Guidelines for creating accessible recorded online lectures

Please note that you may also be providing on-line lecture materials for students who have chosen not to disclose their disability or are as yet undiagnosed. The maxim that whatever is accessible for disabled students increases accessibility for all is a sensible one to follow.

It is recommended that Panopto is used for on-line lectures, wherever possible, due to the ability to produce automated captions/transcripts.

Be aware that disabled students will experience a range of barriers particular to them and with differing degrees of impact, and that all students are currently living with an increased level of stress which needs to be taken into consideration. If you are unsure what the student needs, ask them.

Preparing to record

- Ensure that lighting is good and highlights the face of the lecturer.
- Ensure the picture quality is as high as possible so that the image is clear.
- Ensure that the audio quality is of a standard that students are able to hear all participants clearly. It may be useful to do a test before delivering the lecture.
- Make sure there are no shadows falling onto the lecturer’s face as this will make it difficult for the student to lip read or pick up or interpret facial expressions.
- Keep the background lighting even and not too bright as this will throw the participants face into silhouette, making it difficult for students who rely on lip reading or picking up information from facial expressions.
- Keep hands and fingers away from the face and look directly into the camera so that the face can be seen clearly.
- Use a plain light background behind the lecturer so there are fewer visual distractions.
- Keep background noise to an absolute minimum. Background noise is distracting and can be picked up by hearing aids/ radio aids at the same volume as speech. It is difficult to ‘cancel out’ background noise, when using such devices.
- Make sure the doors and windows are shut to reduce external noise.
- Be aware that there is likely to be ‘echo’ sounds if recordings are made in a room with no carpet/curtains/soft furnishings.
- Ensure there is good contrast between the participants and the background. Where possible, wear plain dark clothes with no patterns as this will be distracting to the student if they are to concentrate on hearing and lip reading, or need to focus on the speaker’s face or audio.

Delivery

- To help relieve the burden on working memory and the requirement to understanding non-verbal communication (including inference), please use straightforward and unambiguous phrasing where possible and avoid multiple parts to questions, insofar as possible.
- Provide a synopsis at the start of the lecture & effective signposting throughout. At the conclusion of each lecture, review major points. The use of built in quizzes or multiple choice questions during the lecture can assist the student in checking their understanding as the lecture progresses.
- Please provide clear signposting of important information, use explicit, rather than implied language and avoid non-verbal cues as the student may not be able to follow non-verbal clues or facial expressions.
- Please highlight key references to guide the student in the background literature.
- Provide reading lists showing a hierarchy of importance or relevance to the lecture/argument.
• The student may also require a note-taker. This will be arranged between the DRC and department and the note-taker will be provided access to the lectures via Moodle.
• Provide questions in written as well as verbal form.
• Consider uploading the lecture in two or three sections so that students can manage their time, symptoms and energy.
• Check with students that they can see and hear you and that the visual and sound quality is sufficient.

Accessible materials
• The student may find it helpful to use the live captioning function in Panopto (details can be found in this short video on how to use captions in Panopto).
• Use the live captioning/subtitling functionality in PowerPoint to create captions for your slides.
• Be aware that if students are required to refer to any textual information, they may need to use screen reading software such as Jaws or NVDA. It will be useful for students to have been sent any materials in advance in an accessible format.
• The most accessible documents are Word documents which have been set up with proper headings, titles and tables. Further details are available on the accessible materials page on the DRC website.
• As screen reading software will not be able to convey or translate all images (including charts/graphs/tables etc.) ensure that images are clearly labelled.
• To avoid any confusion verbally describe all images as you use them.
• Consider asking for feedback on your lectures from a range of participants to see if there are common issues/difficulties.

Disability Resource Centre | April 2020