

Teaching to Include Everyone: A Practical Guide for Online Teaching of Neurodiverse and Disabled Students

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How to use this guide

This document aims to provide practical how-to tips for anyone teaching online, both synchronous and asynchronous. It does not assume particular use of technologies and focuses primarily on behavioural aspects of teaching rather than on module design.

The document has three big-picture recommendations to keep in mind throughout all teaching: be specific, be transparent, and be mindful. Following these principles, the document has specific recommendations of an inclusive principle, a baseline example of good practice, an aspirational version of that practice, and an explanation of what kinds of issues this principle is addressing. These recommendations are organised by where you might encounter them in teaching, for example in any online environment, specifically in synchronous sessions, and related to marking & assessment.

This document is meant to be practical - it does not need to be read chronologically or in its entirety to be of use.

Summary

The move to online teaching offers an opportunity to evaluate and improve the accessibility (ability to participate equally) and inclusivity (feeling accepted and part of the group) of our teaching methods. **The Disability working group, a part of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee in the Department of War Studies (DWS), has put together this guide to make online teaching more accessible and inclusive through a series of low effort & high impact recommendations.** These recommendations are based on existing information and resources within and beyond KCL (particularly helpful publications are listed at the end of the document) as well as the experiences and research of the working group members. This document aims to be a guide for all people currently involved in any kind of online teaching at any level.

The premise of this advice is that **students as a whole, but particularly those with disabilities, learning differences, neurodiversities, and mental health challenges, will benefit from online teaching that is accessible and inclusive.** This guide is specifically focused on those four categories of students as we see this as an underserved area of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion within the department, KCL, and higher education in general. Existing government data suggests that those with disabilities are less likely to attain qualifications than those without, and especially those “Individuals with severe or specific learning difficulties were the disabled group least likely to have a degree (7.0%), a difference of 14.8 percentage points in comparison with the disabled population on average” (ONS, 2019). Learning differences can include ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, non-verbal learning disorder (NVLD). Neurodiversities can include these examples as well, in addition to what are sometimes called “social-communication disorders” such as autism. Mental health challenges can include anxiety (general, social, etc), depression, borderline-personality disorder, bipolar disorder, and more.

There is currently a wealth of technical guidance available to teaching staff at KCL, through CTCL, Flexible Teaching & Learning, Library Services, King’s Academy, and resources on KEATs. This guide builds on existing inclusivity recommendations including from academic faculties and from KCL Disability Services, but goes into more depth as a teaching focused guide. This document is intended to complement those technically focused resources with guidance on behavioural recommendations for teaching online.

We believe that there is a lot of existing teaching practice that is accessible and inclusive, and teaching staff have been eager to learn new technologies and methods to adapt to this environment. Additionally, we know that students have existing methods of ensuring individual access to necessary accommodations through King’s Inclusion Plans (KIPs). We aim to further encourage these efforts by helping teaching staff understand how to a) lightly modify current teaching practices and b) clarify academic standards and expectations to promote success for all students regardless of KIPs.

Big-picture recommendations

This guide has three overarching recommendations about how to improve accessibility and inclusivity:

1. Be specific

This is the single most important aspect that enables accessibility and inclusivity across a wide range of disabilities, learning differences, neurodiversities, and mental health needs. Confusion, anxiety, and extra expenditure of energy most often arises when students worry that they do not understand exactly what a teacher means and what a teacher wants. Students with disabilities, learning differences, neurodiversities, and mental health challenges do not expect university to be easy, nor do they want it to be. They simply want it to be possible, just like any other student, without unduly risking their physical or mental health in the long or short term. **Being more specific about expectations and requirements enables students to more effectively plan their time and energy, thus allowing them to engage more effectively in participating and learning** (Broitman, Melcher, Margolis, and Davis, 2020).

This is a theme that has been recognised, for example, by the newly expanded BA extended induction programme, and is an issue we would like the department more widely to take into account. Many of the particular recommendations listed below are undergirded by the fact that knowledge of academic standards, academic forms of communication (including seminar participation, oral presentations, and academic writing) are learned skills that students may acquire at different paces (Jones, 2017; Starr-Glass, 2020). Yet much of university teaching neither acknowledges the challenges in learning these skills, nor explicitly helps students understand how to gain the skills. This leads to opportunities for misunderstandings, anxiety, and confusion, which can impact not only student performance but also the amount of assistance students seek via office hours, emails, etc., from teaching staff. By embedding much greater specificity throughout all learning, online and otherwise, all of these issues can be addressed from the beginning.

2. Be transparent

Much of what teaching staff know, expect, and how teaching at KCL operates is well established. From expectations around designating readings as Core vs Recommended, to seminars being about discussions, what is included and left out of marking criteria, to assignments being returned with marks within a month, many of us are quite familiar with the structure and expectations of teaching within the department. So familiar, in fact, that sometimes this information is not clearly communicated to students, many of whom (and not just undergraduates), are new to KCL and potentially highly-selective university environments. In your module overview information, on KEATS, and consistently throughout the module, it is important to explicitly explain how to read academic sources and effectively take notes, how to plan and structure academic writing and presentations, what high-quality discussion participation can look like, how marking criteria work within the department, and your detailed

expectations for assessments. Therefore, a number of the recommendations detailed below are encouraging teaching staff to communicate their own processes more frequently and consistently to students. **There is often confusion and anxiety around students simply not knowing what to expect: our guide for accessibility and inclusion does not entail changing the structure of KCL teaching, but rather including students in the explanations and information about how the system works.**

3. Be mindful

Academia has historically been designed around a relatively narrow assumption of what a student looks like (Ulriksen, 2009). Aspects such as having caring responsibilities, non-British academic training, different accents or English-language ease, as well as current COVID-19 related challenges such as access to reliable internet/technology, time differences, and working in spaces not designed or solely dedicated to learning. While understanding is growing, there is still a lot of work to be done around accessibility and inclusivity related to disabilities, learning differences, neurodiversities, and mental health, all of which are often invisible and still stigmatised. In fact, according to the KCL Disability Services, only around 50% of students who indicate a disability (or learning difference) of some kind in their official entry to KCL actually register for Disability Services. This suggests that confidence around acceptance is still far from widespread throughout society, academia, and KCL.

Some of our recommendations in this report may seem like small tweaks to your existing teaching practices, and many will in fact be minor changes. However, as the explanations for each recommendation hopefully make clear, these small adaptations can in fact make huge impacts on students' perceptions of accessibility and inclusion at KCL. Therefore, while this guide has a number of recommendations as well as further resources, we encourage teaching staff in the Department to continue to expand their thinking about potential further improvements that could be added to this and other documents, as well as shared directly with the working group for further dissemination. Although it is true that every student is an individual and has individual needs, we strongly believe that **improvements to accessibility and inclusivity can benefit all students (Irving & York, 1995), and that by embedding these practices into teaching in general, fewer students will need extra accommodations and support.**

Teaching Tips

General

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Create & communicate clear time expectations for all forms of participation, synchronous and asynchronous	<p>“Hi everyone, for this forum, please check in every day and respond to each others’ comments around question x!”</p> <p>“Hello! To get the discussion started, please write a short response to question x in the chat!”</p>	<p>“Hi all, for this forum, please spend 10-15 minutes reading through the responses every day and aim to write about 200 words of your own thoughts in answer to question x.”</p> <p>“Hello - to begin with, please write in the chat one idea you have about question x - there are no right answers, this is just to get us started!”</p>

Explanation: Time management and especially energy management is one of the heaviest invisible burdens on students with learning differences and disabilities. The clearest way to help students manage this is to make sure that your expectations around time and effort, not just quality, content, and length, are made clear at all points. While of course aspects like “please spend around 10 minutes” are guidelines and should be taken neither by you nor your students as set in stone, even this amount of guidance can help students understand what kind of depth and engagement is expected.

In synchronous environments, there is even more time pressure in terms of responding to prompts quickly, which can be challenging to those with access needs or who prefer more time to process their thoughts, and so splitting large discussion questions up into ones that can be answered in just a few words, or a sentence fragment, rather than fully developed sentences, can encourage engagement, especially to begin discussions.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
When framing discussions, synchronous and asynchronous, emphasise to students that there are no wrong answers and validate their participation.	“Does anyone have any ideas? There are no right answers, so give it a go!”	<p>““Does anyone have any ideas? There are no right answers, there are all still open debates. Alternatively, are there any questions anyone wants to raise? There are no stupid questions either.”</p> <p>If a student prefaces a</p>

		contribution with “this might be stupid but...” Ensure your response starts with “That’s a good question, thank you for raising it...”
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Explanation: Fear of failure, especially failure in front of peers and teaching staff who control grades, is a massive source of anxiety for nearly all students. Although academia is traditionally a place to explore viewpoints and try out ideas, the processes through which students enter highly selective universities are often based solely on being consistently correct. Adjusting to a different academic expectation is quite difficult and often not directly discussed or clarified. Repeatedly emphasising, explaining, and encouraging students to participate, in every discussion consistently, through statements such as those above are important to lowering the perceived barriers to entry in discussion participation, especially for those students for whom the online environment has removed nonverbal social cues.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Discuss the move to online teaching and learning in a balanced manner, without assuming it is uniformly a negative experience.	“I know moving to everything being online is an unexpected adjustment for many of us, but I’m sure we will make it work”	“I know moving to everything being online is an unexpected adjustment for many of us, but I think it has some positive aspects too for accessibility and inclusion. I’m sure we will all make this work for everyone!”

Explanation: While the move to online teaching is frustrating for many and was unexpected for most, there are distinct populations, particularly those with learning differences, disabilities, or who are neurodiverse for whom the situation significantly increases their ability to participate. For example, for those with sensory issues or physical challenges, having lectures available in environments under their control is a distinct benefit. For those who need more time to process and take in information, the increased amount of asynchronous activities allows for more time management of the learning process. For those with social and communication issues, the structure of online learning, particularly when clearly facilitated through examples like those in this report, can make working with and engaging with others much easier. For these students, what may seem like idle chit-chat about the difficulties of online learning, and grief in missing out on “traditional” university experiences, and the hope that “things will return to normal soon” feel distinctly alienating to their needs and experiences. Therefore, acknowledging that there are pros as well as cons to the current situation improves inclusivity while addressing the abruptness of change and the ways in which it also has negative impacts.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
When soliciting module feedback from students,	“Were the resources and teaching in this module	“In what ways could the accessibility of teaching and

ensure questions about accessibility and inclusivity, separately, are asked.	accessible? yes/no” “Were the resources and teaching in this module inclusive? yes/no”	resources in this module be improved?” “In what ways could the inclusivity of teaching and resources in this module be improved?”
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Explanation: The best way to know what students want and need is to ask! Accessibility and inclusivity are related, but separate concepts, and to ensure feedback is clear enough to be acted upon, separating out the questions is key. Additionally, soliciting more than yes/no answers allows teaching faculty to not only get a progress report on their current efforts, but also allows students to suggest recommendations, which can give at least starting points for future changes.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Reduce visual distractions in video recordings and synchronous use of video	When recording visuals and during synchronous video sessions, ensure your background is either clutterfree or you use a simple false background or background blur.	Think about whether you need to show yourself on video, either in recordings or synchronously. If there is extra information to be conveyed via the visual, then include using the baseline specifications.

Explanation: Many students with learning differences, neurodiversities, and disabilities have hypersensitivities to sensory stimuli as well as requiring more energy to concentrate. Therefore, minimising distractions is key. Distractions can include backgrounds that may be complicated (libraries) or cluttered. Think about whether you need to be on video at all - what does it add to the information? Particularly if there is also a slideshow or screenshare, video is likely to be an additional, and unnecessary distraction. However, when video would be beneficial, consider having plain backgrounds, utilising background blurring effects, or digitally produced backgrounds that have simple lines.

Synchronous Teaching

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Create & communicate clear expectations about how participants should use video & audio in synchronous settings.	“Hi everyone, for this meeting, please make sure to keep your mic muted when you’re not speaking, but feel free to turn on your video so we can see you!”	Speaking slowly & with the same information available on a document/slide: “Hi everyone, to make sure everyone can hear and concentrate clearly, please do the following 3 things. First, keep your mic and video off unless you are speaking. Second, if you would like to

		<p> speak, please use the “raise hand function” to indicate that. Third, when you are called on by name by the moderator, please turn on your microphone, but video use is entirely optional.” </p>
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Explanation: Having clear communication guidance helps everyone know how to best participate and minimises distractions for all involved. Ensuring only one person is speaking and only one mic is on at a time assists visually-impaired learners who rely on screen readers, and also helps hearing-impaired individuals with automatic captioning.

Additionally, enabling individual choice around use of video decreases the pressure some might feel around extra technical aspects to manage. These additional pressures could include: discomfort showing their surroundings, discomfort around English language ability and accent, simultaneous caring responsibilities, socio-economic pressures impacting internet access and bandwidth, extra concentration needed to both display neurotypical behavioural cues when on video, screening out the distractions of other peoples’ videos who are not talking.

Another example of how one King’s teacher currently opens her sessions is:

“I would ask that you mute yourself, if you are not speaking in the workshop. This helps us minimise disturbances through background noise. Should there be any background noise on my audio do let me know. I would like you to feel comfortable during this session. There are a number of ways of taking part. You can type in chat, raise your hand - and I will invite you to unmute - or simply unmute if it is a general discussion. From time to time we may use PollEverywhere. If you have any difficulty in accessing PollEverywhere, or unmuting, please type in chat. As much as I love to see your faces, it is up to you whether you turn on your video or not. I understand that there are many reasons why people do not feel comfortable sharing their video. Sometimes people do not share video in the main session, but are comfortable to share video in smaller break-out groups, and this can be very helpful for building relationships. Should you decide to turn on your video, during any part of this session, or any other, you may wish to blur your background, which you can do via “Apply background effects”. Some people also like to see captions come up as the speaker is talking. This is in real-time, so not perfect, but it is reasonably good and can be helpful. It is a little harder for me to ‘read’ the room if there is no video, so I may ask some extra questions to check how everyone is doing. There will also be some short pauses while I wait for typed chat to appear.”

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Make chat a valuable contribution.	When asking questions in synchronous sessions, directing students to respond via the chat function, reading off responses, answering questions, and inviting	Break larger questions down into ones that can be answered in short and then built on through discussion: “In reading x, what was the main argument presented?”

	specific students to elaborate more if they want to, and accepting if they do not: “Based on the reading x, why do you think y happened? Please pop a short answer in the chat!”	read chat responses “Great! Based on that, what are the theories about why y happened?” read chat responses. “Student A, that’s an interesting idea, would you like to expand on that? Please unmute your mic if you’d like to elaborate on your chat comment.”
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Explanation: For similar reasons to the discussion above about audio and video participation, the chat function is often underutilised in synchronous sessions. However, due to concerns mentioned above but also many students being familiar and proficient with texting as a high-value mode of communication (Whatsapp, texting, Facebook messenger, WeChat, etc), chat is a great way to get students to participate when they might be less willing to use audio or video to engage.

Additionally, it is a much more time efficient manner to get all students to respond, as there isn’t time for each student to speak for 3-5 minutes, but there is time for all students to engage via chat, especially if it’s short engagement multiple times during a session. Likewise, it acts as an effective gauge for teaching staff to monitor participation in a low effort manner. Although typing quickly can present pressures for students less comfortable in their English language abilities and/or with learning differences such as dyslexia, ensuring clear communication about expectations, for example stating, “pop some ideas down, don’t worry about typos, this is just a quick way to get ideas out!” can help.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
During synchronous sessions, ensure there is a clear agenda and structure to the session.	“Hi all, today we will be spending just over 2/3s of our time discussing the readings and then spending the rest of the session going over the upcoming assessment.”	“Hi all. As you can see on this slide, today we are doing five things. First, we will have a structured discussion around Reading X, talking about Y. Second, we will discuss the seminar question A. Third, I will remind you all about the deadline and submission procedures of the upcoming assessment. Fourth, I will go through my recommendations of how to break down and plan the assignment. Fifth, we will have a Q&A for any questions you have about the session, module, and

		assessment.”
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Explanation: Managing anxiety about what to expect during synchronous sessions and being worried about capacity to participate as needed requires students to use a lot of energy - energy they therefore cannot use focusing on what's happening. Therefore, by clearly explaining, specifically and transparently, what will be happening during the session, students can plan their energy, ensure they have the necessary tools and supports, and focus on the immediate task in front of them.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Act clearly as a facilitator, nominating students by name to respond and specify method(s) of participation and whose turn it is to speak.	“Thank you for all these ideas in the chat, I’d like to hear some elaboration. Student A, would you like to turn your mic on and tell me more?”	“Thank you for all these ideas in the chat, I’d like to hear some elaboration. I’m going to ask a few students to elaborate on their thoughts either via mic or chat, but there’s no need to elaborate if you feel you’ve already made your point. I’d like to hear from Student A, then Student B, then we will see who else would like to speak. Would Student A like to begin?”

Explanation: The online environment can remove many nonverbal and visual cues about whose turn it is to speak, which can cause confusion and anxiety for students, both in terms of social anxiety about not interrupting others and being seen as rude, as well as practical issues such as captioning services having difficulty managing competing audio feeds. Ensuring that the session’s facilitator clearly nominates speakers allows discussion to flow more smoothly because everyone can follow along and concentrate on one input at a time. This can be done not just by naming individuals as demonstrated above, but also through methods such as “Does anyone have thoughts about x? If so, please use the “raise hand” function and I will call on you.”

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
When using slides during synchronous teaching, make sure that students are able to access the slides before and/or during the session so that students can annotate slides based on your lecturing, without having to simultaneously process written and spoken information from scratch.	“Hello all, I am sharing my screen to show you these slides, they can also be accessed on the module KEATS page if you would like to download your own copies to annotate as we go through. After I finish talking through each slide, I will pause for a minute or so to make sure everyone can keep up with taking notes before I move on	“Hello all, as you have seen on the KEATS page, I shared the slides we will be going through two days ago so that you have had time to read through them already if you want and can annotate as we go along. I will also be reading out the slides and describing any visuals so that everyone can fully follow along.”

Alternatively, ensure students are given time without lecturing to digest the slides and then focus on your spoken contribution separately.	to the next slide.”	
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Explanation: Simultaneously processing auditory and visual information is challenging to many, particularly for those already expending extra effort managing online learning. Therefore, minimising these processing burdens can greatly help with concentration and engagement, and can be done simply by ensuring there is enough time to take in written information separately from auditory information, so that students can gain from both rather than having to either choose one over the other or attempt to manage both and end up with doubly inadequate notes and understanding. Additionally, sharing the slides so that students can access them independently also allows those students who need screen readers and/or captioning services to be able to use those technologies in an individualised way that works best for them.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
In synchronous discussions, ensure students have time to process questions and give thinking time for formulating answers.	“What do people think about x? I’ll give you a minute or so to think about it”	“I’m now going to pose an analytical question based on reading x. I’ll give everyone two minutes to think and then ask for people to start putting down initial thoughts, just ideas at this point, nothing polished, in the chat so that we can discuss.”

Explanation: University discussions are often grappling with challenging concepts and ideas, many of which will be new to students. As the goal is engagement with these ideas accurately and constructively, adding in time pressure about being able to answer fluently immediately upon receipt of a question is detrimental to students uniformly feeling able and willing to have a go. By clarifying expectations around the need to think and what kind of detail and polish answers should have, students feel less pressure to participate only if they are certain of the perfection of their response.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Turn off notification sounds and banners when teaching synchronously.	Before sharing your screen, turn off apps and tabs that may create noises or banners.	When participating in any synchronous session or recording any asynchronous materials that include visuals and/or audio, turn off any apps and tabs that may create noises or banners.

Explanation: Many students with learning differences, neurodiversities, and disabilities have hypersensitivities to sensory stimuli as well as requiring more energy to concentrate. Therefore, minimising distractions is key. Distractions can include visual disruptions (banners) when students are reading along via screen-sharing, or audio disruptions (notifications) when students are meant to be listening to someone speak. Furthermore, to students utilising technologies such as captioning services and screen readers, these distractions can likewise be problematic.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
For synchronous sessions, ensure a break of a specified duration is included if sessions run longer than 60 minutes.	"After the first hour of this session, we will have a 10-ish minute break."	"We are now starting the session at xxx time, in one hour, at xxx time, we will have a break until xxx time, before resuming for a further xx minutes."

Explanation: Concentration and attention are challenging for everyone, often especially in online environments, but particularly for those with learning differences or disabilities, who have to use extra energy to be able to participate equally. Including breaks both allows students to recharge and regroup in order to engage productively, and the communication upfront about the inclusion of breaks signals to students that their wellbeing is an important and recognised part of academic success. The difference between the baseline and aspirational example further confirms the theme of specificity allowing for planning and anxiety reduction.

Marking & Assessment

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
When explaining tasks and assessments, make sure to explain the process of accomplishing the task in specific pieces.	"For this essay, you should have an introduction that includes your main argument and overview of your points, three main points, and then a conclusion."	"For this essay, you should start with an introduction that includes your main argument and lists the main points you will be making. In each body paragraph, you should follow the structure of point, evidence, explanation, and link. Your conclusion should be straightforward and repeat your main argument. Are there any questions about what to put in the introduction? How to structure the main points? What to include in the conclusion? Any questions about the essay or assignment overall?"

Explanation: Breaking tasks up into manageable pieces is often one of the most difficult tasks for those with learning differences, as a number of different mental processes are required simultaneously, such as attention, comprehension, executive function (planning, considering the future, time management, prioritisation, determining relative importance etc.). This takes a large amount of energy before the task has even officially begun, with consequences for endurance and forward planning. In order to help with this, explaining clearly the individual pieces of an assignment as well as practical tips for planning and completing them is key. Although these are processes academics are intimately familiar with, they are distinct skills learned at university students are not intuitively aware of.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
Ensure students are provided written feedback on <u>all</u> assessments, including presentations.	"For this assignment, you answered the question well and spoke clearly."	"In this assignment, you had a clear argument to answer the question, a good structure throughout, and fluent use of language. Next time you have an assignment like this, think about using more sources from outside the module reading list."

Explanation: The main theme of this primer is that specificity is key, across all aspects of learning. In face-to-face teaching, presentations are often given a formal grade but then informal verbal feedback, which can be hard for students to process in the moment given the energy required to complete the presentation and the anxiety around performing in front of the group. With the move to online learning, there is a risk of this mode of feedback being lost as presentations are either uploaded prior to seminars or done via synchronous online sessions, removing the same element of taking someone aside as students leave the room. In order to make sure students are still learning, however, from these assessments and have concrete ideas of how to improve and what they've done well, written feedback on assessments is crucial.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
When providing feedback, make sure specific aspects that are good and can be done similarly in future assessments are clearly noted, as well as concrete suggestions for future improvements beyond that particular assignment.	"In this assignment, you did particularly well with summarising the author's argument succinctly. Next time, think about improving the structure of your points."	"In this assignment, the way you summarised the author's arguments in two sentences in the introduction was well done and well-placed. Next time, think about writing a bullet point outline in advance with exactly which points you'd like to make in what order so you can have a clear structure to follow when writing."

Explanation: The main theme of this primer is that specificity is key, and this includes areas for improvement in future. Grading criteria are vague to begin with, and designed for faculty use as well, making them quite unfamiliar to students, even those who have been introduced to the various pieces. Ensuring that your feedback is sufficiently specific to their particular assignment, i.e. goes beyond general recommendations to the class, is crucial to ensuring the ability to link ways to improve with students' own current practice. However, as students will never have that exact assignment (i.e. that particular essay question) set again, too specific feedback, for example on what they could have said in this particular essay rather than how they could improve for the next essay, can be less useful.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
For assessments, ensure information about when and how much feedback students should expect is clearly communicated.	"You should expect to get your mark and some feedback within a month or so."	"No later than date x, you will receive your mark on KEATS as well as feedback on how you did against each of the three main criteria of the marking scheme and at least one specific area for improvement. If there are delays in this process, we will let you know."

Explanation: A large amount of student anxiety comes from the feeling of not knowing when information will be available and feeling a lack of control in resolving these unknowns. On the faculty side, the rules about timing and amount of feedback are relatively clear, yet often not communicated to students. Even a simple statement of when students can expect to receive grades can free up significant attention and concentration resources as students do not have to worry about constantly checking for updates or email notifications.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
For submissions of work, ensure students understand official versus unofficial deadlines.	"The deadline for this assignment is 1pm on October 1, make sure to submit it in good time to avoid lateness!"	"The deadline for this assignment is 1pm on October 1, but KEATS can get overloaded and cause delays, so aim to submit at least two hours in advance of the official cutoff."

Explanation: This continues the theme of specificity throughout this guide, particularly around verbalising and clarifying best practices and norms that are often not directly communicated. In this case, particularly for students new to university, KCL, or online learning, which together encompasses many of our students, this kind of clarification about practical realities can be crucial for managing time and expectations, and therefore anxiety, effectively.

Inclusivity recommendation	Baseline example	Aspirational example
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When designing assessments, ensure alternative methods of participating in assessments are built-in.	“For this presentation, you must present a powerpoint lasting five minutes. You can either upload the powerpoint with an audio recording, or with a transcript of your speech.”	“For this presentation, you must present a powerpoint lasting five minutes. You can either upload the powerpoint with an audio recording, or with a transcript of your speech. We strongly encourage students to use this opportunity to develop their oral presentation skills, but also want to ensure students are primarily able to participate freely, and so there is no need to justify or explain the decision to either present orally or via a transcript.”
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Explanation: For students in face-to-face teaching, oral presentations are often a particularly intimidating form of assessment. This recommendation perhaps goes the furthest in recommending changes to existing teaching practice, but is backed up by a wealth of literature (JISC, 2014; Attewell, 2020; Hector, 2020) that enabling assessments to have multiple forms in fact increases skills and accessibility for all students. In this particular example, students may prefer to provide transcripts for a number of reasons including: limited access to Internet capabilities for uploading larger files (which audio files generally are compared to powerpoints & transcripts), anxiety and discomfort around spoken English due to a stutter or accent, and oral and auditory processing difficulties related to coordination and physical ability such as dyspraxia or hearing impairments.

Selected Further Resources

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