How accessible is your online teaching?

The following checklist provides updated guidance to programme teams about making programmes and teaching accessible and inclusive following the move to online teaching. It provides an opportunity for identifying barriers and biases in programme material/activities and supports the University's compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

GCU is committed to the development of learning opportunities which are inclusive by design and which do not discriminate against disabled learners. Many of the approaches that will benefit disabled students will be helpful in creating engaging learning for all students. This updated checklist is a result of student, staff and sector consultation following the move to online learning.

This is intended as a quick look check list but for more detailed inclusive practice guides go to [Staff Materials](#) section of the GCU Disability Team webpage or contact your department's Academic Disability Co-ordinator (ADC).

This is a live document that will be updated regularly. We welcome your feedback at disability@gcu.ac.uk

Teaching preparation

- ☐ Check the [RAP](#) for students on your modules
- ☐ Make available to all students through GCULearn copies of lecture outlines, handouts or presentations in an accessible format at least 24 hours in advance but where possible even earlier
- ☐ Provide reading lists to the library at least 4 weeks prior to the start of teaching
- ☐ Identify key/priority texts in published reading lists
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with how to facilitate group work effectively
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with module best practice templates for creating module handbooks

Online Learning environment

- ☐ Provide space for and encourage feedback during and after the session
- ☐ Provide clear instructions as to how and when you can be contacted
- ☐ If you are recording the session, check that everyone knows the session is being recorded
- ☐ At the beginning of a session ask if any students may need to contribute questions or access learning verbally and may need to switch their mics on
- ☐ Signpost students to learning and support services at regular intervals throughout the semester, encourage students to engage as early as possible with these services

- Consider having a welcome slide with useful reminders at the start of each session, e.g. how to use the platform features, the ground rules for participation in that session, or signposting students to support with their mental wellbeing.
- Use a headset with a microphone
- Ensure your face is well lit and a plain or blurred background is used
- Allow time for students to set up their learning space and make them aware of any accessibility features
- Consider structured breaks
- If you are screen sharing a document ensure students have a copy prior to the session
- Offer verbal descriptions of key content of each slide and any visual elements in the learning materials
- Read out the slide numbers as you move through a presentation
- When carrying out a poll, read out the number/lettered bullets and their content
- Make students aware that spelling is not an issue in the chat
- Read out questions posed in the chat before answering them, and consider asking a student volunteer to assist with chat moderation
- Agree ground rules and clear group work structures when students will be using break out rooms

Captioning

- If you are delivering a teaching session live using PowerPoint you can [enable automatic captions](#) (you need Windows 10 to use this feature)
- If you are delivering a teaching session live using Microsoft Teams, all participants have the option to [turn on live captions](#).
- If you are making a recorded teaching session or using video content during your lecture you can add captions, edit captions and create a transcript through [Youtube automatic captioning](#)
- Be aware of the variable quality of all automatic captioning tools. The Disability Team will be in touch with relevant Module Leaders regarding support for d/Deaf students, for whom better accuracy and reliability is essential.

Online Assessment

- Familiarise yourself with the [updated guidance](#) on accessible online assessment
- When managing assessed group work provide clear guidelines on good practice for working in groups, and clear guidance as to how the group will be assessed
- Familiarise yourself with updated departmental policy on deadline extensions and the university [Mitigating Circumstances procedure](#) and the appropriate circumstances in which to refer students to these
- Where possible liaise with colleagues to ensure assessment deadlines are staggered

Accessible document design

- [ ] Check the accessibility of your documents and presentations using [Microsoft built-in accessibility checker](#).
- [ ] Blackboard Ally assesses the accessibility of all documents and files uploaded to GCULearn. The more accessible your document is before upload, the fewer the changes you will need to make. Better accessibility generates more file formats for students, to suit their learning need/preference.
- [ ] Ensure PDF documents are accessible - you should be able to highlight text
- [ ] Set font size at a minimum of 12pt in Word documents, 24pt in PowerPoint
- [ ] Choose a clear font colour
- [ ] Consider using a non-white background
- [ ] When using images ensure they are high quality
- [ ] Provide meaningful descriptions of images
- [ ] Use bullet points or numbered lists to keep text to a minimum and assist with the navigation for screen reading software
- [ ] Use in-built slide templates to give clear structure to slides

Placements

- [ ] Discuss any uncertainty arising from COVID-19/shielding issues for disabled students with the Disability Team
- [ ] Familiarise yourself with the [Placement Planning Report](#)
- [ ] Familiarise yourself with student RAPs that recommend the 'Placement Planning Process' is followed
- [ ] In the module handbook clearly outline expected learning outcomes and how the placement will be assessed