



Learn Foundation Interns - Accessibility

Making Learn accessible helps to enhance students' learning experiences

What did we do?

We have carried out an accessibility check for course specific materials so that Schools can get a comprehensive overview of how accessible their current materials are for the introduction of the new accessibility regulations.

What are the new regulations?

New regulations have just come into force which means from next year, every new public sector website will need to meet certain accessibility standards and publish a statement saying they have been met. Existing websites will have until 2020 to comply. All apps will have until 2021 to comply. The aim of the regulations is to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities. (Gov.uk)



What we have learned

Screen readers

Screen readers read the document out loud. Documents should allow the use of screen readers which are useful or even essential for visually impaired and blind people. There are a few rules to be followed in making the document accessible, such as maintaining a logical structure of the document which can be easily navigated by the screen reader, using Styles for headings in Word, and alt text for images. Most scanned documents are images and cannot be read by a screen reader.

Colours issues

Colours can be a great tool, but not for all of us. Using colour to emphasise important information in text, graphs or tables seems intuitive to many, however, it is not suitable for those of us who are colour-blind. Additionally, it can deteriorate the contrast and thus make it more challenging to read. Even though it may occasionally seem that colours are aesthetically pleasing, it is important not to compromise legibility as this is the main aim of resources provided to students.

Text formatting

Everyone has their own, individual way of formatting text. For some of us, especially those with dyslexia, fully justified text, or blocks of capitalised or italicised text, are challenging to read. This does not mean that everything should look exactly the same, but we should follow some rules to make our text accessible for everyone. Moreover, providing an editable version of the file, not only a PDF, makes it possible for everyone to adjust the text to their needs.

Audiovisual accessibility

It is important that videos are accompanied with subtitles and audio files with transcripts. It is not only essential for people with a hearing impairment but also helps non-native speakers or those unfamiliar with the specialist language used.

Testimonials

Two interns were involved in optimising the method used to check the accessibility of courses.

Felicia

"It was a great experience engaging with staff to test and help enhance the procedure we use to check for accessibility."

Sabrina

"It has been really interesting to see how this process has developed into making accessibility checking a streamlined and comprehensive process!"