

Welcome

Ensuring e-assessment process is inclusive

The JISC TechDis Service

- JISC TechDis is an Advisory Service funded by JISC (same as the RSCs).
- We are co-located with the Higher Education Academy in York, but unlike the HEA we cover HE, FE (inc. ACL etc) and specialist (disability) colleges across the UK
- Our remit is neither focused mainly around assistive technology or around disability but around good practice in using technology:
 - to deliver more inclusive teaching and learning
 - to deliver more accessible services (library, support etc)
 - to create a more inclusive experience for disabled staff

Working at all levels

- JISC TechDis act as advisors, key influencers of policy for all the UK Funding Bodies.
- We work with institutional managers to shape policy affecting accessibility and inclusion across an institution.
- We work with course leaders and teams to ensure that learning, teaching and assessment are designed with accessibility in mind.
- We work with practitioners to ensure that delivery of learning, resources, support etc. are as accessible as possible
E-Assessment Resources
- Staff Packs www.techdis.ac.uk/staffpacks
- Main website area www.techdis.ac.uk/geteassessment
- Do not try to read the following – click on the links when you download the PPT file!
- Accessibility in E-Assessment Guidelines – report for JISC TechDis conducted by Edexcel <http://www.techdis.ac.uk/geteassessmentguidelines>
- JISC Podcast 'Find your way around e-assessment'
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2008/02/podcast32assessment.aspx>
- Ball, S. (2005) A Checklist For Inclusive Assessment: Getting Started With Accessibility. Proceedings of the 9th International Computer-Assisted Assessment Conference, Loughborough, UK.
<http://www.caaconference.com/pastConferences/2005/proceedings/BallS.pdf>
- Wiles, K., and Ball, S. (2003) Constructing Accessible Computer-Based Assessment: Minor Works Or Major Renovations?. Proceedings of the 7th International Computer-Assisted Assessment Conference, Loughborough, UK.
<http://www.caaconference.com/pastConferences/2003/procedings/wiles.pdf>
- Teachability: www.teachability.strath.ac.uk

Work currently in progress

- Every year we administer the HEAT scheme where staff involved in HE (inc. HE in FE) can bid for technology to undercover or develop an aspect of inclusive practice – in teaching, assessment, staff development, careers services, libraries etc
- One of the current projects (due to report May 2009) is at Roehampton University looking at Reasonable Adjustments in Assessment and how the possibilities balance against the barriers

Guidance Required

- Needed at every stage in the development of an e-assessment:
- Question Design (and marking);
- Design of Delivery Software (Accessibility Passport) ;
- Process (bigger picture)
- And THEN adjustments to accommodate what remains unaddressed

Potential areas of adjustment

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- Procedures for conducting assessment – allow extra time for exams and assignments, or provide alternative exam dates or venues
- The method of assessment – give assignments in the place of exams, write short-answer instead of multiple choice exam questions, allow oral rather than written assessment
- You may also need to provide assistive technology, amanuenses, readers and other support in exams
- <http://www.adcet.edu.au/View.aspx?id=4208>

What to take into account:

- Adjustments should be the result of negotiation between you, disability service staff and the student.
- Find out the student's specific needs – the support office will be able to interpret what this information means in practice.
- The nature of the assessment task. Student need will vary according to the skill and ability required
- What kinds of skills and knowledge does your particular subject demand, and in what ways does the current system impact on the student's capacity to demonstrate them?
- The student's usual kinds of assistance should also be available during assessment activities.
- <http://www.adcet.edu.au/View.aspx?id=4208>

Adjustment vs Academic Rigour

- Balancing equity and academic rigour requires curricula (including assessment) to be designed with a diverse student cohort in mind. Core course requirements and assessment criteria must be clearly stated, so that modifications can be made without affecting academic standards.
- The aim is to be flexible in the mode and delivery of assessment, but to ensure (as far as possible) that the way it is marked stays the same. (Differential marking is only appropriate when it is not possible to put reasonable adjustments in place for the assessment itself.)
- <http://www.adcet.edu.au/View.aspx?id=4208>

Forewarning: Accessibility 101

- The single most important thing any of us can do to make our assessment more inclusive is to warn students at a very early stage what will be required of them. If they will be required to sit for 3 hours in an exam room, if they will be required to be able to look down a microscope, if they will be required to juggle a selection of tropical fruit whilst unicycling – let them know as early as possible.
- The more forewarning they have, the more time they have to put support in place, to acquire or bring assistive technologies or to ask for adjustments if they will need them. (We've all been there: "If I'd known I was going to have to do this I'd have brought my reading glasses...")
- It's common sense.....isn't it?

Flexibility of approach

- In the previous session we saw a range of considerations that need to be made when designing e-assessments in order to make them as accessible and inclusive as possible.
- Taking a holistic approach to the assessment helps in determining how and where to apply adjustments

The Holistic Approach

- “Implementing a holistic approach to e-learning accessibility”
- <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/web-focus/papers/alt-c-2005/>
- Need to provide accessible learning experiences, not necessarily accessible e-learning experiences.
- Accessibility is primarily about people and not about technology, so need to take into account an individual's specific needs, as well as institutional and subject factors when providing accessible resources.
- Need for a quality assurance framework for the development of accessible e-learning resources.
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Alternative Assessment

- When an assessment cannot be made accessible to a particular student, an alternative needs to be created.
- It is good practice to have a range of assessment types within a course.
- Be prepared to accept that some students will have to do things differently – and that one assessment does not have to be accessible to everybody.

Equivalence?

- Often a planned alternative question or version can involve the student in greater effort than the original version. E.g. It can be harder to select ‘comprehension’ issues from an audio passage than a typed passage due to ease/difficulty of ‘scan reading’

Text-Only Alternatives to E-assessments

- Remember: EQUIVALENCE! - A text-only version may NOT be equivalent to the Full Monty
- RNIB's first 'See It Right' Award went to Tesco's access site. Oh dear.....
- If you do have to use a text-only version and the material is web-based, have a look at Betsie (but ask her first): www.bbc.co.uk/education/betsie

Alternative Assessment: Example 1

- A hairdressing student has to provide a text description of the tasks involved in bleaching and dyeing hair.
- A dyslexic student may have difficulty formulating the sentences.
- It may well meet the intended outcomes in this instance to provide a list of suitable and unsuitable statements in a 'select and order' exercise.

Alternative Assessment: Example 2

- A deaf student (BSL user) is undertaking a Spanish course.
- A compulsory element is a 'listening / speaking test' where a Spanish speaker converses orally with students in the Spanish language whilst the tutor observes and marks the student.

- But the outcomes are not about listening, they are about understanding and communicating in a face-to-face medium.
- So for the deaf student, could the Spanish speaker be replaced by a Spanish Sign Language interpreter, with the Deaf student communicating with them in that medium? (The tutor would need assistance from the interpreter in marking the student)
- Or would the Deaf student be expected to undertake the assessment by lip-reading?

But what if you don't have design control?

- Awarding bodies all have a list of standard adjustments that are allowed upon satisfaction of particular criteria e.g. extra time
- Helpful, but a blunt instrument – Student has condition that causes fatigue so can't write for an hour, so they give her an extra 20 mins – but she gets fatigue! Extra time in this case is worse!
- Depending on the AB there may be more you can do.

Some useful AB information

(SQA Alternative assessment arrangements:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files/AssessmentArrangementsResourcePackDraftNov07.pdf>

- OCR / Edexcel / AQA / WJEC Alternative access arrangements:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/exams_officers/JCQ_Policy_Access_Arrangements_Special_Consideration.pdf
- QCA Adjustments and Accessibility page: http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_15470.aspx
- OfQual Adjustments and Accessibility page (currently identical to the above):
<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/467.aspx>
- National Assessment Agency DDA page (inc. quiz):
http://www.naa.org.uk/naa_15988.aspx

The other half of the equation: Marking and Feedback

- Technology can aid in making marking and feedback more inclusive.
- There are just as many potential areas for innovation as in learning and teaching
- Here are a few possible considerations:

Anonymous marking 1

- How do you anonymously mark 25 hand-written scripts and one audio tape?
- Get all students to type their scripts, and the student dictating to audio tape to get a scribe or proxy to type theirs up in the same way?

Anonymous Marking 2

- Use discretion as you would in any other aspect of marking – if one student has included the lowest number of references, think about the reason: could it be the blind student? are all references available in a suitable format? Is the library catalogue easy to browse? Or is the student just not as good? Maybe it's not the blind student after all!

Audio feedback 1

- Audio marking is now becoming more common
- Use Audacity – free audio recording software (www.techdis.ac.uk/getfreesoftware)
- Stephen Gomez at Bristol University has published several interesting papers on this: <http://science.uwe.ac.uk/staff/StaffPage.asp?StaffID=S-GOMEZ>

Audio feedback 2

- Advantages include:
- Tone of voice – reassuring to students, especially those with anxiety or mental health issues
- More space to express your thoughts than writing in the margins
- No handwriting illegibility issues (replaced by accent illegibility?)
- With a bit of practice you can build up a bank of stock phrases and splice them together (if you can really be bothered)

Assessment Policy Checklist

1

- Do policies make it clear that adjustments can be made to examinations and assessments?
- Are examination and assessment methods considered for accessibility at the course planning and review stages?
- Are students aware that adjustments can be made for examinations and assessments?
- Are they invited to disclose that they have a disability when registering for exams even if they have not declared a disability previously?
- Is the policy sufficiently flexible to respond to the needs of all students, not just to those who need adjustments?

Accessibility Policy Checklist

2

- Are students involved in decisions about the adjustments they receive to ensure that they are fully appropriate to their needs?
- Are academic staff also involved to ensure that academic rigour is maintained?
- Does the policy apply to class exams and assessments administered by departments or tutors?
- Are disability-related needs verified to avoid abuse of the system?
- <http://www.adcet.edu.au/View.aspx?id=4208>