# **Evaluating the accessibility of recordings for re-use in teaching and learning**

## Introduction

When considering re-using a video for a new cohort of students, think about how accessible it is. Universities have a legal obligation to work towards compliance with [The Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/952/contents/made) (PSBAR). In addition, there is a legal obligation to make [reasonable adjustments](https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/key-concepts-reasonable-adjustments-and-inclusivity#collapse1801896) for students with disabilities, and an [anticipatory duty](https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/anticipatory-duty) to ensure that all students can access learning resources on an equal basis.

## Factors to consider

In order to ensure equal access to the video for all students, and to meet our anticipatory duty, consider the following:

**Is the sound quality good?**

Is there significant external noise, a regular hum, crackle or distortions in the sound that will significantly distract students? Can the speaker be heard easily without needing to turn the volume to 100%?[[1]](#footnote-1) Does the speaker’s voice vary significantly in volume as they move around in the relation to the microphone? Some issues (such as a background hum) may be possible to fix retrospectively, and this can be discussed with [local IT officers/Replay departmental contacts](https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/replay/local-support).

**Are the learning resources and the speaker clearly visible?**

It is good practice to include a video feed of the speaker (this is helpful for Hearing Impaired students but is also effective for student engagement). Can the content of slides be clearly seen, and can you still make them available for students to download separately? If the video includes a demonstration or use of a whiteboard, can these be clearly seen/read?

**Are there context-specific references in the video?**

Does the video refer to the specific context of its original use and will that still be relevant/meaningful to students when it is re-used? Consider editing out these references, or create a brief introduction to the video to contextualise it for re-use to engage new students.

**Captions, Audio description and reasonable adjustments**

* Captions

Machine generated captions, available by default within Panopto, should be switched on. Staff are not required to manually edit captions/transcripts that are automatically created and access to video content should not be restricted where it has not been possible to eliminate all errors. Adding detailed lecture notes or scripts, and using PowerPoint slides to summarise the key points and explain key terminology, improves accessibility and can mitigate for captions that are not fully accurate.

If there are particularly widespread caption errors which have a disproportionate impact on meaning and intelligibility, departments can contact the Disability Advisory Service who can advise/arrange access to manual caption editing/transcription services subject to demand. The Replay team (replay@it.ox.ac.uk) can also advise on third-party captioning services.

Staff may choose to check and edit captions on their videos, and there is guidance on how to do this in CTL’s [Creating accessible videos](https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/creating-accessible-videos) resource and on the [Replay team’s captions page](https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/replay/captions).

* Audio description

Is any visual information that is necessary to understand the content (such as charts or images) described adequately in the audio? For example, ‘this chart shows that sales increased significantly, from 1 million in the first quarter of 2019 to 1.3 million in the second quarter’, is a full description of the visual information, but saying ‘you can see how sales were affected on this chart’ relies on the user being able to see. A key part of providing good audio description is to refer to objects explicitly, rather than using pronouns that refer to the visual content. For example, ‘attach the small ring to the green end, which is the larger end’ rather than ‘attach this to the green end’. This not only improves access for visually impaired students, but is also helpful for all students to improve comprehension of the visual information.

* Reasonable adjustments

Students who require fully accurate captions or audio description of visual content as reasonable adjustments should contact the University Disability Advisory Service via [disability@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@admin.ox.ac.uk).

## More information and Links

* More detailed advice on [creating accessible videos](https://www.ctl.ox.ac.uk/creating-accessible-videos) is available from the CTL website.
* Information about the accessibility features in Panopto, as well as how to report accessibility issues with video content on the platform, is provided in the [Panopto Accessibility Statement](https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/replay/accessibility/statement).
* For more information about the Captioning Service run by DAS, please email [nmh@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nmh@admin.ox.ac.uk).

1. Hearing impaired students, or those listening in noisy environments, need to have the flexibility to increase the volume beyond that which would be needed under normal conditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)