

# Accessible Teaching and Learning Policy

## Supporting guidance

### **Why are we implementing the Accessible Teaching and Learning Policy (ATLP)?**

The University's Transformative Education Framework principles aim to create a learning environment that fosters a culture of compassion and promotes respect by embedding inclusivity and cultural competence. The University seeks to avoid the exclusion of any student and facilitate equality and diversity by pursuing language, behaviours and teaching practices that foster the inclusion and success of all students, and work towards improving their experience, skills, and attainment.

The ATLP sets out expectations and guidance for accessible and inclusive teaching to all students through consideration of their different requirements in the design, approval, delivery and review of programmes and modules.

Under the Equality Act 2010 the University of Exeter has an anticipatory duty to ensure that our learning and teaching environments are inclusive and supportive of disabled students. We are expected to build accessibility into our teaching and learning and not simply make adjustments when a disabled student identifies themselves to the institution.

Embedding reasonable adjustments improves the educational experience of all students, and are required by a significant number of disabled students. This policy enables staff to move towards a position where ILPs are no longer the only means of overcoming learning inequities faced by our students. It also responds to the European Court of Human Rights' recommendations following the death of Natasha Abrahart. The ATLP and the accompanying guidance will ultimately support academics to progress towards more

consistent and inclusive model for inclusive teaching, by reducing reliance on individual reasonable adjustments on a student-by-student, ad hoc basis.

This policy includes five adjustments which made up two-thirds of the adjustments recommended by the Wellbeing and AccessAbility Services in Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). By 'mainstreaming' these adjustments we significantly improve the accessibility and inclusivity of our classrooms for all students and reduce the number of ad hoc adjustments that educators need to make.

## **About the development of the ATLP**

The ATLP was commissioned at the request of the Success and Inclusive Education Working Group, Wellbeing and AccessAbility Services, and the Student Guild. This Policy was approved by Education Board on 23 April 2025. The ATLP was jointly developed following consultation with Education Board, Education Leadership Team, Senior Education Partners, the Doctoral College, Success for All Strategy Group, Success for Inclusive Education Working Group, Deans of Education and Student Experience, Doctoral College, the Neurodivergent and Disabled Students' Society and the Student Guild.

You can read more about the pedagogic principles and the research background underpinning the ATLP and this guidance in the [Inclusive Education Project Report](#).

## **Where can I learn more about the learning barriers faced by disabled students and how to make my teaching more inclusive?**

You can read more about inclusive education, the Equality Act, and the duty to make reasonable adjustments on the EduExe Toolkit ([Inclusive education, disability, the Equality Act and the duty to make reasonable adjustments \(sharepoint.com\)](#)).

The EduExe Toolkit pages were collaboratively created as part of the Inclusive Education Project by the Educator Development team, Wellbeing & AccessAbility Services, Disability Network, Neurodivergent and Disabled Students' Society, members of staff from around the University and Education Incubator fellows.

You can also find many examples of great inclusive education practice from across the university to try out in your own discipline and teaching.

## Universal Design for Learning and co-creation with students

We want to make sure that curricula are designed to be as inclusive as possible from the outset. We are co-creating Curriculum for Change with our students, with the aim of enhancing the student experience for all students, emphasising Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Success for All as core to our offer, and creating a sense of belonging and mattering within our university community.

You can read more about Universal Design for Learning on the EduExe Toolkit ([Universal Design for Learning \(sharepoint.com\)](#)), and find more information about training and support available to help you design inclusive curricula and classroom experiences for students.

You can read more about the Curriculum for Change transformative education design principles on the Transformative Education SharePoint ([Transformative Education Design Principles](#)).

# FAQs about the Accessible Teaching and Learning Policy

## Application of the Accessible Teaching and Learning Policy (ATLP)

### Who does the ATLP apply to?

The ATLP applies in respect of all students of the University and to all staff (including external guest lecturers and tutors) who teach students on modules and programmes, where relevant.

An example of where it does not currently apply is to teaching sessions hosted on LearnUpon, as these have undergone independent accessibility checks and production. LearnUpon content sits outside the control of the University.

### What about staff who do not teach, but do have a support role for students?

Many of the principles in this ATLP are appropriate to apply in roles supporting students. Support staff are encouraged, but not required, to apply these principles in their support contexts where relevant.

### What about external tutors who teach on my module?

We are responsible for making sure that external tutors provide teaching materials to students in advance and in an accessible format. When you are arranging external tutor sessions, please ask them to provide session outlines, and any documents or presentation slides in a timely manner so that you can upload them to ELE as usual.

## **Providing module outline and reading lists**

Module outlines and lists of core readings shall be available at least four weeks before the module starts.

### What constitutes an outline?

An outline should:

- Indicate the broad content of the module and outcomes
- Tell students the module's methods of assessment
- Indicate the core texts which they are expected to read
- Make it clear that there will be more information to follow, what information will be provided, by when and where the information will be given

### How can I ensure that students receive my module outline?

Module outlines should be made available through your module's ELE page and clearly identified in module tiles.

### How will this benefit students?

This will allow students to read around their subject early on and prepare well for their module.

How will this benefit staff?

This will ensure that students are well prepared and have the opportunity to engage with module material.

## **Providing prioritised reading lists**

Reading lists to indicate priority and/or relevance.

Can the Library help with this?

Yes. When you send the Library your module reading lists, Library staff will then check for the availability of resources, purchase any items not available and in some cases digitise chapters and articles within the CLA Higher Education copyright licence.

Once complete, you and your students will have an online list, accessible from ELE which links out to your module reading. Resource lists can be customised to display week by week readings, or key and recommended readings. You can find out more information on the Library's [resource list guide](#).

Do I need to prioritise my whole reading list?

No, but you should indicate which readings are considered to be key to understanding themes within the module and those which are supplementary.

Can I still expect students to read outside of this reading list?

Yes, absolutely. It should be indicated that students should read widely, and independently identify sources to read.

How will this benefit students?

This will enable students to ensure that they obtain essential information at appropriate points in the module. It will allow students to manage their time effectively and be well prepared for classes.

How will this benefit staff?

It will ensure that students engage with appropriate reading for the module and have been exposed to the necessary information at the appropriate time in the module.

## **Providing lecture outlines and documents to be used in teaching before class**

Teaching session outlines and documents to be used shall be made digitally available to students at least 24 hours in advance of the relevant teaching session.

### What documents might this include?

This should normally include an outline of what to expect in the teaching session and a copy of any presentation slides. If you are providing other documents (e.g. an article extract for review) to students in the teaching session, a digital copy of these should also normally be made available to students in advance.

### I don't normally use presentation slides, am I expected to create a set specifically for this?

No, if you do not currently use presentation slides you are not expected to start using them. Instead, you should simply produce an outline of the class. This could be a bullet-pointed list of key themes and content: detailed notes are not required.

### What if my presentation slides contain confidential or 'spoiler' information?

Judgement will need to be exercised where confidential or 'spoiler' information (that which might spoil a student's learning experience by revealing information too early) is contained within lecture materials so as not to compromise confidentiality or impinge upon the pedagogical experience. In such cases students should be informed that they may be given partial content. In the case of 'spoiler information' students may be provided with partial content in advance of the class; the full materials to be made available following the class. Confidential information need not be included.

### Where should they be made available?

Lecture slides or outlines should be made available through your module's ELE page and clearly identified in module tiles. If this is not possible, you should let your students know where to find them. However, students will find it easier to navigate their module if information is provided in the same place.

### How will this benefit students?

This will help students familiarise themselves with the lecture material ahead of the class, provide an opportunity for preparatory background reading and prepare any questions that

they may have. It also facilitates notetaking during the lectures by removing the need for students to copy down content from slides.

#### How will this benefit staff?

This will help students to engage in deeper notetaking in class, beyond the lecture slides. It should free students from copying down slide content, enabling them to be more engaged in the class discussion. Students may come to class better prepared and with questions about the material.

### **Providing key terminology and formulae in advance**

Key technical words and formulae to be provided to students at least 24 hours before the relevant class.

#### Where should they be made available?

Keywords and formulae should be made available through your module's ELE page and clearly identified in the appropriate week's module tiles. If this is not possible, you should let your students know where to find them. Students will find it easier to navigate their module if information is provided in the same place, such as a "Glossary" module tile, and this will be easier to keep updated.

#### How can I make equations and formulae accessible?

Students who rely on alternative formats for equations and formulae and have an ILP will have arrangements in place (which might include personal assistive technology) that will enable them to access these. There is no need to do anything other than provide these at least 24 hours in advance to allow students to use their own strategies.

#### What about new terminology that is introduced in a teaching session?

In this case, it would be helpful to update your module ELE page (such as a "Glossary" module tile) as soon as reasonably practicable after that teaching session. Similarly, if an external tutor introduces complex terms, technical words or formulae during a session it would be helpful for you to include these on your module ELE page as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards.

#### How will this benefit students?

This will enable students to fully understand their teaching and facilitate their participation. It will provide students with an opportunity to prepare in advance of the lecture and to bring any questions to the lecture that they may have about the material.

#### How will this benefit staff?

This will promote increased participation in class. It will enable students to come to class with questions.

### **Email notification of cancellation / changes**

Students shall be notified by email of changes or announcements such as changes to modules, room changes or cancellations.

#### How should we tell students about cancellations or changes?

The official channel of communication for the University is the student mail system, using the student email address. But this can be backed up with other communication such as lecture announcements, for example.

#### What is the time-limit for communicated cancellations or changes?

There is no time-limit, but students should be warned of cancellations or changes as soon as possible. If changes are notified with less than 24 hours warning, there may be cost implications for the University in rearranging non-medical helper support such as notetakers or BSL interpreters.

#### How will this benefit students?

This will ensure that students do not miss important information about changes and cancellations, for example, through absence, minimising disruption and dissatisfaction.

#### How will this benefit staff?

This will help classes to be well attended and that all students are up to date with class learning.



## **Recording scheduled live teaching sessions or making alternative provisions**

For recording of lectures and other classes please see the following relevant policies:

[Digital Learning Resources Policy](#)

My timetable lecture or other teaching won't be recorded, what should I do?

Some students may be unable to take contemporaneous handwritten or typed notes and risk not meeting the intended learning outcomes for that teaching session. It is important that they have a way to capture important information from your teaching session.

If your lecture or seminar will not be recorded, then you will need to consider what alternative provision you will make instead. Appropriate alternatives include annotated lecture or seminar notes, or a separate lecture or notes document. You could also provide annotated lecture slides, lecture notes, a transcript of the teaching session, a written summary of questions and answers provided in the teaching session, or descriptions of taught content to supplement lecture slides instead.

While verbatim notes are not required, it is expected that notes are sufficiently comprehensive that students who are unable to take notes during a lecture or seminar are not placed at a disadvantage to their peers.

I am not able to produce additional lecture or seminar notes, what should I do?

You could, as an alternative, allow students to audio record lectures, tutorials and supervision sessions using their own equipment for their own personal learning. This supporting guidance sets out how students are able to do this and requirements for managing those recordings.

My teaching session contains personally or commercially sensitive or confidential information, what should I do?

There is no expectation that any such sensitive or confidential information should be provided to students in your annotated lecture or seminar notes or recorded by students.

You have the right to stop any recording in order to protect confidentiality or other sensitive or personal information. You have the right to ask students to stop any recording they may

be making. A clear way to do this would be to put up a slide at the appropriate part of the teaching session.

However, students that are unable to take contemporaneous handwritten or typed notes should still be able to meet the intended learning outcomes for that teaching session.

Am I expected to monitor whether students have complied with their responsibilities for recordings?

There is no expectation that staff will monitor whether students have complied with their responsibilities, including whether they have deleted personal recordings.

Are students allowed to record live teaching sessions using their own equipment?

There is no general permission for students to record live teaching sessions. Students **may** be granted permission to make an audio recording of their standard core teaching and learning sessions (e.g. lectures, tutorials, supervision, lab sessions etc)) using their own equipment for the sole purpose of their own personal learning.

If you permit students to make their own audio recordings, then it should be made clear that:

- a) the student shall delete this once the University has provided them with a recording that meets the purpose of the student's own personal learning.
- b) the student recording may only be used by the individual student for the purpose of their personal study. It shall be a disciplinary offence to use the recording for any other purpose, including sharing or distributing it.
- c) the recording must be made in an unobtrusive manner by the student using their own equipment.
- d) the recording must be destroyed once its purpose has been met. This will always be before the student leaves the University and shall normally be by the end of the assessment to which the module relates.
- e) teaching staff have the right to insist that recording stops in certain circumstances. An example might be to protect confidentiality where sensitive or personal information is being discussed.
- f) students agree to these terms and conditions as part of the contract between the University and its students.

## Using microphones in lectures

All teaching staff shall ensure that microphones are worn and used in all lectures, where available, regardless of the perceived need to wear them.

I have a loud enough voice: I don't need to wear a microphone

We cannot assume that all students can hear well enough or that they would wish to disclose their hearing impairment in a teaching situation, in front of a lot of people. The acoustics in the room, external noise and individual factors will all have an impact.

I need the flexibility to walk around during lectures, what should I do?

Wearing a lapel microphone is the best solution. These are already provided in many of the larger teaching spaces where AV systems are installed. In our largest teaching spaces, there should always be two radio microphones to ensure there is always one available for use.

If a lapel microphone is not available in the room you intend to use, you may need to consider moving to another room.

What else should I think about when wearing a microphone?

Students with hearing loss may still rely on watching your face as you speak. It is important to face the class and avoid obscuring your face with your hand or hair.

Aim to wear your lapel microphone in the middle of your body, about 8 inches from your chin. This helps prevent your microphone from picking up popping noises when you speak and from brushing against ties, scarves and earrings.

I am recording my lectures, do I still need to wear a microphone?

Yes. It is essential all teaching staff using lecture recording use a microphone so that audio can be recorded. Teaching spaces which have been equipped with Lecture Capture (Recap) technology also have either radio microphones or hand-held microphones.

The lapel microphone is missing from my teaching room/the microphone provided does not work, what should I do?

There is no regular maintenance schedule that picks up missing or broken microphones in a timely manner. It is therefore the responsibility of teaching staff to report any missing or

broken microphones as soon as you notice this. The number to call to report missing or broken microphones is 01392 72 2230 (Streatham or St Luke's) or 01326 213822 (Penryn).

Each teaching room should have this telephone number on a laminated sheet or displayed prominently on the lectern terminal.

#### How will this benefit students?

It helps to reduce the amount of effort that students have to spend concentrating to hear. It is very important for students with hearing impairments and for those whose first language is not English.

It reduces the risk of loss of information or mishearing information. Also, it removes the need for students to ask teaching staff to wear a microphone.

#### How will this benefit staff?

It puts less strain on teaching staff to keep voice levels raised. It contributes to increased concentration in class among students and possibly greater participation.

## **Creating accessible resources**

It's very important that all educators check that their materials such as slides, lecture outlines and other electronic documents are accessible. The key purpose is to ensure as many students as possible can utilise these materials in their learning or assessment without the need for further adaption or support.

#### How can I make my digital materials accessible?

- Ensure that filenames, folders and hyperlinked text provide an explanation of the linked material when read out of context by, for example, a digital screen reader.
- Provide titles and headings within documents, images, graphs and tables, using template heading styles where available.
- Use text and background colours that contrast well.
- Avoid overlaying text on textured backgrounds.
- Avoid fully-justified text, as this has uneven spaces between words or characters.
- Use a plain font of sufficient size, and avoid italic or CAPITALISED text.
- Avoid using colour alone to communicate information within text, images or diagrams.
- Provide alternative text explanations on non-decorative images and diagrams. If the image is a hyperlink then the alternative text should also include the link information.

- Make audio and video resources more accessible to blind, deaf and Deaf students, for instance using audio description, captions, or a transcript.
- Provide a statement indicating how to obtain the resource in an alternative format.

Find more detailed information on how to make your teaching resources more accessible on the Digital Learning Support Sharepoint: [Digital Accessibility - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

### How can I support students to make their ELE dashboard more accessible or convert resources into a range of alternative formats?

We subscribe to software which may be helpful to students by enabling them to make their ELE dashboard more accessible or convert resources to alternative formats themselves.

[SensusAccess](#) is a self-service solution that automates the conversion of documents into a range of alternative formats including digital Braille, MP3, DAISY and e-books. The service can also be used to convert otherwise inaccessible documents such as image-only PDF files or scanned images into more accessible formats.

Library Services have [online information](#) about enhancing students' experience reading e-books.

Students can make their ELE dashboard more accessible by using the ReciteMe toolbar. The [Student ELE Guidance Course](#) provides information on the [accessibility features of the ReciteMe toolbar](#).



## **Getting further support for accessibility**

We recognise that the accessibility needs of disabled students can vary widely, and we are committed to working with individual disabled students to meet their unique requirements.

If you would like to discuss accessibility on your module with a member of our AccessAbility team, please email [accessability@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:accessability@exeter.ac.uk) for Exeter or [accessability@fxplus.ac.uk](mailto:accessability@fxplus.ac.uk) for Cornwall.

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