Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 29 April 2016 at 09:30 in BS/007

Present
Helen Petrie (Chair)
Linda Brosnan (Secretary)
James Browne
Matt Cornock

15-16/16 Update on the review of the process for providing accessible documents for visually impaired students

Anthony Sinnott from Information Services attended the meeting to give an update on the review of the process for providing accessible documents for visually impaired students.

Due to an increase in the number of visually impaired students, a Working Group was convened in November 2015 to undertake the review. It was clear that a more efficient way of responding to and anticipating students’ needs was required and also in light of the changes to Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) funding. Two clear streams of work emerged:

1. Support for current students
The process for receiving requests from students was streamlined by implementing a:

- common email address to receive requests from students and to be used to communicate with students, tutors and library staff
- searchable log for recording the requests
- new way of delivering documents to students using Google Drive instead of emailing attachments. This has been piloted with one of the current students and is working well.

In addition all resources provided to students will be held in a new central digital library.

2. Process for the future
A new more efficient, streamlined process is being development that will: improve communications between the library, disability services and departments, know when the peak times are in order to be able to anticipate demand, be able to handle
late and/or additional requests, respond more quickly and manage expectations by including clear guidelines on what is/is not possible.

The Working Group are planning to make recommendations to the Disability and Accessibility Group about what is needed to make the new process work.

During discussion the following points were made:

- Publishers
  - Contact with publishers includes questions about accessibility but there appears to be no conformity.
  - The turnaround time varies and at best is next day but usually a week. The Library is trying to encourage faster publisher responses but anything published pre-1998 is very slow.
  - There is confusion and differences of opinion about the definition of an accessible format. It was explained that the DSA Working Group will be asking relevant offices to look at a University definition of an accessible format.

- In answer to a question about the best way for departments to contact the Library to request accessible materials, it was explained that this should be through their Academic Liaison Librarian.

- The advantage of having essential reading texts prepared in advance will mean that this will free up library staff time to work on independent reading for students, which can also be sourced.

- Programmes that can produce accessible documents
  - Google docs has a “Grackle” docs add-in that includes a good accessibility checker.
  - The Nuance Enterprise software is being replaced with ‘Power PDF’ but this is not yet available to University staff.
  - It was also suggested that other similar packages should be investigated.

15-16/17 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dave Swallow, Jo Fletcher, Mike Dunn, Amanda Wright, Cassandra Lovelock and Evelyn Kramer (YUSU) and Imran Shah (GSA)

15-16/18 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2016 were approved for publication on the web.
15-16/19 Matters arising

a. 14-15/21 Guidelines regarding the recording of lectures, seminars, etc, by students

At the last meeting it was suggested that the guidelines could be included in the Academic Integrity Module. This had been discussed but is still a work in progress due to concerns raised that the module may not be the most appropriate place for the guidelines.

b. Videos on the University website

The Chair is continuing to review videos on department webpages and identity those without captions. The relevant Heads of Department would then be contacted about updating the videos.

Action - Chair

Following consultation with the Disabled Students’ Network there is currently no demand to add a BSL interpretation to videos on the University webpages.

15-16/20 Feedback from the Disability and Accessibility Group

- Accessible core reading materials for visually impaired students
  
  See minute 15-16/18 above.

- Live captioning at public lectures
  
  Discussions had taken place about trialling this at some future public lectures and the forthcoming ‘Festival of Ideas’. As there are only a small number of venues on campus that can support live captioning, this may be limited to one event.

  This has raised concerns about the intellectual property and copyright for external speakers. The University’s Copyright Advisor is reviewing and discussing these issues with the Conference Office.

- Accessibility of the VLE
  
  The University and the suppliers of the VLE had requested further testing of the VLE. Results to be reported to the Forum and the Disability and Accessibility Group in the Autumn.

15-16/21 Update from the E-Learning Development Team

- VLE
  
  The next upgrade to the VLE is schedule for the 12 and 13 July. The new version includes improvements and fixes to current issues.

On the 3 May an open forum with the suppliers is planned.
- **Replay Capture Tender**
  The pilot stage of this tender is nearly complete and the decision about whether or not to proceed with the new system will be discussed later this term.

- **Learning resources**
  Work to improve learning resources on creating accessible documents to take place during the summer.

### 15-16/22 Review of Assistive Technologies

- **Exams arrangements**
  As students are not allowed to use their own laptops for examinations, the screen reading software JAWS, had been installed on accessible PCs on campus. Other software being used by students in exams includes Dragon and a braille display. IT Services had agreed to support this new initiative.

  This new development has raised concerns about invigilators levels of IT proficiency and disability confidence. It was suggested that PhD students in Computer Science have an understanding of accessible software and may be willing to invigilate exams. The long term solution would be a team of invigilators with the relevant skills.

  It was suggested that Computer Science could also offer training for invigilators.

### 15-16/23 Any other business

- **Universal Design Conference – 21-24 August** (http://ud2016.uk/)
  Over 100 papers had been submitted. More information about the conference will be made available on the webpage. All York staff and students are welcome to attend and do not need to pay the registration fees.

- **Project to describe images used in powerpoint presentations and teaching resources**
  Computer Science are currently running a pilot project and asking students to provide descriptions of images.

- **Accessibility of the University’s webpages**

  The Chair had reviewed the University's homepage and found that the images shown, either did not have a description or did, but it was not relevant to the image. Also the ‘Study at York’ page included five ‘read more’ links which are not understandable when using screen reading software. This feedback will be forwarded to the Digital Team within Strategic Marketing and Digital Communications. The Chair will offer to conduct a more extensive accessibility audit of the main pages of the university website.

**Action - Chair**

Minutes of the e-Accessibility Forum: 29 April 2016
• Presentation on accessible software by a visually impaired user

Computer Science are running a new version of their study skills for first year undergraduate students in 2017-18. A presentation on how visually impaired people use accessible software will be part of this module. It was suggested that a video of this session would be a good learning resource for both staff and students throughout the university.

LB/May 2016