



Date **Friday, 22/01/2021**

Time **11:00**

To **Sub-committee on Accessibility**

At **Remotely**

Subject **Meeting Minutes**

Our Ref **SCoA/22/01/21**

Minutes

1. Introductions and apologies

- a) Present: Martin Vinnell (Chair); John Harding (Secretary); Deb Taylor; Kirsty Wayland; Gary Reed; Jessica Comber-Chaney; Jo McPhee; Alison Dunning; Katherine Stalham; Mark Elsdon; Miriam Lynn; Nick Mattin; Libby Tilley; Hisham Ziauddeen; Patrick Dowson; Rensa Gaunt; Will Smith; Thom Sweet (Minutes)
- b) Apologies: Chloe Newbold; Darran Bryant
- c) Declaration of interests

2. Minutes of the last meeting (21/10/2020)

One minor correction on point 9.a) was resolved.

3. Membership

The proposal to add Mr. Dowson from the University Libraries Accessibility Service was accepted. As Mr. Kay has retired, a new member of Estates Management will need to be sought. Mr. Harding has held discussions with Mr. Reed and Mr. Harding will follow this up.

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- a) Actions/updates from previous minutes not within agenda items

Mr. Harding updated the Sub-Committee on the meeting with the Colleges and AccessAble. A costing formula has been formulated and Colleges now have the option of opting-in to

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make guides available for the next academic year. Ms. Gaunt updated the Sub-Committee that buildings have not been able to have been surveyed due to the current lockdown and the sign-up date has been pushed back. AccessAble are looking to complete the surveys over the summer and possibly launch towards the end of Michaelmas term 2021. It is hoped a significant number of Colleges will be involved in the launch and this will encourage other Colleges to join. Dr. Vinnell stated it would be welcome for the Sub-Committee to be kept updated on Colleges joining up to AccessAble and having guides produced.

5. Libraries and Accessibility

a) University Library Accessibility Service

Mr. Dowson updated the Sub-Committee on the Libraries Accessibility Service. A brief summary of the work undertaken and planned for the team was provided. The Sub-Committee was also informed that a Libraries Accessibility Advisory Group is to be created

A question was raised as to whether this service could support disabled members of staff as well as students. The Sub-Committee was informed that the service is primarily setup for students but the service is willing to assist any members of staff who require accessible formats. Mr. Dowson was asked what the biggest challenge to the service was. He was of the opinion that in the current lockdown the biggest challenges for students were in relation to study space, and that a key priority for the new service will be ensuring a consistent service for all students across all subjects, and building effective links across all University departments and faculties, and with the Disability Resource Center (regular meetings have already been established).

6. Accessibility Policy

a) The Sub-Committee is asked to comment on the third draft SCoA 01/21-02

Dr. Vinnell updated the Sub-Committee on the status of the draft University Accessibility Policy and provided a brief explanation for new members. It was confirmed that the policy is a high level policy which would act as a framework for all areas of the University to use as a guide when developing their own policies, ensuring that accessibility had been considered in all instances. It was also suggested that new policies should also have an Equality Impact Assessment and Resource Implication Assessment. The draft accessibility policy itself has no upfront implementation costs but may have some resource implications as it is embedded across the University, however, it was noted that there are considerable long-term cost savings that can be made if the principles of Universal Design are implemented.

Mr. Harding stated that the final draft of the policy had been updated with comments from members of the Sub-Committee and that it would be sensible to set a final deadline for further comments and corrections. Dr. Vinnell set a short deadline of two weeks after the meeting for any final comments.

Mr. Harding also stated that the draft Policy needed to go to the VCO for the VC to sign-off on and approve the statement. Dr. Vinnell confirmed that once final comments had been incorporated he would discuss the next stages with the Registry.

Dr. Vinnell encouraged all members of the Sub-Committee to review the draft policy and submit any final comments by the deadline.

7. Captioning/Caption.Ed

Mr. Harding provided an update on lecture captioning. He reported that after a discussion at the November meeting of GBEC it was decided that automated captioning would not be turned on by default in Panopto. This was mainly due to concerns by academic staff related to the accuracy of captions, time required to edit captions and some concerns related to plagiarism. The provision of captions is therefore optional, but must be provided where there is an evidenced requirement for disabled students. Guidance has been made available on the [UIS lecture capture web-pages](#). Mr. Harding also reported that the DRC has been trialing Caption.Ed, a web browser plug-in that can provide live captions from any media source. There is currently no funding for this software and Mr. Harding has been asked by the Senior PVC Education to produce a paper outlining the possible options for wider use of Caption.Ed. Mr. Harding outlined briefly the possible options which are:

1. Individual licences provided to individual students registered with the DRC (the current piloted model).
2. Small group licence for up to 100 individual users and pay a flat fee per year
3. Full institutional licence and the plug in can be used by any student who needs access to captions.

Mr. Harding stressed that restricting this resource only for use by disabled students is not an inclusive approach as there are many students who may require captions for a range of different reasons. Mr. Harding also cautioned that scaling up the small group licence option may not be possible due to a lack of administrative resourcing within the DRC.

Dr. Vinnell stated that he hoped that it would be possible to move to the full institutional licence option quickly, given the potential benefits to a wide range of students. Mr. Harding confirmed that Caption.Ed has a higher accuracy rating than captioning within Panopto and it also has modules available for specific course content and this helps with technical vocabulary. The full licence also contains an editing suite to correct captions.

A number of questions concerning captioning were then raised by subcommittee members:

- A question was raised as to whether this is the highest accuracy software available - it was confirmed that for an AI only solution user testing and evaluation indicated it was one of the highest accuracy solutions available (with student users rating it at 80-90% accurate).

- A question was raised as to whether this would replace notetakers for students who require this support - it was confirmed that notetaking will still be available, where it is required, but that for some students it may be that captioning negates the need for notetaking.
- The Subcommittee discussed concerns related to accuracy and intellectual property rights.

Dr. Vinnell recognised the validity of the concerns raised and directed the subcommittee to the guidance on the UIS webpages.

8. AOB

The Subcommittee briefly discussed issues related to the provision of sign language interpretation in large scale on-line events.

2020 – 2021 meeting dates:

The meetings of the Sub-Committee on Accessibility will meet on the following days this academic year – all meetings are currently planned to be on Teams.

April 2021: Wednesday 14, 1400-1600