

SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

Paper Number	P1213-1324_rev1
Document Title	Building an inclusive culture: making small practical changes to help all Swansea students achieve their best
Enquiries to	Phil Maull, Dr Michelle Lee
Proposer in meeting	Dr Michelle Lee
Action Requested	To be discussed
Consultation / Approval History	<p>Body/Committee Date of Meeting</p> <p>Discussed at Learning and Teaching Committee on 30th May 2013. Action: PM/ML to propose amendments to the Blackboard minimum content policy</p>
Document	<p>Background / Context To agree the wording of a recommendation to release lecture materials in advance and encourage staff to use best practice guidelines on designing inclusive lecture materials</p> <p>Options Available Approve in full Approve subject to revision</p> <p>Recommendation(s) Approve in full</p> <p>If approved: Action By Michelle Lee/Inclusive Culture Group Target Date Mid-June 2013</p>

Building an inclusive culture: making small practical changes to help all Swansea students achieve their best

Background:

The report of the 'Developing an Inclusive Culture and Curriculum' project report was endorsed by the University Learning and Teaching Committee in November 2012 [MNLTE68, P1213-470]. Following this the Inclusive Culture Group (ICG) have been in discussion with SALT, HR and APECS to progress staff training and develop practical usable information to enable staff to begin to create learning and assessment that is inclusive. In addition the ICG has identified some small changes to policy that can be implemented across the University, without the need for additional resource, with the potential to significantly enhance the student experience.

Recommendations:

- 1) Amend the and the Blackboard Minimum Content requirements to require that lecture materials are made available on Bb in advance of the lecture (at least 24-hours in advance).
- 2) Amend the Assessment Policy and the Blackboard Minimum Content Policy to recommend that best practice guidance on the format and style of lecture materials be adopted (e.g. Rodriguez-Falcon et al. The Inclusive Learning and Teaching Handbook published by the University of Sheffield¹; JISC TechDis inclusive technology advice <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/home>)

To provide some lead in time, this will be a recommendation for 2013-14 before becoming a requirement in 2014-15. Consultation and support will be carried out with students and staff during this period to ensure its success.

Why make lecture materials available in advance?

- Allows slides to be viewed on mobile devices during lectures and make use of apps for note taking (e.g. Evernote).
- Assists with planning and preparation ahead of lectures, which is helpful to all students, but especially helpful to students with specific learning difficulties where planning ability is affected (see Swansea University policy on Specific Learning Difficulties).
- Provide an opportunity for students with specific requirements to make their own adjustments to materials (e.g. increase font size, use of coloured filters, print in advance)
- It supports sustainability by reducing the need for printed hand-outs to be provided in lectures (this also saves money that could be used for other student experience initiatives)
- It is likely to have positive effects on retention and progression: improved accessibility of lecture material in general which is of assistance to students who work part time, have carer/family

commitments or ongoing special circumstances (these are often mature students and/or students who are local to Swansea and live at home who have a greater risk of non-progression)

Barriers to releasing material in advance

- Belief that attendance may drop: Data collected in the Department of Psychology suggests that pre-releasing lecture material does not have a negative impact on attendance (based on comparing 2012/13 attendance with attendance in 2011/12 when lecture material was uploaded to Bb after a lecture). Attendance is more likely to be affected by other issues (e.g. reading directly from Powerpoint slides, lack of engaging manner, disorganized content, lack of interest in subject matter - as evidenced from module evaluation). For staff concerned about attendance the adaptive release function in Bb provides a mechanism for advance release of materials only to those students who meet an attendance threshold (Latreille 2008, Economics Network case study²)
- It will take more time to pre-release material and potentially increase resource requirements: There will need to be a shift in practice for many staff, but pre-release need not be more time consuming than uploading material after a lecture has been delivered. Material is routinely pre-released where adjustments have been put in place for named students.

Dr Michelle Lee
On behalf of the Inclusive Culture Group
May 2013

1. Rodriguez-Falcon et al. (2010)
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.18989!/file/The-inclusive-learning-and-teaching-handbook.pdf
2. Latreille (2008)
http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/showcase/latreille_attendance

Checklist for Inclusive Lecture Materials

- Use Blackboard to release as many lecture materials as possible at the beginning of a module
- Release lecture presentations at least 24 hours in advance of the lecture
- Use a sans-serif font such as Arial or Tahoma for all materials
- Use a minimum font size of 12 for handouts and 28+ for presentations
- Choose a font colour that contrasts with the background (black or dark blue font on white; white font on dark backgrounds)
- Avoid textured, green, pink or red backgrounds which cause problems for students with dyslexia
- Align text to the left and turn right justify off
- Avoid using red and green on diagrams which may be difficult to differentiate for some students (about 8% of males have a degree of red/green colour blindness)
- Keep slides simple – avoid too much text (keep to 3 main bullet points) and if using diagrams aim for one per slide displayed as large as possible
- Check that any images/diagrams do not interfere with the text
- Try to use accessible language keeping in mind the audience will be international
- Explain jargon, abbreviations, acronyms and colloquialisms (could be added to a glossary of key terms)
- Consider using a range of media such as screencasts, podcasts, videos, YouTube clips, weblinks accessed via Blackboard
- Seek informal feedback from students at the end of lectures early in the semester – ask them if the lecture materials are readable, clear and accessible

Useful links

<http://ow.ly/INB34> [Rodriguez-Falcon E, Evans M, Allam C, Barrett J, Forest D (2010) The Inclusive learning and teaching handbook. The University of Sheffield]

<http://ow.ly/INGCO> [JISC TechDis Inclusion Technology Advice; Introduction to accessibility and inclusion]

<http://ow.ly/INHf8> [Waterfield J, West B, Chalkley (2006) Developing an inclusive curriculum for students with dyslexia and hidden disabilities. Geography Discipline Network, University of Gloucestershire]

<http://ow.ly/INI2c> [InCurriculum: an inclusive curriculum in Higher Education. Norwich University College of the Arts, University of Westminster, De Montfort University, HEA National Teaching Fellowship Scheme]

Designed by the Inclusive Learning Group, Swansea University Inclusive Culture Project

Proposed Revisions to Blackboard Minimum Content

Information marked in **Grey** will be automatically fed to the VLE but Staff will need to check it for accuracy.

Information in **Bold** must be added by staff responsible for the module

VLE Menu Item	Content Area	Source	Released in Bb
Module Information	Module Synopsis	Feed: Module Proforma - <i>Synopsis</i>	Start of TB1
	Syllabus	Feed: Module Proforma - <i>Syllabus</i>	Start of TB1
	Assessment Timetable	Feed: Module Proforma - <i>Assessment Information</i>	Start of TB1
	Module Catalogue	Feed: Full Module Proforma Information	Start of TB2
Staff Contacts	Name & Contact Details	Feed: Module Proforma Module Lecturers	Start of TB2
	Office Hours	Short term- Manual input by Teaching staff Long term-from Module Proforma	
Assessment & Feedback	Assessment Timetable	Feed: Module Proforma - <i>Assessment Information – Month Only</i> This will need to be supplemented by Teaching Staff	Start of TB2
	Assessment	Teaching	Start of TB1

		Staff	
	Assessment Guidelines	Teaching Staff	Start of TB1
	Marking Criteria	Teaching Staff	Start of TB1
	ASK Tool	Automatic with template	Start of TB!
	Sample Papers/Questions	Teaching Staff	Start of TB1
	Electronic Submission, where used	Teaching Staff	Start of TB1
Staff Support (Only available to staff)	Links to support a and guidance on developing Bb modules	SALT Team will provide this	Start of Term
Activities/Module Content	<p>To enable students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties to better prepare for lectures it is recommended that all module content (notably lecture materials) is made available to all students a minimum of 24 hours before each lecture.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to new Lecturers developing materials and to external/guest lecturers, although all should be encouraged to comply with this approach to ensure parity of the student experience.</p> <p>Following Best practice guidelines on the format of presentation materials and handouts will ensure that lecture materials are inclusive.</p>	Teaching Staff	Start of session 2013/14 (Recommendation) From 2014/15, this will be a <u>requirement</u> for all modules.

	<p>See Checklist for Inclusive Learning Materials</p> <p>Each module should contain indication of what each lecture would contain; as lecture titles themselves are rarely that informative. This may take the form of adding at least one of the following:</p> <p>Access to any presentation or discussion materials e.g. handouts, notes ,PowerPoint, Prezi, pdf, Keynote, Beamer, Slideshare etc</p> <p>A summary of the main arguments</p> <p>A structure/outline of the session to be accompanied with a 'further reading' section</p>		
Reading List	Reading List	ISS Reading System Trial	As part of trial and then fully from 2013/14
Calendar	Lectures Timetable		TBC
	Seminars Timetable		TBC
	Assignment Deadlines	Feed: Module Proforma - Assessment Information – Month Only	TBC

In each content area of each module there will be a text element, only viewable by staff, explaining what information should be there and what can be done in each area.