



# **Accessible and Inclusive Teaching Practice**

**Tips for lecturers at CAMPUS 02**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

According to the project report on the 2015 Student Social Survey, around **12% of all students** attending an Austrian higher education institution are impaired due to a disability, specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia), or chronic, mental or other condition. The figure suggests that 36,800 students have an impairment that hampers their academic achievements.<sup>1</sup>

There is a wide **diversity** of impairments, which ranges from mental and chronic-somatic conditions, physical disabilities and visual, hearing and speech impairments to special learning difficulties, such as dyslexia.

Around **two thirds** of students with an impairment state that their condition is not necessarily visible to others.

In line with our legal duties and through further efforts to ensure inclusive learning and teaching, CAMPUS 02 aims to create an educational environment that enables as many students as possible, regardless of their impairment, to fully **participate in our courses**. Furthermore, our strategy for the admission of students based on our entry requirements and qualification profiles of the various degree programmes aims at preventing the exclusion of able potential students due to their impairment. Besides the importance of actions taken on an institutional level — by providing a point of contact, barrier-free access to lecture halls and designing accessible admission exams, for instance — **actions** to ensure accessible and inclusive **teaching practice** are of equal importance.

The following guidelines aim to provide lecturers with **handy tips** for breaking down barriers and increasing inclusivity. Even though the following tips will not be able to cover all forms of impairments and solve all problems caused by them, they do serve as a usable tool kit for making adjustments that will increase the accessibility and inclusivity of your courses. Many of the tips provided in these guidelines will also benefit students who do not have an impairment and are therefore worth following as they do not necessarily require additional effort.

Other diversity and gender aspects, such as how to use gender-inclusive language with heterogenic groups of student, are not the subject of these guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

If you need help with making adjustments in a specific case, please contact — with permission of the student in question — the **responsible heads of degree programme** or **GDM coordinator** via [diversity@campus02.at](mailto:diversity@campus02.at).

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<sup>1</sup> [Student Social Survey 2015 accessed on 24 July 2019](#)

<sup>2</sup> See CAMPUS 02's Sprachleitfaden

## 2 PREPARATION OF COURSE UNITS, TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

- ❖ Upload all information on the course and all **course materials** to the Moodle learning platform as downloads **in digital form and in advance**. Make sure that the downloads are editable so that students with impairments can increase the font size or contrast levels of the document, create a print-out version in Braille or use screen-reader software if necessary.
- ❖ Make sure that course materials are always **digitally accessible** so that screen-reader software and Braille notetakers can easily recognise them. The following tips help provide digital accessibility:
  - Insert a hyperlinked table of contents in text-based documents.
  - Insert explanatory captions for images and diagrams.
  - Instead of “manually” numbering and listing information, structure texts using defined styles templates for headings and bullet points.
  - Instead of typing spaces to create blank spaces and page breaks, set tab stops to do so.
  - Do not justify texts as large spaces between words can create problems.
  - Instead of inserting tables and diagrams as embedded images, create them in Word if possible.
  - Do not use colour combinations of red and green.

If you use Microsoft Office applications to create your documents, the "**Verify/Accessibility Checker**" function in the ribbon is very helpful on the way to barrier-free digital documents. You can find more useful information on creating barrier-free PDF, Word, PPT and Excel files (and more) on the internet. The University of Vienna also provides many useful tips on their [Barrier-free Teaching](#) webpage (German).

- ❖ When using **videos** in class, make sure to insert **comprehensible subtitles and/or provide audio transcripts**. Automatic subtitling functions provided by video portals, such as YouTube, are not always reliable. YouTube, however, does provide a fairly simple solution for integrating your own transcripts as subtitles.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Whenever you give a lecture or talk, prepare recommended reading lists or handouts to give hearing-impaired students the chance to access the information you are presenting.

## 3 ATTENDANCE-BASED LECTURES

- ❖ Impaired students often know best what kind of support or adjustment they need. We therefore recommend that you use the **first class** of your lecture to address the topic. Offer students the possibility to **talk to you in person** (e.g. after class) about any adjustments they might need with regard to the communication of knowledge and performance assessment (see more information below). Inform students that adjustments can only be made adequately if they let us know about their needs.

When informing impaired students in class about the support options we offer, please keep in mind not to directly address them as the impaired student to avoid “outing” them in

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<sup>3</sup> [Automatic Captions in YouTube Demo](#)

front of their peers. To communicate the support we offer discreetly, mention the following during class:

- A mobile hearing induction loop can be borrowed from the Info Point.
- Students with impairments have the legal right to take an exam in a different format (see more below) upon consultation of the heads of the relevant degree programme.
- You will treat any information that is disclosed to you as strictly confidential.

**If the student concerned agrees**, please inform the heads of the degree programme about the student's impairment so that appropriate actions can also be taken to support the student outside of the lecture environment. If you are not sure what adjustments can be made or which adjustment would be best, please contact the heads of degree programme and/or [diversity@campus02.at](mailto:diversity@campus02.at).

- ❖ When giving a lecture, **avoid standing with your back to the students** and try to face them as much as possible. People with hearing impairments especially rely on your facial expressions, gestures and last, but not least on your lip movements to follow what you are saying. When you write on the blackboard and explain something at the same time, it would not only help impaired students but all students if you repeated what you said with you facing them.
- ❖ If possible, we recommend that you use the **microphone** and audio system during a lecture. Try to keep non-verbal signals to a minimum. If hearing-impaired students are attending your lecture, please mention the mobile **hearing induction loop** that can be borrowed from the Info Point upon reservation. The Info Point staff is happy to show the students how to use it. Please also allow students to use their own microphone system if they have brought one along to class.
- ❖ CAMPUS 02 takes into account the needs of people with **limited mobility** when booking lecture halls. In the case that a non-accessible lecture hall is booked for your lecture, even though a student with limited mobility is attending, please inform the heads of the degree programme so that adjustments can be made for the future.
- ❖ Please remove any **physical barriers** that might occupy the space reserved for wheelchair users taking part in attendance-based lectures.
- ❖ Make sure to **keep the noise level down in the lecture hall**. Hearing aids cannot filter disturbing and background noises and therefore turn their volume up as if they were your voice. Hearing-impaired people find disturbing and background noises especially unpleasant and loud.
- ❖ Try to include **interactive learning methods**, such as individual and group work, in your lecture as they can boost concentration and motivation. Students with mental health conditions, in particular, can achieve better results this way. These methods also give impaired students the opportunity to actively engage with other students in a more intimate and protected environment, lose their inhibitions and network with their peers.
- ❖ If there are students with speech impairments in your lecture, do not give in to the urge to want to finish words or sentences for them. Give them **time to formulate** what they want to say.

## 4 ASSIGNMENTS AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

- ▣ Besides the materials you usually use for your attendance-based lecture, we recommend providing **preparatory and follow-up documents for your attendance-based lecture** on the Moodle learning platform. As impaired students may have to miss a class due to certain circumstances (doctor or therapy appointments, phases of pain, necessary rest periods, concentration disorder or mental condition), they can better take part in your lecture and more easily compensate for any missed classes. Make sure to **make materials digitally accessible** (see tips above). Students without impairments will also benefit from supporting materials, such as:
  - Scripts
  - Transcripts and audio recordings of your lecture
  - Sentences from your presentation slides
  - Reading lists (e-books)
  - Educational videos and screencasts
  - Quizzes
  - Exercises and solutions
  - Links to websites
- ▣ Try to make homework as accessible as possible and help students with impairments find an appropriate **peer** who can help with practical exercises.

## 5 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

- ▣ According to Art. 13 of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHG *Fachhochschulgesetz*), students have the **right to take an examination in a different format** if they can prove they have a disability that makes it impossible for them to take the exam in the prescribed manner and that does not affect the content and requirements of the original assessment method. If a student would like to exercise his/her right, please contact the heads of the degree programme in time so that possible adjustments can be made. The student in question is required to provide proof of his/her disability to the heads of the degree programme.
- ▣ Changes to the format of the assessment method include **small adjustments or completely different assessment arrangements**. As a lecturer, you are invited to contribute to finding appropriate adjustments together with the heads of the degree programme that ensure the testability of the learning objectives to the greatest possible extent. Examples of adjustments include:
  - Allowing the use of special aids and devices, such as a Braille notetakers or lenses (e.g. for students with visual impairments)
  - Providing exam papers with larger fonts or tactile writing (e.g. for students with visual impairments)
  - Allowing additional exam time (e.g. for students with specific learning difficulties)
  - Conducting oral instead of written exams (e.g. for students with limited hand mobility)
  - Conducting oral exams communicated by a sign language interpreter (e.g. for students with speech and/or hearing impairments)
  - Written or electronic exams instead of oral exams (e.g. for students with language impairments)
  - Conducting exams to be done on the computer instead of hand-written (e.g. for students with specific mobility impairments)

- Allowing practical tasks to be carried out by the student's assistant on the basis of the student's instructions (e.g. for students with limited mobility)
- Conducting an oral exam instead of asking for a presentation as the basis for assessment (e.g. for students with certain psycho-social conditions)

The aim of making adjustments to course materials, lectures and exams is not at all to make degree programmes easier to pass or even to allow the bypassing of exams, but to **compensate for impairment-related disadvantages** and to ensure **equal opportunities** for all.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND EFFORT!**