

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

▶ **Who might find this checklist useful?**

All staff involved in delivering teaching and supporting learning, e.g., lecturers, technicians, research students, etc., and new staff on induction.

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

► What the SENDA Code of Practice requires

5.6 Responsible bodies should not wait until a disabled person applies to do a course or tries to use a Service before thinking about what reasonable adjustments they could make. Instead they should continually be anticipating the requirements of disabled people or students and the adjustments they could be making for them (to):

- teaching, including classes, lectures, seminars, practical sessions
- curriculum design
- learning facilities such as classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, studios, darkrooms, etc. (3.14)

Example 5.2A

A partially deaf student who lipreads is attending a Business Studies course. One of her lecturers continues to lecture while simultaneously writing on the whiteboard. The student asks him to stop speaking when he turns his back to use the whiteboard so that she can follow what he is saying. The student is likely to be at a substantial disadvantage if this adjustment is not made.

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

● What the QAA Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities recommends

Precept 10

The delivery of programmes should take into account the needs of disabled people, or, where appropriate, be adapted to accommodate their individual requirements. Institutions should consider making arrangements which ensure that all academic staff and technical staff:

- plan and employ teaching and learning strategies which make the delivery of the programme as inclusive as possible;
 - know and understand the learning implications of any disabilities of the students whom they teach, and are responsive to student feedback;
 - make individual adaptations to delivery that are appropriate for particular students, which might include...short breaks for interpreters to rest, or using radio microphone systems, or flexible/interrupted study for students with mental health difficulties.
-

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

What students say about current practice

Sarah - Science - deaf/hard of hearing

I still have difficulty hearing what's going on in lectures even with induction loops and I have problems with lecturers moving about constantly. I do lip read and I do try to follow what they are saying but I have to rely on my note taker. My note taker sometimes becomes aware that I have suddenly switched off completely because I haven't got the stamina to follow any more.

Karen - Business Studies - visual impairment

When I tell the staff I can't see the overhead it makes me feel really awkward. It's as if I am a burden. They say "Oops what are we going to do with you then?" I'm thinking, "Oh help, here we go again".

Gemma- Science - dyslexia and Meares Irlen Syndrome

They don't understand the problems I have with trying to hear, see and write all at the same time. I find it incredibly hard, incredibly hard. If I've got nice short bullet points to copy down that's great and I can go away and read up about it.

Sandra - Arts and Humanities - multiple sclerosis

This year I've been in much smaller groups and the layout of the room has been fundamental to my participation or lack of it. When the room layout has been chairs in rows, I've been stuck at the end of the row by the door, because the room is too narrow for me to get across to the other side in my wheelchair. Worse still when we break into small working groups I tend to get stuck with whoever I happen to be next to, which may not be who I want to be working with. The best arrangement for me is when the room is arranged into a "u" shape of tables, so that I can manoeuvre. This has the added advantage of my wheelchair becoming less obvious and I feel more comfortable with that.

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

* What staff say about current practice

- As a department we have a procedure for getting early notification of any student with a disability that is going to be studying on a course. Initially I was worried that it was going to cause me a huge additional workload. In practice it has meant amending my teaching to include a broader range of presentation methods including technologies I had not embraced, like Power Point.
- We had a student with a hearing impairment due to attend the lectures and I met with him to discuss where he would sit and how best to proceed. To start with it was difficult to stop myself turning towards the whiteboard while I was still talking and I know I have a habit of obstructing my face with my hand when I'm explaining something. After each of the first few lectures I met with him to see how he was getting on. I found the feedback useful and he became more confident as well. If I am honest, I feel that trying to be sensitive to what he wanted has made my lecturing style a bit clearer for everyone.

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

◆ Checklist

Overall procedure

What is the overall procedure for ensuring that the delivery of lectures and seminars/tutorials is flexible and versatile to meet the individual needs of students with a range of disabilities?

By what method do staff become aware of the implications of a particular disability on an individual student's teaching and learning needs, and in particular the "reasonable adjustments" required for lectures and seminars?

Is targeted disability awareness training available for full and part-time staff, from the disability support service? Is this available on a regular basis? Who initiates the sessions? Who attends?

The availability of supporting materials

Is the course documentation made available well in advance of lectures/seminars and has a systematic approach been taken to make it available in an accessible format for a range of disabilities?

➔ **Go to Preparing documents for printing, visual display and electronic dissemination.**

Organising the teaching space

Has an opportunity been made to meet or discuss with students any necessary "reasonable adjustments" that need to be made? Whose responsibility is this?

Is the time tabling of teaching space supported by a reliable access audit and is the allocation suitable and accessible to the disabled students?

What arrangements are to be made where the following apply:

- that some students may utilise assistive technology or employ medical and non-medical helpers to support them.
- that a wheelchair user does not want to feel marginalised by a lecture or seminar room layout?
- that a student with a speech impairment may want another student to ask their questions?
- that students may require additional support to prepare a presentation?
- that having two people talking at once will disadvantage someone with a hearing impairment?
- that a lip reader or a student with a visual impairment may want to be introduced to the student group and have some ground rules set down for communication, etc?

Action Comments

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

◆ Checklist

Action Comments

● that students and sign language interpreters may need short rest breaks?

➔ **Go to Appendix I: Positive communication.**

Are all presentation areas suitably lit, e.g., is it possible to avoid back or side lighting from windows or other light sources, and how are task lights to be supplied when necessary?

Teaching and learning strategies

Is positive communication employed, e.g., by facing the student group when speaking, avoiding obscuring the face by hands or gestures and are staff aware that beards, microphones and books can be obstructive to lip readers?

➔ **Go to Appendix I: Positive communication.**

Are a variety of teaching and learning methods to be used, supported by accessible written and visual material, e.g.:

- positive communication
- whiteboards
- OHP transparencies
- electronic presentation packages
- audio-visuals, etc
- invitations for student input?

➔ **Go to Preparing documents for printing, visual display and electronic dissemination.**

Is the material displayed on electronic presentation packages, OHP transparencies and whiteboards, etc., including graphs and charts, explained orally? Are they available in written form for transcribing purposes?

Is complex information summarised through bullet-pointed summaries?

Will plain language be used when speaking and to explain specialist terminology, thus avoiding jargon and colloquialisms?

Will strategies be used to re-iterate key points, re-phrase information that is likely to be misunderstood and re-emphasise questions asked by students?

Will in-session announcements be produced in written and electronic formats, e.g., concerning the content of future sessions, venues and times including amendments, arrangements for fieldwork, etc.?

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

◆ Checklist

	Action Comments
Will students be encouraged to make tape recordings of lectures and seminars if required?	
In-class assessments Where in-class assessments are scheduled have "reasonable adjustments" been made to self and peer assessment, group work, problem-based assessment, OMRs and CBAs, etc.? ➔ Go to Assessments.	
Post lecture and seminar activities Will course material be posted on the intranet and will email aide-mémoires be used for students who may have been absent for disability related reasons? Is there a chat room that can be used for this purpose?	
Student evaluation Is there a system in place for disabled students to evaluate the learning opportunities provided by lectures/seminars?	

6. Lectures, seminars and tutorials

+ Additional sources of information

The Disability Discrimination Act Part 4. Learning and Teaching Good Practice Guide, (2002), Disability Rights Commission, London.
Available at: www.drc-gb.org

Inclusive practices for students with disabilities: a guide for academic staff, (2000), Universities Disabilities Cooperative Project, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, New South Wales, Australia.

Teachability - Creating an Accessible Curriculum for Students with Disabilities, (2000), Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, University of Strathclyde, Strathclyde.