

Policy on permitting disabled students to audio-record teaching sessions

1. Under the Equalities Act 2010, Higher Education Institutions have a responsibility to ensure that disabled students are not at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to students who are not disabled. This includes a responsibility to make **reasonable adjustments** in order to remove any disadvantage that may exist.
2. For some disabled students, permission to audio-record any teaching sessions in whatever format they are delivered is a useful adjustment which enables them to gain full advantage of a course, which might otherwise be inaccessible to them. This is consistent with existing copyright legislation, due to the exception of 'fair use'.
3. It is assumed that any information which is conveyed during a lecture, seminar, tutorial, practical or fieldtrip is information which any student is entitled to have a record of, in some format. Students who need to receive information in an audio-format should, therefore, be permitted to audio-record this information, unless there are justifiable reasons why this might not be possible in an individual situation.
4. If a student has permission to audio-record a class, the course co-ordinator is responsible for informing all lecturers/tutors involved in teaching that student. The name of the person who will place the audio-recorder should be given to each relevant member of staff. This would normally be the name of the student himself or herself, except in cases where the student has requested confidentiality. In these circumstances, the name of the person assisting the student will be given. The student will be asked by the Disability Adviser to sign an agreement that the recording will be used exclusively for the purposes of private study.
5. **Possible alternatives:** If it is not possible for anyone to audio-record a particular class, students should be made aware of this well in advance, preferably before the start of the course. The duty to ensure that all students have full access to all lectures/tutorials etc. still remains and alternative means of enabling this should be negotiated with the student(s) concerned. If a student is able to access written material, options may include the services of a note-taker or the provision of a full transcript of the lecture (not just copies of the presentation itself). If it is essential for the student to receive information in an audio-format, options may include the provision of the full transcript in electronic format (enabling the student to use text-voice software, if they utilise this) or having a presentation dictated into audio format- this would not apply to the contributions made by other students in the class. The specific alternative which may be appropriate in an individual case should never be assumed but should be discussed by the lecturer, student and the Disability Adviser. All parties should be clear on what provisions are being made well in advance of the class itself.
6. **Visiting Lecturers:** According to the legislation, visiting lecturers are considered to be 'agents' of the University. As such, the University needs to demonstrate that an approach was made to the lecturer, requesting that a student is given permission to audio-record a class, in order to prevent them being at a substantial disadvantage for a reason related to his/her disability or impairment. If the visiting lecturer does not grant permission, the responsibility remains with the institution to ensure that any existing disadvantage is alleviated. In such circumstances, alternative options, such as those listed above, should be considered.