Creating accessible PowerPoint presentations

This guidance explains how to create accessible PowerPoint presentations for use in lectures and sharing electronically. This benefits all students, not just those with identified needs.

Making text and structure accessible

- To ensure text is visible to all students in a lecture theatre, use a sans-serif font (e.g. Arial or Verdana) in **18-22 point size** for main text and **30 point size** for headings (note: some font sizes appear bigger than others). Avoid italics, which can be difficult to read.

- Minimise the amount of text on each slide and keep the layout simple (using bullet points, for instance). If you find yourself putting a lot of text on a slide then provide this as a handout instead.

- Use the layout options (or a pre-defined template) in PowerPoint rather than adding text boxes to a blank slide as this ensures screen readers can recognise titles. Give each slide a different title and number so students can navigate using assistive technology.

- When linking to other resources, avoid using the phrase 'Click here'. Instead, give hyperlinks descriptive text. This allows students using assistive technology such as screen readers to follow the link.

- Ensure that there is a strong contrast between text and background, for example, dark text on a pastel or cream background (not white). Try to avoid contrasting red and green as these colours can be difficult to differentiate for those with colour blindness.

- Ensure that colours are not the only means of conveying information: use headings to help students distinguish between content.

- If there are several text boxes on the page, make sure the slide reading order is correct (you can check the reading order by selecting Home > Arrange > Selection Pane - the first object to be read is at the bottom and works upwards).

Sharing Slides

- Make slides available online **24 hours in advance** of teaching, as well as at the start of the presentation or lecture. This allows time for students using assistive technologies to access materials and will give all students the opportunity to prepare.
- Sharing documents in advance, including glossaries of new terms or acronyms, is particularly helpful for those with some disabilities (e.g. dyslexia) or those whose first language is not English.
- It is vital for sign language interpreters to receive a copy of a presentation in advance of a lecture. This is to familiarise themselves with terminology and concepts and agree translations in BSL for niche terminology.

Making images accessible

- Adding descriptions to images or charts using the 'alternative text' feature ensures the information you want to convey is available to all students, including those using screen readers. To add 'Alt text' use the steps outlined in the Microsoft Office guidelines and follow these points:
- A short sentence describing the image is likely to be sufficient. Try to identify the key information that the image is intended to convey to students. In charts and graphs, this is often the data. If interpretation of the image is subjective or intended to teach a visual discretion skill, think carefully about which information you should include.

- If possible, avoid using terms that describe visual concepts such as 'foreground' or 'background'.
- If the image is purely decorative, you may want to just include a short summary or leave the 'Alt text' field bank.

Displaying data accessibly

Try to avoid using tables simply for formatting purposes. If you do need to display data in a tabular format, use the table function rather than formatting using the space bar. This will allow assistive technology to recognise the format. If you decide to use a table:

- Try to keep the table as simple as possible (avoid splitting or merging cells)
- Use column headings (found in 'Table Tools') to indicate which information is needed to interpret the cells in the table
- Keep table headings short and specific

Using audio-visual content

- Ensure that videos or audio content are accessible to all by enabling closed caption subtitles for videos and audio content and/or providing a transcript. Further guidelines on using videos in PowerPoint are available.
- View the Example PowerPoint Slides resource for different samples of accessible slides. Check the accessibility of your presentation using the Accessibility Checker.