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# Provision of reading lists, teaching materials and lecture handouts in advance

This is the provision of written materials such as handouts, PowerPoint slides, glossaries, reading lists that will be used or referred to in a teaching session, at least 24 hours ahead via the Canvas VLE or electronically (email or University file-sharing service).

## Why is it important?

Many disabled students’ access to learning is restricted in lectures and tutorials because their impairment makes it difficult to engage with the teaching session without the opportunity to prepare in advance. Making available teaching materials such as handouts and slides in advance of the session can create better access to learning for students with a variety of conditions.

Students with:

* impairments that affect concentration, such as ADHD, can benefit because they will have had an opportunity to understand the broad structure and objectives for the session in advance and this aids concentration;
* chronic conditions whose ability to take notes quickly is compromised can more easily make decisions about what needs to be noted down, because they are more aware of what is already included in the written materials;
* hearing impairments who need to familiarise themselves with key terms in order to be able to comprehend these during a lecture (either via lip-reading, hearing aids/loops or via a sign interpreter);
* dyslexia or dyspraxia who have difficulties with information processing and note-taking simultaneously can familiarise themselves with handouts and slides ahead of the session, reducing the information processing burden;
* visual impairments need to familiarise themselves with handouts and PowerPoint slides using text-to-speech software or other assistive technology to help enable them to follow references to these materials during a lecture;
* SpLDs or with visual impairments may want access to the electronic files ahead of the session to make adjustments to the layout and formatting to make the documents readable for them.

## Why do we have to do it?

Universities are under a legal obligation under the Equality Act (2010) to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students to ensure that they are not put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with students who are not disabled. The University has also committed to providing ‘exemplary inclusive practice’ in its Common Framework for supporting disabled students. An inclusive approach to education values individual differences, and recognises the benefits that diverse students and staff bring. It aims to improve the educational experience of all students, by taking into account students’ varied learning needs from the outset. If it is recommended that a student have access to teaching materials in advance within their Student Support Plan, then departments and academic staff should provide this.

## What do I need to do?

* Upload your teaching materials on to the University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Canvas. The materials should be included within the Canvas course for the relevant paper 48 hours ahead of the session. If you have not previously used Canvas, the administrator or IT officer with oversight of the system within your department will be able to assist you in setting this up.
* If you or your department do not use Canvas, materials can be sent to students electronically in an accessible format (Microsoft word, PowerPoint or accessible PDFs [link]). This enables students to change the formatting if needed.
* If you do not usually produce PowerPoint slides, you do not have to do so specifically to meet this requirement. However, a lecture outline (a short summary of the aims of the session and topics to be included in the order to be covered) and a glossary of terms to be used should be provided.

Students can familiarise themselves with the lecture material ahead of the class, which enables them to think about the concepts to be covered in advance and prepare any questions that they may have or carry out background reading, enabling a greater depth of understanding during the teaching session itself.

## Anticipating student needs and inclusive practice

The University has an equality duty to not just respond to student need but to anticipate needs wherever possible. We must think ahead about the common barriers to study anyone within a cohort might experience and remove them. Making teaching materials available in advance for all students contributes to meeting this anticipatory duty. Approximately 10-15% of all students require some form of adjustment to teaching due to a disability, and provision of teaching materials in advance is the most commonly recommended adjustment for disabled students (800 current students require this adjustment via a Student Support Plan).

Making one-off changes to routines around teaching can be time-consuming, but changing routines for good may lead to a more inclusive learning environment for students and be more efficient overall. All students may benefit from the opportunity to review teaching materials in advance of a teaching session—especially those who find it hard to combine listening, reviewing slides or handouts and taking notes simultaneously. Individual students have their own preferences for learning, at different paces and using different methods. Providing teaching materials in advance can give them greater flexibility and control over their learning.

## Further information

Oxford Teaching Ideas: accessibility resources