to address this (cf booklet prepared for the previous VLE: Priddle, Bamber and Everett 2006\(^3\)). The main requirements are to:

- Undertake an audit of support and guidance materials relating to production of learning materials (text files and slide sets), rate these for their support of good practice in relation to accessibility, and update where necessary (May-August 2016).
- Undertake an audit of support and guidance materials on the use of learning technologies, rate these for their support of good practice in relation to usability and accessibility, and update where necessary (May-August 2016).

• Review existing guidance on the use of the VLE, and consider the need and specification for an institutional manual on good practice in relation to learners with disabilities (June 2016) (see also 3.7).

3.7 Existing learning platforms

As noted in the overall goal for this phase of the enhancement of inclusive and accessible learning, there are three elements for consideration:

• Provision of learning materials online in a format that enables use by all learners
• Provision of those materials in a timely manner to support all learners
• Delivery of materials through platforms that are themselves usable for all learners

The usability of a platform such as the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) is a combination of the technical specification, especially in respect of users who are reliant on interfaces such as mobile platforms or screen-readers, and the way that the platform is utilised by its designers (predominantly teaching staff), especially in relation to navigation.

The accessibility of the current VLE is being examined currently, and an audit is likely to be completed by September 2016, although the subsequent timescale for implementation is currently uncertain. This takes place against the background of consideration of a new Learning Management System (LMS) which must also consider inclusive principles (as per our Corporate Plan).

A number of formal and informal studies at Anglia Ruskin have highlighted good (and poor or simply well-meaning) practice in the use of our learning
technologies, and it would be opportune to consolidate these, so that teaching staff – in many cases enthusiasts who invest considerable effort in their VLE module sites – can be informed about the potential pitfalls and can support all students better, including those with learning issues (e.g. East et al. 2016).

Investigation of the platform that support our online reading lists suggest that this is broadly accessible for end users, although this may not be the case for those staff setting up reading lists (see Appendix 2).

We may not have accessibility audits of other platforms used in supporting online learning, for instance MyPlayer.

- Draw together recommendations on the effective use of the VLE and other learning platforms from the viewpoint of inclusivity and accessibility (May-July 2016) (see also 3.6).

### 3.8 Forthcoming developments in learning platforms

Our University will continue to expand, and in some cases change, its use of technologies to support learning. This will involve both ‘introduction’ at institutional level and ‘innovation’ by individuals or course teams. There needs to be a careful balance between innovation and inclusion and accessibility. In particular, it would be wrong to stifle innovation in the use of

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technologies that enhance courses and benefit students by trying to make them conform to a restrictive (‘one size fits all’) accessibility model – ‘you don’t treat everyone equally by treating them the same’. Instead, staff need to be aware of potential issues and supported in implementing innovative approaches in the context of their learners’ needs. Appendix 3 provides an example of this.
# 4. Outline implementation timeline

Dark tint indicates initial implementation, light tint continuing

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<th>Areas of development</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<td>Apr</td>
<td>May</td>
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<td>3.1 Prior delivery of materials</td>
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<td>Monitoring through SSLCs</td>
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<td>3.2 New learning materials - preparation</td>
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<td>Resource accessibility audit in AM and PR</td>
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### Areas of development

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<th>Areas of development</th>
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<td>3.3 Existing learning materials - conversion</td>
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<td>3.4 Reading lists</td>
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<td>3.5 Staff development</td>
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<td>'Train the trainers'</td>
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<td>3.6 Supporting and guidance materials</td>
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<td>3.8 New TELT accessibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff supported in TELT choice</td>
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Appendix 1. Confirmation on the feasibility of ‘retro-fitting’ the accessible document stylesheet to an existing Word document

I have tested this and this appears to work on a standard Word .docx document. To update a document with a newer accessible template you need to:

1. Open the older Word document. **Press Alt+t**. This will display a small dialog box at top of screen.
2. **Press i**. This will bring up the “template and add ins” dialog box.

3. In the document template line **select Attach** and then **navigate to \anglia.local\fs\APPS\ARU Templates - Staff** (or alternatively there is also Templates – Students)
4. **Select Staff_Blank_template.dotx** and then **okay**
5. **Tick the “Automatically update document styles” box**, and then **OK**.
6. This should then update your document. This only works by updating the styles that are used/ applied. If someone for example has highlighted a few rows of text and changed the font, as opposed to changing the “normal paragraph” style and amending that- it will not work.
I have tested this in a Word .docx document and have not tested in an older .doc document. I have not tested in compatibility mode. I would presume these instructions work for a .pptx document also.

If further investigation/testing is needed, I would suggest this needs to be raised with ITS services perhaps through BRM’s/ CST. But if the main question is- “is it possible for staff to update older documents with new template?” then yes we have the means for them to do so.

We will update our accessibility section on the Office 2013 page to include these instructions. There are some good resources on this page for staff.

Kind regards,

Vix Samways
IT Training Manager | IT Services| Anglia Ruskin University
[dated 12 April 2016]
**Appendix 2. Statement from Talis regarding accessibility of the platform used for ReadingLists@Anglia**

The following was provided by Talis in response to a request for an accessibility statement for Talis Aspire, the software used for ReadingLists@Anglia.

**Is Talis Aspire tested for compliance with DDA accessibility requirements?**

Since launch in 2009 Talis Aspire has been adopted by more than 50% of universities in the UK and is currently used extensively by hundreds of thousands of students across the country and globally.

Talis services and websites are designed to be compliant with applicable disability laws and regulations and where possible to comply with relevant guidelines such as the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) published by the Worldwide Web Consortium.

We pay particular attention to the front-of-house workflows that students experience, and have designed these portions of Talis Aspire to be broadly in line with Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) AA and WCAG 2.0 compliance. We follow best practice regarding DDA compliance when designing our software.

This includes making sure we have semantic, well-designed HTML markup, a logical information hierarchy and ensure Talis Aspire works well with Javascript and CSS disabled. It should be noted, however, that some areas of the administration and academic side of Talis Aspire do utilise Rich Internet Application (RIA) techniques.
that rely heavily on Javascript.

In addition, Talis has commissioned an independent consulting firm to advise and then verify formal certification, and is committed to implement any suggested improvements necessary to maintain conformity with the requirements of WAI level AA and WCAG 2.0 compliance

Appendix 3. Example of accessibility judgements applied to choice of an online portfolio platform

The following e-mail from Sian Shaw (FHSCE) indicates how she addressed accessibility issues in the choice of an online portfolio platform used extensively for nursing students in placement. This was originally in response to a student with dyspraxia and other learning difficulties, who was offering to take part in an evaluation of the software.

From: Shaw, Sian  Sent: 06 April 2016 19:05  To: Everett, Sally
<sally.everett@anglia.ac.uk>  Subject: RE: Student Feedback for myprogress - special needs student.

Pleased to hear this helps. One of the things I took into consideration in setting up the system and the choice of system was inclusivity. I did go and visit the learning support team to review my ideas in the process of creating the e-ongoing achievement record. There are several features of the platform design that specifically address some learning needs. If you would like me to demonstrate some of the features that I think support inclusivity do let me know for a few examples of features which we have incorporated

- Speech to text recognition - so audio recording can be converted to documents.
- Automated checklists which keep track of student progress - so help with organisation
- Light / dark screen background choice
- The ability to sort and organise assessments in to ‘favourites’
- Choice of using a tablet or desktop computer