

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSPs) are drawn up for students who have a range of impairments and health conditions requiring **reasonable adjustments**. PLSPs outline the disability-related barriers faced by students in the learning environment and identify the reasonable adjustments or strategies to overcome these barriers. Responsibilities of Disability Services, the academic school, central services and the student are laid out in the PLSP. Most PLSPs include a number of reasonable adjustments as detailed in the FAQs below:

FAQs

Permit recordings for personal use

Q “I am uncomfortable with the idea of my lectures being recorded; what measures are taken to prevent recordings being put onto the internet?”

A Disability Services advise students not to pass on recordings to anyone else. Students agree in their PLSP that recordings are for personal use only and that they must not under any circumstance publish the recording on the internet, or on any public site.

Q “Modules are delivered in relatively small groups and student discussions include personal information. As someone recording sessions could inhibit group discussions, can I ask the student to turn off the recorder?”

A Where lectures are participatory and contributions touch on personal issues or opinions, it is appropriate for the student to stop recording. Recording should only be used as an alternative strategy to note-taking.

Access to slides before taught sessions when possible

Q “I sometimes have to prepare sessions the night before and it’s not always possible to forward slides in advance. Is this reasonable?”

A It depends if the term ‘when possible’ has been included in the recommendation. For the majority of students, not having copies of slides in advance for the odd lecture would not put them at a ‘substantial disadvantage’.

Access to slides BEFORE taught sessions

Some students would be excluded from the learning experience if they did not have slides beforehand, for example: students dependent upon lip-reading will need to acquaint themselves with new terminology in advance of the lecture; students unable to access boardwork will be reliant upon their copy of slides.

Q “I have posted my slides on Blackboard sometime ago but have since made some minor amendments including changes to the order of the slides. As the lecture content will be roughly the same do I need to go to the trouble of updating Blackboard?”

A For a number of students this will not be necessary. However, it is always advisable to check your students' PLSPs. If a student has a visual impairment and is unable to access boardwork then it is imperative that the slides posted on Blackboard are in sync with the ones displayed in the lecture.

Advice, if needed, on initial essay plans

Q “Does this mean that I am being asked to review all essay plans – and wouldn't this advantage the students concerned?”

A For students who are not academically confident and / or have difficulty in addressing a question with a clearly structured answer in a written format, this adjustment has huge benefit: however, experience has shown that few students in fact take up this option, except where it is built into the teaching programme as good practice for all students.

Advice, if needed, on priorities for reading research

Q “Students are given reading lists and are expected to read around the subject. How much specific help should I give?”

A This depends on the barriers faced by the student. Some students will simply require reassurance that they are on the right track whereas others may need more support. For example, a blind student will be faced with great difficulty in obtaining texts in an accessible format and opportunities for reading around a subject in any depth may not be an option. Other students may not be able to skim or scan text very easily and reading will take considerably longer. In these circumstances, the student will need to be informed of relevant chapters rather than book titles alone.

Advice on and adjustment to course-work deadlines if necessary, so long as this does not compound the problem

Q “Should I be giving blanket extensions?”

A No, we would not advocate this as an effective strategy. All students need to manage their time effectively, including disabled students who often for disability-related reasons take longer to study. Nevertheless, disability can impact directly on the efficiency of time management, and these students need to be given advice – and if necessary referred back to Disability Services for this.

Lectures to be Panopto recorded wherever possible, or equivalent strategies implemented

Q “I am not sure how to use Panopto, or even if my timetabled lecture room has such facilities?”

A Larger lecture rooms should have Panopto facilities. For further information, including on training, see:
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/itservices/lt/lecturecapture.php>
or email the Learning Technology Team at: lttech@bangor.ac.uk

Q “My teaching style does not lend itself to lecture capture, yet the student’s PLSP says I should use Panopto wherever possible.”

A Panopto provides an excellent opportunity to reduce or overcome barriers faced by many students, including disabled students, particularly in didactic-style lectures. When using Panopto, as a minimum, the audio of a lecture should be recorded and PowerPoint screens captured. Slides should conform to the University’s clear print guidelines and delivery paced appropriately.

However, where teaching styles do not lend themselves to Panopto, teaching staff will need to implement equivalent strategies for lectures and seminars. These might include:

- Key questions, outlines of sessions or PowerPoint slides made available at least 24 hours in advance of the class, *wherever possible*.
- Key words, and formulae where appropriate, provided (or the student directed to appropriate supporting texts/reading material) at least 24 hours before the class, *wherever possible*.

(There may be instances where it is a reasonable adjustment for a student to have the information at least 24 hours in advance, and where this is the case it will be stated in a student’s PLSP.)

- Ensuring optimal layout of the learning space and seating arrangements where possible in smaller group teaching (e.g. to facilitate a student who is reliant upon lip-reading).
- Clear guidance to sources of additional/supplementary information, which students can use as the basis for further study.

Complex PLSP (modules with large class sizes)

Q “This has been ticked against a student on one of my modules. I am not sure what it means?”

A Students who have ‘complex PLSPs’ require a number of individualised adjustments. When teaching large groups, it is not feasible to remember every student’s PLSP therefore we recommend you implement as many inclusive strategies as possible but also identify and familiarise yourself with complex PLSPs.

Doctor's note not always required

Q “Should I ask for a doctor’s note for each extension?”

A It is not uncommon for GP surgeries to charge for a doctor’s note or, in the case of Bodnant surgery, the University is charged. If a student is unwell for 1-7 days, they should complete a self-certification form which is available on Student Services website.

If a student has a PLSP because of an enduring health condition then the PLSP should obviate the need for a doctor’s note as Disability Services will have the relevant documentary evidence on file. There may be times when for sound reasons an additional doctor’s note is required; this will be at the discretion of the School e.g. when required for extenuating circumstances in line with the School’s policy.

Note, too, that for some students their specific learning difficulties, or disability, may mean that, if they have fallen behind schedule, for whatever reason, they are simply not able to ‘catch up’ and produce work at the rate of a non-disabled student, or a student without those learning difficulties. This is because of the additional barriers they are faced with. In these circumstances, as a one-off, an extension is a reasonable adjustment; no further ‘evidence’ should be asked for, as Schools have agreed that, in these circumstances, granting of an extension is a reasonable adjustment.