Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30 April 2015 at 10:00 in RCH/105X

Present
Helen Petrie (Chair)
Linda Brosnan (Secretary)
Matt Cornock
Josh Salisbury representing the YUSU Disabled Students Officer
James Browne
Mike Dunn

14-15/12 Good Practice: Enabling individual(s) with hearing impairments in a meeting setting

It was explained that the membership of the Forum now includes an individual with a hearing impairment and the Good Practice outlined in this paper will be following at future meetings.

14-15/13 Update on the proposed changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

A presentation about the proposed changes to DSA was given by James Browne from Disability Services. The main points were:

- DSA is a non-repayable grant to assist disabled staff with the additional costs in relation to their study in higher education. A range of support is financed by DSA, including the purchase of computers and specialist equipment, assistance with travel costs and non-medical help (note takers, examination support, study support, mentoring, British Sign Language interpreters).

- 1500 students at York with a broad range of disabilities are currently in receipt of DSA

- In July 2014 the Government announced its intentions to “modernise” the DSA system to:
  - ensure that DSA funding is targeted at those with the greatest need
  - rebalance the responsibilities between government funding and HEIs, who are required to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010
  - take into account the increased use of technology

- The changes will be implemented in two phases:
  - Phase one from 2015-16; extra accommodation costs, travel, computers and Non-Medical Help

In March 2015 the Government announced that some of the proposed changes scheduled for 2015-16 had been deferred until 2016-17. These included
changes relating to accommodation, peripherals and consumables. These changes would only be made following consultation with the sector and stakeholders.

- Phase two from 2016-17; Non-Medical Help

  - Students will continue to receive DSA where their support needs are considered to be more complex, for example, students with Specific Learning Difficulties.

  - A Working Group chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching had been convened to look at how the University could plan for these changes.

During discussions the following points were made:

- In answer to a question about the timescale for implementing the changes, it was explained that the guidelines are still at the draft stage.

- Student Finance England (SFE) makes the decision about a student’s eligibility for DSA funding. This will continue to be based on the complexity of students’ needs. It was explained that the definition of “complex needs” in the draft guidelines is vague and still to be clarified.

- SFE would not normally consider Specific Learning Difficulties as complex. Therefore they represent the most vulnerable group.

- Concerns were raised about the level of support for international students with disabilities. It was explained that international student are not eligible for DSA so the University had provided funding to support these students.

- Teaching will need to be more inclusive and in the long term will support all students.

- Changes are already been seen in DSA funding, for example, students are being asked to contribute £200 towards the cost of a laptop.

14-15/14 Apologies

Apologies were received from Steve Campbell, Jo Fletcher Dave Swallow and Jelena Hovatic (GSA).

14-15/15 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16 January 2015 were approved.

14-15/16 Matters arising

a VLE; review guidance on VoiceOver for Mac Users (minute 14-15/6)

It was reported that the guidance on VoiceOver for Mac Users is available here [https://vle.york.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/xid-4943184_4](https://vle.york.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/xid-4943184_4). It is also linked from the E-Learning Development Team website essential workflows & guidelines page and the VLE guide search (requires a University username and password).

During discussion it was noted that ChromeVox is a text-to-speech app that works with the Google Chrome browser.
Feedback from the meeting of the Disability and Accessibility Group held on 2 February 2015

There was no specific feedback from the Disability and Accessibility Group so the Chair provided a brief update on the issues discussed at the last meeting including:

- Campus signage project
  This is a campus wide initiative to improve signage.

- Hearing loops
  A small group had been convened to look at the provision of suitable meeting rooms on campus that were equipped for people with hearing loss. A small number of rooms had been established as being suitable and are listed here [Rooms on campus suitable for meetings](#).

- Disabled Staff Network
  This was successfully launched on the 2 February and a further meeting of the network planned for May.

- Videos on the University website
  It was explained that all publicly available videos uploaded to the University's YouTube channel will be captioning by the Digital Marketing Team. Details about the YouTube captioning tool are available at [www.captionsforyoutube.com/](http://www.captionsforyoutube.com/).

  To further improve the accessibility of videos on the University website it was suggested that a British Sign Language interpretation could be added to some key videos. This would give a clear message that the University is committed to accessibility and inclusivity. It was agreed that the Chair would raise this at the next meeting of the Disability and Accessibility Group.

**Action - Chair**

**14-15/18 Update from E-Learning Development Team**

- **VLE**
  An annual upgrade to the VLE is planned to take place in the Summer and will be accessibility tested before it is more widely available.

  The supplier of the VLE had appointed a new head of accessibility to improve this facility on new versions and upgrades of the system.

- **New media pedagogy – using video**

**Flipped classroom**

This involves recording a lecture using the Replay system and making it available to students to view in their own time. The students would then attend a timetabled slot with the lecturer to discuss the content of the lecture. Concerns had been raised about the accessibility of the recorded lecture for students with hearing impairments. It has been suggested that either; full lecture notes are provided or captions are added to the recorded lecture or DSA funded support is provided for students.
During discussion the following points were made:

- Some lecturers are already using this system.
- Remote access is very inclusive for disabled students.
- Concerns were raised that students would take time to adapt and engage with this change to teaching practices.

It was agreed that full lecture notes would be the recommended way forward.

**Action - MC**

**Video summaries**

These would be used for non-core online activities, for example, discussion forums or a group discussion with a lecturer, assessment feedback, a summary of a module by a lecturer.

It was reported that discussions had already take place at York about using video summaries. Feedback included; concerns about accessibility for disabled students and additional resources to add captions or produce a transcript.

It was noted that lecturers would be expected to supply this information in alternative formats for disabled students.

- Captioning

With the increasing use of video materials in teaching, there are concerns that departments will not be able to fund captioning of videos used to support learning and teaching activities, for example, recordings made with the Replay system.

The Chair agreed to raise this issue at the next meeting of the Disability and Accessibility Group.

**Action - Chair**

**14-15/19 Update on accessibility testing project (Protea)**

It was reported that a new webpage ([www.cs.york.ac.uk/hci/index.html](http://www.cs.york.ac.uk/hci/index.html)) had been developed. There are also plans to upload case studies to the webpage.

The webpage will be publicised to all departments at the University and other organisations.

- MOOCs (Massive online open courses)

It was reported that during discussions with FutureLearn, the main British MOOC platform, concerns were raised about the need to carry out accessibility testing with disabled users.

**14-15/20 Review of Assistive Technologies**

- Software for creating equations

It was reported that two software packages, Microsoft Equation Editor and Mathtype, had been look at as options for creating equations.
During discussion the following points were made:

- Concerns were raised that MathType can only be used on PCs and laptops.
- A member of the Forum asked if there was an alternative Google app to create equations. It was explained that a Google Docs add-in that lets you insert equations using LaTeX syntax had been looked at and some support material is being prepared on how to use this.
- Using macros in Microsoft Word documents might be another option for creating equations.
- The Microsoft Equation Editor is suitable for students who only need to produce a small number of equations.
- It was suggested that Postgraduate students across the University could be consulted about the different software options for creating equation. In addition, the Maths Centre would also be able to give advice about software packages currently being used in departments.

It was agreed to ask Postgraduate students and the Maths Centre about the different software available for creating equations.

**Action – MD and Chair**

- **Provision of PC classrooms**
  Students are now using laptops, tablets and mobile phones to access assistive technology rather than a PC. So, IT Services are reviewing the provision of PC classrooms due to the reduction in the number of students using these facilities.

- **Google Apps**
  The use of Google Apps is increasing and IT Services are looking at ways to communicate what is available and how it can be used. This will include training sessions and materials.

**14-15/21 Guidelines regarding the recording of lectures, seminars, etc by Students**

It was explained that this guidance was produced in March 2010. Due to changes to legislation and internal processes it has been agreed that the guidelines are revised for approval by the University Teaching Committee.

During discussion the following points were made:

- It was suggested that the title should be changed to personal recording of lectures, seminars by students.
- Feedback already received from members of staff showed that students whether they have a disability or not are using a mobile phone to record lectures and seminars without asking permission.
- The guidelines need to be clear about:
  - the misuse of personal recording
  - expectations
- complying with restrictions on third party material
- A member of the Forum suggested that the guidelines should be checked by the Copyright Advisor.
- International students had asked to record supervision sessions. It was suggested that this should be at the discretion of the supervisor.
- An explicit reference preventing sharing on online platforms, such as YouTube, should be included.

It was agreed that members of the Forum should forward any comments/amendments to the guidelines to the Chair. The revised version of the guidelines will be presented to the University Teaching Committee for approval in October.

**Action - All**

**14-15/22 AOB**

*Lecture Capture*

The representative from the YUSU Disabled Students Network asked for more information about lecture capture via the Replay system.

It was explained that:
- departments make requests to record lectures and these are added to the timetable
- the number of departments using the system is increasing
- Departmental Student Reps could promote the use of this system in their own department
- departments who would like more details about the system could contact Matt Cornock

LB/May 2015