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Baseline Standards of Inclusive Learning and Teaching - Report

Jenny Brady

Contents

Please note: This document was written with an internal (University of Leeds) audience in mind. External colleagues should contact the report's author, Jenny Brady (J.Brady@adm.leeds.ac.uk) for further information.

Executive Summary

Introduction

As an institution, we are committed to embedding inclusive learning and teaching, to recognise the diverse identities of our students, maximise success and engender belonging for each individual. The University of Leeds Strategy states that

> "We will embrace the values of equality, diversity and inclusion in our entire community, welcoming underrepresented groups, enhancing both their sense of belonging and their chances of succeeding."

This aligns to both our Student Education Strategy for 2020-2030 (delivered through Curriculum Redefined) and our Access and Student Success Strategy 2025. To support this aim, a set of Baseline Standards of Inclusive Learning and Teaching were developed by a cross institutional working group, led by Disability Services and Organisational Development and Professional Learning, and approved by the Taught Student Education Board in 2018. The standards are based on approaches to learning and teaching known to benefit disabled students, as well as those from a range of linguistic, educational and cultural backgrounds. Sector-wide, there has been growing support for initiatives to embed inclusive teaching[1], with a number of recent reports showing significant remaining gaps in provision which have been highlighted by the Covid pandemic[2,3].

In 2019, School Academic Leads for Inclusive Practice (SALIPs) were appointed to help embed the standards. SALIPs are in place across 26 (out of 34) schools/areas, and for the past 3 years have sought to understand the extent to which the standards are currently operational. This report provides summaries and recommendations resulting from 137 individual SALIP case studies submitted between July and October 2021. These cover a wide range of topics and provide an insight into the institutional development work that is still required to meet the standards. The study should not be considered an audit, not least because huge variation exists between the sizes of schools, the staffing infrastructures, and learning and teaching cultures. Rather, the case studies provide a collection of examples which are likely to hold true across many areas. Throughout the report, links to ongoing institution-level projects, initiatives and pedagogical research are also included which will support the institution to meet the standards.

Key findings

This research demonstrates the considerable amount of activity and commitment to embedding inclusive practices and uncovering areas that are as yet underdeveloped. It shows that we are not yet meeting our institutional baseline standards although pockets of

good practice do certainly exist, and these need to be built upon. The findings reveal that the institutional culture of teaching in many areas needs to evolve further to reflect the needs and identities of the learners, with a greater emphasis on transparency, consistency and clarity. There is little evidence to show that teaching staff in general are aware of the requirement to anticipate the needs of students with common disabilities (under the 2010 Equality Act), or indeed that the concept of disability describes an interaction between individuals, their environment and the activities being undertaken. In addition, time and support for inclusive practice activities within schools in the case studies were often limited, with greater success where those in student education roles worked together. This has obvious implications for parity of experience for students across the institution.

It is clear also that our internal systems and processes need to evolve for the benefit of all stakeholders. Examples of this include information-sharing practices regarding disability adjustments, and processes for checking whether digital tools are accessible. Regarding digital accessibility, a lack of strategic leadership, time and guidance were key themes: staff were willing to engage but often felt unsure about what to prioritise.

The Covid pandemic necessitated a switch to online delivery during this study, providing an opportunity to see that when the environment and delivery mode changed, new barriers to access and participation also emerged. The sharp acceleration in digitally enabled approaches, such as recorded lectures, automatic captioning and remote access, improved inclusivity by offering greater flexibility for many students. However, the lack of in-person interaction had significant impacts on student mental health and well-being, compounding pre-existing inequalities. This served as a reminder of the need to be continually responsive to the lived experience of students, and to continue building on the flexibility that we know technology can afford our students. It is also a reminder that flexibility and choice are the cornerstones of an inclusive approach and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work.

In addition, the pandemic helped progress the conversation around assessment methods-away from traditional exams, which are not inclusive for a great many students. The case studies bare testament to the amount of development underway in this area, highlighting that inclusive assessment design is deeply connected to the curriculum and not merely about the chosen method.

Recommendations

Fifty-five recommendations emerged from the SALIP case studies, covering a broad range of thematic areas. These are provided within the appendix of the report, but are summarised within the following 10 calls to action:

1. Mandatory training and awareness for all staff on the social model of disability is required to foster a collective understanding of the interaction between the experience of disablement and the environment.
2. Institution level support is required to provide all academic staff the time and opportunity to understand and reflect on how they can make their teaching more inclusive.
3. Clarity and consistency of content in the virtual learning environment (Minerva) need to be emphasised in staff training and guidance materials for the move to Minerva Ultra in 2022.
4. An institution wide strategy on embedding digital accessibility to meet legislative requirement needs to be developed to ensure this becomes the normal way of working for all staff and students in a digital environment.
5. Continued engagement with academic and assessment literacies, is needed, for both students and staff. This will ensure clarity on the aims of assessment, and how students will be supported in their learning to achieve those aims.
6. Our institution wide processes for sharing information about the needs of disabled students require improvement for the benefit of all stakeholders
7. The development of a sustainable model for embedding and monitoring progress on inclusive pedagogies is required, with a particular emphasis on broadening support to incorporate schools which have not as yet had a SALIP in post.
8. Flexibility in pedagogical approaches, space and facilities planning are required to accommodate students who may not always be able to physically attend campus, for a variety of reasons.
9. Further insights on the experiences of disabled students should be sought to help identify areas of priority for future development in this area.
10. We need to continue to evolve our student voice mechanisms, to ensure we understand how our students experience inclusion as an ongoing process, and act on that feedback.

Conclusion

In seeking to understand the extent to which our institutional baseline standards are met, the work of the SALIPs has so far made a vital contribution to our institutional progress with embedding inclusivity. There is still a way to go, and this needs to be addressed through institution wide culture change initiatives, which recognise the multiple layers of responsibility and action that are required. The Curriculum Redefined project provides an ideal opportunity to progress and scale up this work, recognising the crosscutting nature of inclusive teaching and building it into module and programme design from the outset.

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Background: Institutional and national context

1. In early 2017, the Department for Education published guidance for HEIs[4] (Higher Education Institutions) promoting inclusive teaching and learning for all students. This followed on from reductions to Disabled Students Allowances, announced by David Willetts in 2014[5], and represented a rebalancing of responsibilities under the 2010 Equality Act[6]. The Act makes clear that public sector bodies, including HEIs, must be anticipatory of the needs of disabled students in the design and delivery of all aspects of provision. Given the prevalence of disability in higher education and the year on year increase[7], it is reasonable to assume that our cohorts will include disabled students. At the University of Leeds this constitutes 15% of all home/ EU undergraduate students[8], which is close to the national average of 17.3%. The most commonly reported disability types are specific learning differences, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia; attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (ADHD); and mental health conditions. It is also highly likely that a significant proportion of students who would meet the legal definition of disability do not come forward to seek support or adjustments[9],[10]. The rationale for implementing inclusive learning and teaching is therefore to remove the need for common, one-off reasonable adjustments by accommodating those needs within the general provision for all students. Where students have more complex needs, such as a sensory or physical impairment, reasonable adjustments can still be made, and where additional funding is required, the Disabled Students Allowance is still available for those who need it.

2. Within the HE Sector, a widely used definition of inclusive learning and teaching was developed by Christine Hockings (2010)[11] and encompasses a wide range of students. The core definition is:

    > "Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others" *(p1).*

    While the primary (and most obvious) driver for inclusive practice is to meet the needs of disabled students, there is a recognition that inclusive teaching represents good teaching for all students. This means providing a quality and equitable learning experience, engendering belonging and helping to address discrepancies in awarding gaps between students with, and without, protected characteristics. In accordance with the social model of disability[12], becoming a more inclusive institution should reduce factors which disable students' participation within the HE environment.

3. Inclusive approaches to teaching and assessment are key vehicles for change in our institutional Access and Student Success Strategy, which aims to reduce awarding gaps between students with and without particular characteristics, and our Student Education Strategy for 2020-2030 lays out a commitment to designing and delivering student education inclusively across all areas. It will be delivered through the Curriculum Redefined project with inclusive pedagogies being one of the key pedagogical strands for all programmes.

4. The scope of inclusive learning and teaching is broad. It encompasses the concept of the hidden curriculum, whereby assumptions of prior knowledge of UK higher education contexts are made resulting in some students being unfairly disadvantaged because of their background. This too intersects with the University's decolonisation agenda, which seeks to challenge the sources of our knowledge and rebalance educational inequalities. The inclusive learning and teaching and decolonisation projects therefore overlap in the area of hidden curriculum. However the current project (and particularly baseline standard 1- see below) is concerned with whether students can access a particular activity or material rather than whether the activities or materials include a full range of viewpoints, especially from those groups that have been traditionally silenced.

5. This research therefore aims to provide a benchmark for improvements in how we move forwards to the next stage of embedding inclusivity in learning and teaching practices.

Baseline Standards for Inclusive Learning and Teaching

6. The Baseline Standards of Inclusive Learning and Teaching were developed in response to the Guidance from the Department for Education, and were agreed by the Taught Student Education Board in 2018 as a framework to work towards. They represent good practice in inclusive pedagogy and are based on sector wide evidence based research, as well as being tailored specifically to the Leeds context.

7. The Inclusive Learning and Teaching Development (ILTD) working group, led by Jenny Brady (Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence) was tasked with gaining an understanding of the extent to which these standards were already operational within current learning and teaching practices.

8. The standards themselves are purposefully broad, meaning that gaining an insight into how and whether these are being met, required a good level of knowledge of that subject area and the local culture of learning and teaching.

School Academic Leads for Inclusive Practice (SALIPs)

9. From September 2019, School Academic Leads for Inclusive Practice (SALIPs) were appointed in approximately 70% of schools for an initial 3 year period (ending in summer 2022), each with a 0.2FTE workload.

10. SALIP activities were carefully devised in order for them to:
    - Develop their understanding of inclusive teaching and impart this to others
    - Create opportunities for local discussion of inclusive teaching with staff and students
    - Understand strengths and priority areas for development
    - Bring their own strengths and interests around inclusivity to the SALIP role; bringing enthusiasm and authenticity to their own leadership

11. SALIPs were expected to gather information and provide regular project updates, as well as supporting the school to develop their practices as required. A key part of the role has been to establish and maintain relationships with other key colleagues across the school and faculty, such as those working in the field of Student Success, as well as being part of the School Taught Student Education Committee and Staff Student Partnership Forum.

Methodology

12. This research attempted to identify the gap between current delivery and the baseline standards, and explore current and potential interventions. It draws primarily on a collection of 137 short case studies submitted by SALIPs between July – October 2021, exemplifying various aspects of inclusivity in learning and teaching. Through the case studies, SALIPs were asked to explain whether they felt the standards were being met and provide details of further work which would be needed, either within the school or institutionally, to help meet the standard. A table showing the number of case studies submitted by each school is available in the appendix, and throughout the report each case study has been represented by a number from 1-137.

13. Prior to the data collection period, SALIPs had identified key areas for concern and these were thematically grouped according to the relevant baseline standards. These themes formed the basis for a padlet to which SALIPs submitted case studies.

14. SALIPs chose specific areas to report on, with a significant focus on areas known to require some localised development. The findings should therefore not be regarded as an *audit,* more as a collection of examples, which are likely to be applicable across other areas. Although the majority of case studies identify areas where the baseline standards are not yet being met, this does not mean that student education practices are generally not inclusive, it simply means that the SALIPs have been

predominantly devoting their time to uncover areas for development, and have not necessarily commented on areas where the standards are already being met.

15. It is worth noting that the switch to online delivery in March 2020 coincided with the main research phase for SALIPs, and it became apparent that measuring the inclusivity of current teaching methods at that time did not seem appropriate. SALIPs were therefore given an additional year and a slightly narrowed focus on which to base their case studies.

16. The case studies include results of surveys with students and staff, outcomes from meetings and away days, and narratives about changes in student education practices to meet the standards. They provide an incredible insight into the commitment and determination of each SALIP to effect change under very challenging circumstances.

17. The findings in some of the sections are supported by additional contextual information from the Project Lead's ongoing work and discussions with SALIPs. In addition, where available, each section provides information and links to further work on progress institutionally to help develop and embed our inclusive approaches. Again, this may not be exhaustive, and the projects listed are likely to cover more than one area of inclusive teaching.

Findings

Baseline Standard 1: All practices, all students

> "We will ensure that all learning and teaching practices, activities, and supporting materials, can be used by all students. (Reasonable adjustments required in some circumstances)."

This standard has a very broad application, covering accessibility which can be viewed from a number of angles (e.g physical, digital, linguistic, cultural). It is worth noting that, in terms of tools, resources and facilities, the term *accessibility* refers not only to a person's ability to find, open or gain access to something but also to be able to use it with parity of experience. The standard has been broken down into 17 thematic areas which arose from initial scoping activities with the SALIPs. A number of these areas overlap and complement each other.

It is clear that the baseline standard has not yet been met in the majority of areas within common learning and teaching practices and the provision of learning materials.

Standard 1.1	Reading materials and documents
Findings	Case studies covering this aspect focused primarily on the digital accessibility of the materials, (discussed further in section 1.14). Blackboard Ally was frequently cited as the source of information regarding accessibility issues, although it was widely acknowledged that some of the solutions to these issues fell outside of the scope of individual academic staff.
	Pdf documents which did not meet accessibility standards were a cause of frustration in several case studies (33, 66) because of the potential impact on students but also because their prevalence affected staff willingness to engage with Blackboard Ally. Some of these resources are provided through the library's Online Course Readings service, and others may have been scanned independently. In response, some schools have issued advice about tools which can convert documents into more accessible formats, but this would breach copyright rules if the staff do not own the copyright and provide the copy for all students. This therefore only works as a one-off reasonable adjustment but doesn't achieve inclusive provision for all students.
	The majority of SALIPs have provided training and awareness sessions on creating accessible learning and teaching materials, and this was delivered at all

staff meetings and compulsory training sessions in some cases. Use of Blackboard Ally to monitor the accessibility of files is ongoing, with staff being advised to remove old teaching materials if these are no longer in use. One faculty undertook a review of 20 modules and found inaccessible pdfs in 80% of the modules, and all of the modules contained at least some accessibility issues. This was despite all staff having received training on creating accessible learning materials at the start of the year (55).

Documentation created by Student Education Service staff was noted as a cause for concern in 2 case studies (21 and 33), in terms of both the digital accessibility the language used in formal university process and procedure documentation. This highlighted a training need which sits outside of the scope and influence of the SALIP role.

Digital accessibility for written materials is particularly challenging for subjects which rely on equations and formulae. Case study 81 described how more than 50% of files in undergraduate modules in the School are pdfs containing equations which cannot be read by a screen-reader. Staff in the School of Maths (led by the SALIP) have developed a more accessible approach and guidance. The main challenge now is raising awareness and changing the practice of colleagues who are used to working in a particular way. Staff workload, training and prioritisation seem to be the primary barriers to adoption of new ways of working.

Case studies 89 and 66 also detailed other accessibility issues for teaching materials in STEM, specifically maps, graphs and diagrams, noting potential workload implications for adding alt-text descriptions. The current solution to making these materials accessible relies on individual reasonable adjustments via the University's Transcription Centre or the use of human support to verbally describe information. SALIPs are keen for this area to develop, but this will require time, dedicated expertise and an awareness of good practice across the sector.

None of the case studies in this thematic area looked into whether reading lists differentiated between core and recommended reading, in order for students to prioritise their time. Directed reading lists are [frequently recommended as a reasonable adjustment](#) for disabled students, and should form part of an inclusive approach. This aspect needs further work to embed good practice.

Recommendations:

- ★ Aim to provide online course readings in a digitally accessible format as standard
- ★ Guidance and transparency for staff and students about the accessibility of library resources
- ★ More training and development opportunities available for all staff on creating digitally accessible content
- ★ Invest in dedicated resource to develop solutions for complex visual material such as graphs and charts
- ★ Embed good practice with prioritised reading lists, with introduction of new reading list tool (Leganto)

Links to ongoing work	Alongside the move to Minerva Ultra for 2022-23, the library are implementing a new system for online course readings. As part of this, the library have confirmed that online course readings will no longer be included in the Blackboard Ally accessibility check, meaning that the report will only cover materials which the module leader can amend. Improvements to the accessibility of materials provided as online course readings are also being planned. In addition to this, a new digital essentials programme is being rolled out to colleagues across the Student Education Service and will include training and awareness on making materials accessible, as well as good practice principles in inclusive communication. The introduction of a new tool in September 2022 for managing reading lists (Leganto) will enable module leaders to identify essential and recommended texts.

Standard 1.2	Presentations and synchronous teaching

Findings	Case studies on this theme related to difficulties with making PowerPoint slides digitally accessible to all students. In case study 33, a small-scale student survey revealed that insufficient colour contrast made it difficult to see content on slides, and some slides did not include sufficient descriptive content for students to follow a lecture. Digital accessibility more broadly will be discussed further in section 1.14, but the levels of awareness of accessibility issues and the need to check slides (e.g by using Blackboard Ally) are improving. However, the 2 issues noted here can be

challenging to resolve by teaching staff. Insufficient colour contrast is one of the most common issues identified by Ally, but where colleagues want to use coloured fonts or backgrounds on slides, this can be difficult to remediate on sight alone without using an online colour contrast checker. PowerPoint templates with in-built colour palates would help staff to avoid this issue.

Supplementing the slides with a recording of the lecture can help to ameliorate some of these accessibility issues, as students will get a verbal description of the key things of note from that visual content, although the drawback of this approach is that it cannot be made available in advance (discussed further in relation to Baseline Standard 2 later in the report)

Recommendations:

- ★ Provide an institution, school or faculty branded accessible PowerPoint template
- ★ Develop guidance on expectations for alt-text with complex visual material in slides, with a view to reducing the need for reasonable adjustments

Links to ongoing work	Developments in the area of digital accessibility are discussed in section 1.14 Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence (LITE) Project: Andrew Davies, School of Medicine: Evaluating the pedagogy of multi-mode teaching
Standard 1.3	Videos and captioning
Findings	Several schools spoke of changes to practice which had been made possible due to the pandemic, creating a more inclusive experience for students in relation to recorded content. In case study 51, technical staff had been initially reluctant to film their practical sessions, but this became necessary and has resulted in a far more flexible provision for students, meaning they can view it at their own pace and convenience. A similar response was also reported in relation to the increased use of lecture capture in case study 113. Feedback from staff highlighted that they saw definite pedagogical benefits to providing asynchronous content and commented on the ability of students to use this flexibly.

The increased uptake of flipped classroom approaches has also normalised the use of pre-recorded content. One school (case study 76) provided specific protocols for releasing these materials 48 hours in advance, with others questioning whether it should perhaps be on the timetable for students, as some may find it difficult to manage their own study time around this.

Changes to the audio recording policy at the start of 20-21 created expectation for all taught sessions (including seminars and tutorials) to be recorded, for students to access afterwards. Exceptions are permitted, but need to be authorised by the Head of School.

The auto-captioning facility across a number of platforms used for teaching has helped to create a more inclusive experience for students, and advances in technology over the past few years have meant that the process is now relatively streamlined. However, concerns about the accuracy of the auto-captions means that they cannot be considered to meet the legal definition of *captions* and would still require additional editing in order to provide an equivalent information source (when compared with the original spoken content). SALIPs reported frequent inaccuracies with technical and subject specific terms, and case study 1 also observed the potential tension which exists between the University's efforts to decolonise the curriculum, and the inability of the software to pick up non-Western names. SALIPs also reported occasional changes to meaning which had been caused by the software.

SALIPs have reported that the lack of accuracy has made some staff feel uncomfortable about using auto-captioning, but the workload involved in thoroughly editing captions would be unreasonable, with 50% of survey respondents in case study 1 reporting that they *never check the captions.* University policy makes clear that staff are not expected to edit their captions, and it should be made clear to students that there may be some inaccuracies. Staff are advised to indicate this on Module Accessibility Statements (see section 1.14). Advice from JISC[13] suggests that even inaccurate auto-captions will improve the accessibility of audio content, so it is important that we retain this functionality, despite the perceived shortcomings.

In order to make this provision fully accessible to disabled students, a process exists whereby module leaders can request human captioning as a reasonable adjustment (i.e. that the captions are edited for full accuracy). This therefore means that the baseline standard is not fully met in this regard, but advances in

technology over time, and the streamlining of the process for reasonable adjustments are likely to improve this.

It is worth noting that a survey conducted nationally with deaf higher education students in early 2021[14] indicates that this group have been particularly affected by accessibility limitations of online learning, with the majority saying that their mental health had suffered as a result.

Consistency in the use and storage of video resources is also discussed in 1.10.

Recommendations:

★ Guidance for staff on how to maximise the quality of captioning (e.g the importance of using microphones in lecture theatres), how to use each system and the expectations on staff. Staff should be made aware of the existence of such guidance
★ Improvements in technology for accuracy of auto-captioning
★ Improvements in lecture capture system, with consistency across teaching spaces, to enable sound quality to be optimised for the best results in auto-captioning

Links to ongoing work	The Digital Education Service ran a staff and student survey about captioning at the end of 2021, with recommendations for improvement being expected in Spring 2022. The process for providing accurate captions as a reasonable adjustment will be streamlined. The technology which supports auto-captioning is evolving all the time. Although there is acknowledgement across the sector that HEIs are not yet able to meet legislative requirements with the available technology and resources.
Standard 1.4	Group interactions/ small group teaching
Findings	Case study 43 outlined potential barriers to participation for international students, particularly in relation to the online learning environment. As a response, the School offered additional support to enable students to develop skills, and also sought to understand more via a survey. The survey highlighted issues in students' confidence, their ability to follow the speed of conversation, and difficulties in understanding Eurocentric references used in teaching. In order to make this experience more inclusive, students suggested that staff could call

directly on them in class, provide advance materials, and ensure examples used take account of the diversity of students within the classroom.

Baseline Standard 1 is not being met in this example, as the conditions do not allow all students to participate equally in seminars and small group teaching. Case study 117 also noted that students reported varied success of online collaboration activities. When comparing which ones had or hadn't worked, the main differentiator appeared to be where staff had invested significant time in explaining instructions and expectations of engagement. More needs to be done, therefore, to highlight appropriate pedagogical approaches which could minimize barriers to participation. This is also discussed in section 1.15, in relation to sense of belonging and community.

In addition to this, further guidance was requested by two schools in relation to inclusive assessment for group work.

Recommendations:

★ Development of guidance on pedagogical approaches which enhance peer to peer relationships and engender successful online participation
★ Development of institution wide guidance on inclusive group work assessment

Links to ongoing work	Some of the issues discussed in this section will be explored further by Sense of Belonging Academic Leads (see 1.15)
	LITE Projects:
	• Tony Morgan, Lena Jaspersen and Louisa Hill: Leeds University Business School: Informing the new Leeds Curriculum by researching Interdisciplinary and Digitally Enhanced learning and enhancing Employability Skills (The I-DE-ES Project)
	• Gillian Proctor : Authenticity and connection online: The impact of exploring the psychological aspects of online learning on engagement and a sense of belonging for students and staff.
	• Ed Venn: Enhancing a sense of belonging through interactive pedagogies: theories, practices, and recommendations

Standard 1.5	Lab/ practical work

| **Findings** | No case studies were received for this because of Covid but one school reported that a small scale survey with disabled students indicated room for improvement with the accessibility of the lab environment. The students did not feel as comfortable in this environment as in other teaching spaces so further work should be undertaken to establish whether specific changes could be recommended for the benefit of all students. Section 1.3 provides a case study example of video being used for demonstrating practical work, enabling additional flexibility for students and staff.

Recommendations

★ Student voice feedback mechanisms need to allow for students to make suggestions for improving the inclusivity of the lab environment. |

Standard 1.6	Fieldwork

| **Findings** | Two case studies were received for this (91, 86). One case study described how a fund had been set up to enable undergraduates on the Plus Programme (who tend to be students from low-participation neighbourhoods and low-income groups) to buy suitable clothing and equipment for fieldwork. The scheme will be trialled in 21-22 and, if successful, will require ongoing support from the School.

The other case study focused on the impact of the pandemic on reshaping thinking around the inclusivity and sustainability of fieldwork. The School now provides more local and regional UK destinations, thus removing barriers of affordability, accessibility and having a lower carbon footprint. In addition, some components have now been delivered online without the necessity to visit the location, which again, improves accessibility. A further focus in the School is around developing resources and toolkits for LGBTQ+ inclusive fieldtrips.

Recommendations:

★ Further development of resources and sharing of inclusive fieldwork practices across different schools |

★ Ensure schools' commitments to and opportunities around inclusive fieldwork practices are externally visible for both recruitment and knowledge exchange.

Links to ongoing work	The School of Earth & Environment have been focusing for a number of years on developing effective pedagogical approaches for the inclusion of disabled students in fieldwork, with projects such as Access Anglesey (Houghton, 2018)[15] and the Virtual Worlds project (Houghton, 2015)[16]. A survey was carried out as part of a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded project in 2017 indicating a high level of awareness and commitment to supporting disabled students, but more needs to be done to ensure all staff receive appropriate training around this. A Student Success Network has been established in the Faculty of Environment with opportunities for sharing of practice being planned.
Standard 1.7	Placements/ year abroad
Findings	Two case studies were received, one which relates to placements (130), and the other to year abroad (27). The case study on placements demonstrated difficulties with information sharing to placement educators in relation to disability and reasonable adjustment. This is further complicated by differences in the learning environment between the university and the placement setting and the potential relevance of the recommendations. Placement educators expect students to be forthcoming with discussions around this, but students may not feel comfortable to instigate such discussions. Because of these issues, the School is working to improve information sharing practices and awareness of inclusive approaches which could alleviate the need for adjustments and disclosure for some students, and make it easier for students communicate any learning needs they may have. They are also looking to raise awareness among students of the benefits of sharing this information (where they feel comfortable) and are planning to seek further insight from staff around this. The case study on year abroad highlighted the challenges of delivering this virtually, in the context of the pandemic, and how this approach impacted more negatively on disabled students. Additional factors affecting the inclusiveness of the provision included lack of learning community, internet connectivity, accessibility of materials and clarity of communication, and these led to higher

levels of anxiety, social barriers and impacts on the students' sense of belonging. This experience has enabled the School to develop a number of recommendations and an action plan which will help to address the needs and concerns of students affected by this, and to take an inclusive and informed approach should the need for virtual year abroad arise in the future.

Recommendations:

★ Further sharing of practice between schools who deliver placements.
★ Ensure all educators have access to university information about inclusive teaching and the institutional expectations.

Standard 1.8	Course related software
Findings	One case study was received which related to course related software (87). It highlights difficulties with finding out accessibility information which could have a significant impact on student experience for some students. Remote learning in the pandemic highlighted the need for students to be able to access course related software from home This also has implications for students who may have difficulty attending campus in normal circumstances (non-pandemic). To address this, the university introduced AppsAnywhere on the virtual desktop for Windows although students need strong internet connections to access this. In addition, it was made possible for some software to be downloaded locally by students. However, some of the software used in the (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) School in this case study is very specialised and requires an IT set-up which in general terms is not feasible for students working from home, both in terms of the hardware, connection and support they might need. There are so many variable factors that it is difficult to be definitive about whether students will be able to successfully use certain software remotely. **Recommendations:** ★ Transparency about the fact that some software is currently only available to access on campus, not remotely, but IT support should continue to develop this. ★ Ensure access to cluster machines for students who need to use specialist software

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★ Greater communications between the University and vendors for them to improve any accessibility issues which become known

★ Digital accessibility information to be surfaced for both students and staff, and for this to be factored into procurement of 3rd party systems

Links to ongoing work	The University's Education Spaces Programme is looking into ensuring sufficient space and facilities for student education to incorporate future ways of working, in alignment with Curriculum Redefined. This includes computer clusters. The IT service are continuing to evolve provision of access to software to students, taking into account the challenges of varying hardware and connectivity in students' accommodation. Students who are in financial hardship will continue to be able to request funding for a laptop, which can be of higher specification if required by the course (and the need verified).
Standard 1.9	Academic literacies and skill development
Findings	A range of case studies were received which gave examples of approaches to embedding academic (and digital) literacies, and skill development. This happened to varying degrees within schools, within programmes and within specific modules, in some cases as a response to student feed. Two case studies reported on how students had requested access to academic skills development within the School. In case study 35, this related to note-taking, referencing, the use of reading lists, using technology, and submitting their first assessed coursework. Transitional support between levels of study was also requested, as were improvements in methods of communication to avoid email overwhelm. The case study notes that this overwhelm is a particular issue for students with mental health conditions, who are more likely to fall behind and feel reluctant to seek help from tutors. Case study 135 reported that students felt underprepared for their dissertation module, so the School was working together with Skills@library to put together sessions for all cohorts. Case study 104 showed that this school are particularly strong in the area of academic and study skill development, and this is necessitated by the nature of their student cohort. Academic skills drop-in workshops are provided, and the

case study demonstrated that staff regularly build skills development into their curricula, making time for additional tutorials where needed. The presence of dedicated resources and study skills tutors within the centre was also shown to impact on academic staff's ability to also embed this in their teaching. Plans to develop this further include attempts to de-stigmatise the idea of additional study skills support, and ensuring that all programmes include a study skills module. Particular challenges were noted, however, in relation to supporting students with digital literacy whilst working online, and there is recognition that *academic skills* will continue to evolve with pedagogical and technological advances.

A number of case studies noted the need to explicitly include digital literacy within the curriculum, with case studies 44 and 48 noting the Schools' intention for a greater focus on this as part of induction. However, in the case of short courses (as described in case study 24), the students had expressed a desire for this support and training prior to the course starting. Two case studies reported on how practices had been implemented to encourage staff to consider students' digital literacy needs as a normal part of module delivery. Case study 116 described how a set of principles had been introduced to remind staff to familiarise students with the digital platforms and tools being used in the module. In case study 92, module leaders are asked to reflect on this as part of the Schools' moderation form. In each of these case study examples, the actions had been necessitated by student demand and feedback, demonstrating a need to build this into curriculum planning.

Case study 105 described differing approaches to the use of glossaries in teaching with a general consensus among staff that they are of benefit to students. This is in addition to being mindful about the nature of the required reading in relation to the level and experience of the students within academia, and using plain English wherever possible in explanations. However, it was challenging for staff to find the time to do this as well as they would like. Also, some questioned whether homogenising and simplifying the use of language would actually serve students in the long term. One potential solution was to encourage students to keep their own glossaries of new terms and for a collective resource to be generated from this, and the School plans to discuss this further.

The Language Centre provide in-sessional support in a number of schools, meaning that students who need it can have access to additional tuition in communication/ writing skills. This works well in many areas, but case study 77

noted that take up of support in that school was particularly low. They have therefore taken the decision to timetable language support sessions for international students, who can then opt out if they don't feel it is useful. Ideally, the support would be available to anyone who needs it, not just those from different language backgrounds, but it is proving difficult to engage students.

The case studies demonstrate that the provision of skill development within the curriculum is variable and often necessitated by the nature of the student cohort. It is encouraging that the needs of students are being responded to in this regard and that the infrastructure exists to develop this further across the institution. Further conversations among students and staff need to take place in order to surface the link between academic literacies and student success, and how this also links to a more levelled out, decolonised curriculum.

Recommendations:

- ★ Guidance for staff on teaching and supporting students with mental health problems
- ★ Clearly articulate the link between academic literacy and decolonising the curriculum; and how this links to the concept of the hidden curriculum.

Links to ongoing work	Work to develop an institutional Academic Literacy Strategy has been underway since 2021, being led by Dan Pullinger and Maddy Mossman from the Library. This is a key part of the Capabilities Framework within Curriculum Redefined. In 2020, Student Success Officers catalogued activities and interventions which support student success in their faculties. The report (on Student Success SharePoint Site) provides an overview. LITE Projects: - Richard de Blacquiere- Clarkson, Lifelong Learning Centre: Embedding digital literacy in the curriculum - Nina Wardleworth, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies: Decolonising

- [Michelle Schneider, Skills@library: Exploring perceptions of the co-curricular Skills@Library service](#)
- [Jiani Liu (Learning Development Team / skills@library): Assessment literacy and student success](#)

Standard 1.10	Learning environment- consistency and clarity

Findings	Case study 114 reported that an initial review of Minerva modules in the School showed it was largely being used as a repository for teaching materials rather than a virtual learning environment. Inconsistency was common, impacting on the student experience and meaning that support workers from Disability Services could not find the necessary resources to assist students. This was further compounded by the move to online delivery in 2020. The SALIP therefore implemented a number of initiatives to address the issue, including an accessibility audit of content each semester (using Blackboard Ally), 1-1 support for staff to help adherence to the template and structure, a poster campaign on "inclusive use of Minerva", and delivery of workshops. A key element of this was supplementing the institutional Minerva template with further guidance that embodied inclusive principles, especially flexibility.
	Case study 2 noted high levels of consistency across a sample of 10 modules, with good adherence to the template and use of announcements for communicating with students. However, it seemed that the "module information" and "staff information" areas were underutilised. This could mean that students do not have easy access to the names of staff teaching on that module, and it was suggested that a lack of clarity among staff about what should go into the "module information" area could be the cause of inconsistency there.
	It was clear from a number of case studies that inconsistency in Minerva is a source of dissatisfaction for students, with case study 48 noting that not only was it an issue of accessibility but also had impacts on staff time when responding to calls for clarification. The layout of modules was reported as an issue raised by students in case study 36, and case study O3 described issues with the inconsistent storage of video materials used in teaching.
	Two case studies 48 and 16 noted that the multiple platforms used in teaching created an extra level of inconsistency and potential confusion for students,

but there seemed to be necessary pedagogical reasons for their use. The storage of files in Microsoft Teams was seen as problematic as it does not allow for easy organisation of content and file hierarchy.

In 4 case studies (48, 16, 36, 56) improvements were noted in Minerva consistency, prompted by awareness raising activities, templates and guidance. Case studies 73 and 100 noted that all modules are required to adhere to the template with staff being reminded of this regularly. Case study 78 reported that the consistency of the online environment was likely to have been improved by the adoption of the Student Centred Active Learning Approach (SCALA) methodology, which included specific principles of hybrid design and delivery.

Several case studies (73, 77, 92, 116) also mentioned the school-wide use of learning journeys and module maps, to help students know what to expect either over the course of the module or week by week. In addition to this, case study 73 described how the School also planned to develop expectations of student engagement in terms of preparatory work for each unit of learning.

It is clear that there have been improvements on this in many areas, but there is still work to be done, particularly in schools where there is no strict mandate to adhere to a specific structure, and no culture of checking. Awareness needs to be raised on the importance of this for the student experience, and good practice built in from the outset with the upgrade to Minerva Ultra in 2022.

Recommendations:

★ Messaging and guidance on how to use the template to maximise consistency and clarity– built into Minerva Ultra roll out
★ Guidance on improving the use of Teams when used as a virtual learning environment, e.g. how best to organise information
★ Include a wellbeing tab for easy access to key information for students in all modules
★ Ensure Module Accessibility Statements are used as standard for transparency about any content which may pose accessibility challenges
★ Implement the use of module maps/ learning journeys across all modules

Links to ongoing work	Consistency is being considered as a priority in the development of the new template and training materials for the roll out of Minerva Ultra in summer 2022

Standard 1.11	Access for specific student groups

| Findings | The range of case studies received on this particular topic demonstrated the breadth of consideration required to ensure teaching is inclusive of students from underrepresented groups, or whose learning needs are not generally considered in curriculum planning.

Various approaches to sharing disability related information were found across the case studies. Case study 57 showed that staff assumed the baseline standards were already consistently in place across all teaching practices, negating the need for students with specific learning difficulties to receive additional reasonable adjustments. Support summaries were therefore only shared for students with more complex disabilities, housed on an internal Sharepoint site. Guidance about common reasonable adjustments was also shared with both students and staff and the faculty were considering the best way to ensure students could feed back easily where their reasonable adjustments were not being met. Case study 28 highlighted that staff had been reminded about their responsibilities to take note of and understand any recommendations provided by Disability Services, despite challenges in the current way disability information was shared across the institution via emailed support summaries.

Sharing information about disabled students was also the focus on case study 127, within the context of clinical placements. The issue described is as much about systems and processes as it is about culture and implicit bias. Currently, it is expected that students themselves will come forwards to discuss any disability related support needs with clinical educators, but the SALIP is now leading on work to highlight the problems with this approach. Students don't know who to speak to or how to do this, or even what support or adjustments they might need in a new environment. It is also clear that clinical educators should be included in conversations about the University's approach to inclusive learning and teaching so that they can embody the same values and practices. |
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Disability disclosure among international students was discussed in case study 17, as well as the challenges of supporting international disabled students on short courses. University data[17] shows that disability disclosure in non-UK students falls far below what would be expected, given the broad reaching definition of disability in the UK (15% for home/ UK undergraduates versus 2% for overseas students in 2020/21). The SALIP plans to carry out some research with international students to understand the reasons behind this, which are likely to be affected by numerous cultural and linguistic factors. In addition, the case study identified where improvements are required to ensure timely support and recognition for those students who need it. This will involve working closely with Disability Services, raising awareness with colleagues in the school as well as understanding systemic issues within the University which assume particular time frames for students.

Two case studies (67 and 45) identified the necessity for a greater understanding of the needs of students with particular characteristics. Case study 67 suggested a need for greater acknowledgement in the School of the challenges faced by neurodivergent learners, and for this to be discussed within academic personal tutoring. The School plans to appoint a Mentoring Tutor to work with the School's Disability Contact to identify such students. Case study 45 highlighted an enhanced need to support students with mental health difficulties as it was recognised that the pandemic had had a worsening impact on this within the student community. This was leading to increased mitigating circumstances and extension applications, and the SALIP was keen to understand what changes could be made. Lack of connectedness and sense of belonging was a major factor (discussed further in 1.15), as were feelings of overwhelm from the amount of new information and digital systems (also noted in case study 35). The SALIP is now working closely with the DEAL and Student Support colleagues to make improvements, as well as taking forward discussions about inclusivity in seminar participation.

In case study 28, the SALIP worked closely with the Faculty Student Success Officer to understand data relating to non-continuation in the School. Specific interventions were then taken forwards within 2 particular programmes which had higher rates of non-continuation for mature students, students with specific learning difficulties and those with identified mental health conditions. Further investigation revealed that mature students on one of these programmes had previously received a much greater level of support when joining the programme from the Lifelong Learning Centre, and this transition could account for some of the difficulties encountered. The intense nature of

the pedagogic approaches in that subject could also be a contributory factor, and the conversations between the SALIP and these programme teams has helped to raise awareness of this. This case study also discussed awarding gaps for students from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, demonstrating how a range of interventions were being considered, with a recognition that some students from BAME backgrounds may require more academic or skills support than white counterparts. They aim to continue to critically engage with this, and seek more insights from students who face particular challenges such as commuting, care giving etc.

Students with caring responsibilities are another group who may require occasional flexibility within their studies. Case study 115 identified the need for further work in the School to address potential tensions between the carer's and attendance policy. The School is keen to support students with caring responsibilities, but flexibility has obvious implications for attendance. Online learning during the pandemic provided an additional level of adaptability in this regard, but the School needs to consider how to develop these 2 policies for a balanced and fair outcome.

An example of good practice was provided in case study 106. It describes a long-standing initiative in the School for students to act as role models for others, which enables students from diverse backgrounds to feel a sense of belonging to the School and programme. There are over 50 Learning Champions in the School now, after 11 years of running the scheme, and they engage in welcome, skills sharing and celebration events. All parties gain from this as the Learning Champions themselves develop their confidence and skills, as well as inspiring and motivating others.

Recommendations:

- ★ Faster/ more effective information sharing from Disability Services to teaching staff
- ★ Investigate the use of Pebblepad for contextual information about student learning needs
- ★ Develop understanding of why low numbers of international students request disability support
- ★ Ensure disability support processes meet the needs of international disabled students
- ★ Consider how positive elements of the Learning Champions scheme could be built in across other schools to engender sense of belonging

Links to ongoing work	Disability Services are working with the Student Lifecycle Project to try to improve processes, and longer term this may be resolved by the introduction of Microsoft Dynamics 365 (customer relations management software).

From March 2022, all new students registering with Disability Services will have additional information on Banner to share information about appropriate reasonable adjustments with schools. This will mean the information is more easily accessible to School Disability Contacts for sharing locally. However, it will be in code form, and lack the contextual information which is on the current individual support summary sheets. For this reason, Pebblepad is being explored as an option for housing this information for students.

A small working group has been put together between LITE, the Language Centre, LUU and Disability Services to further investigate issues relating to international students and disability disclosure in Spring 2022.

LITE Projects- see section 1.15 |

Standard 1.12	Student voice feedback loop

Findings	Six case studies provided a range of perspectives on obtaining and using feedback from students to help improve the inclusiveness of learning and teaching practices. Case studies 107 and 79 noted that improvements had been necessitated by the Schools' Academic Experience Review and NSS scores, respectively, so actions had been taken to amplify the student voice. Students are more likely to provide feedback if they see that it will be acted upon, and case study 107 described a practice which has been implemented to include previous feedback, and associated changes, into the module information for students to see. Case study 18, also identified an issue with students not being able to benefit from their feedback as they tend to be on short courses, whereas for modules which run throughout the whole semester, mid-semester surveys provide opportunities for module leaders to reflect and act on feedback.

Part of the SALIPs role is to attend the Student Staff Partnership Forums and develop relationships with reps to provide a two-way link. Concern was noted in several case studies about the suitability of student reps to effectively represent diverse and marginalised voices. This may have the impact of masking any issues which only affect a small number of students, and case study 79 noted that the |

School had appointed a rep specifically for equality, diversity and inclusion issues. Case study 96 also describes how the School had set up forums for Black and Students of Colour, and LGBTQ+ students, thus ensuring that these students have a collective voice and can bring any issues to the attention of the School. Case study 14 noted that their course representation model cannot effectively communicate and gather feedback from such a large cohort, and considered whether student reps should be remunerated for time spent undertaking the role.

The recruitment and training of student reps was the topic of case study 18, and the School are reviewing their student representation processes, training and communications to ensure it can feed effectively into improvements in the curriculum. It had become evident that the training reps receive doesn't help them to effectively carry out the role, which could in part be due to cultural and linguistic factors. This would therefore affect the success of the student feedback loop in that context.

 A specific action is described in case study 68, which presents plans to get feedback from students to help the School prioritise certain improvements in the digital accessibility of files in Minerva (as shown via Blackboard Ally). This will be done via the Student Staff Partnership Forum, with the support of an intern.

The case studies on this topic covered student representation which operates at different levels, with school reps having more centralised access to training and support from Leeds University Union, but course reps not being part of the same system. It is clear that if feedback isn't representative of the diversity of students, we don't know if we're being inclusive. However, it is not just the existence of representatives that makes a difference, students need to know that their experiences and opinions matter and will be listened to. They need to have multiple and timely opportunities for communicating on this.

Recommendations:

★ Consider incentives for student reps, such as budgets within schools for Student Voices activities
★ Inclusive support and training for reps- on all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion
★ Diverse recruitment of reps- further work to address hidden biases within the current system

	★ Further work to understand and capture the positive elements of the different layers of representation
Links to ongoing work	The Explorance Blue tool for module evaluation, introduced in 21/22 now enables more timely and visible responses from module leaders to student feedback. The tool also provides the option for enhanced use of information about student demographics, so this may be explored in future.

A Student Voices Framework is under development. The aim of this is to identify key themes in each academic cycle and signpost relevant information for students and staff based on these.

The Listening Rooms Project (Stacy Mottershaw, Leeds University Business School) aims to explore under-represented student perceptions of access and student success, using Listening Rooms methodology.

Student Involvement Work (Matt Dollery and Elen Rose- Educational Engagement)- The aims of this work is to involve students in the development, delivery, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of all aspects of Widening Participation activity across the student lifecycle.

A Partnership Reinvigoration group has been convened to refresh the Leeds Partnership and make sure students effectively relate to it. This work aligns to Curriculum Redefined.

A Student Voices Communication Strategy is in development to ensure student voices are captured effectively at different levels.

Disability Services Student Panel are a group of self-selecting disabled students who are committed to improving the experiences of other disabled students and act in a consultative capacity. This group are available to help seek further insight into areas mentioned in this report. |
| **Standard 1.13** | School culture around inclusive design |
| **Findings** | School culture around inclusive design was featured in 26 case studies, reflecting the dual role of the SALIP in both gathering information for the review and also embedding good practice, which could sometimes lead to competing demands. Common themes which emerged from the case studies were difficulties with |

getting sufficient time with colleagues to help them reflect on current practices, knowing how to lead without authority, and recognition of the multiple priorities of academic staff. Issues were also raised about knowing the most effective communication channels to use and the need for repeated messaging about certain aspects of inclusive practice, while also trying to avoid information overload. In terms of engagement with the concept of inclusive practice, challenges still remain with a perceived threat to workload affecting engagement and ownership, and a lack of understanding of the responsibilities that all University staff have under the 2010 Equality Act. However, SALIPs have collectively undertaken a phenomenal amount of work in this space to try to effect culture change, and this has had tangible impacts on those around them.

The level of seniority of the SALIP and their connectedness to other student education leads in the School seemed to have a significant impact on their ability to engage, influence and gain insight into the practices of others. For example, one SALIP was responsible for carrying out Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS) meetings (case study 53), which provided the opportunity to ask colleagues how they embed inclusive practice in their teaching. Two SALIPs were also the Director of Student Education in their school, meaning that they are key members of the Faculty Taught Student Education Committee as well as leading their own School Taught Student Education Committee (STSEC), and can shape the way that new initiatives are implemented in the School. Another SALIP is a member of the School's Education Delivery Group, meaning that they can directly influence the roll out of any school wide activities. 80% of SALIPs reported that they sit on STSEC and 70% regularly attend the School's Student Staff Partnership Forum.

Working in partnership with other student education leads was another key factor in success for the role. As well as the Directors of Student Education, SALIPs also report working jointly with their Digital Education Academic Lead, Academic Personal Tutor Lead and leads for Welcome, Induction and Transition, as well as Student Support Officers, Equality and Inclusion Officers, Student Success Leads and Officers. In some cases, specific working groups were set up for progressing particular initiatives (e.g inclusive marking), and these could then feed directly into STSEC or other deliberative structures.

These relationships featured in a number of case studies describing the provision of workshops and training sessions for teaching staff. There was an understanding that in order to effectively embed inclusive approaches, time to reflect on current practices would be required. Two schools (37 and 93)

described how they delivered compulsory training on digital accessibility and inclusive pedagogies for online delivery; also ensuring that the same content was made available to new staff. The need to repeat and provide multiple development opportunities was highlighted. Two schools worked jointly, arranging for colleagues from Disability Services to deliver staff training sessions, and this was very well received (case study 19). However, anecdotal evidence from SALIPs indicates that optional sessions on aspects of inclusive practice or digital accessibility are often poorly attended or do not have the required reach. (Also noted in case study 53).

As well as delivering workshops, SALIPs also reported a range of ways of sharing information online about inclusive practice. These range from Minerva areas to regular email newsletters, and were seen as most effective when the messaging was tailored specifically to that school's context (rather than being generic university/ non subject-specific guidance). Throughout the project so far, communications and engagement has been a major challenge for SALIPs, and even more so in relation to the strain put on people by the pandemic.

In one school, where programmes are subject to professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements, some additional reticence among both students and staff to engage with inclusive practice was identified, which added an interesting dimension to the study. In one of the school's case studies (128), issues of information sharing in relation to disabled students was highlighted, and the lack of an adequate infrastructure was preventing staff from making reasonable adjustments for those with common disabilities such as dyslexia. This, in turn, made the adoption of inclusive practices for all more problematic. The case study considered tensions that may exist in the perception of students and educators about careers in that particular field, and this could affect teaching and assessment methods. Anecdotal evidence gathered by the SALIP suggests that students may be reluctant to disclose disability because of preconceptions about professional attributes, and staff too do not know how accommodating they can be of different learning needs because they don't want to set students up to fail in the outside world. This issue is multifaceted, requiring much greater engagement from staff in addressing any implicit biases and understanding how an inclusive approach aligns with professional body requirements.

The issue of information sharing was also highlighted by another school (58) which indicated that staff did not recognize they had a responsibility to ensure the environment was accessible to disabled students. In a small scale survey,

disabled students said that they were not being made aware of technologies and provisions that could make their learning and teaching more accessible to them. This school felt they needed to do more, potentially through academic personal tutoring or welcome, induction and transition to ensure students are introduced to these things.

On an institutional level, opportunities to reflect on inclusive practice (and the baseline standards) are now considered within quality assurance processes. From 20-21, SALIPs have been invited to participate in Annual School Reviews, and they are expected to contribute actions relating to inclusive practice into the School's ongoing action plan. Workload, reward and recognition has been a reoccurring theme from SALIP feedback sessions as it is strongly felt that colleagues should be incentivized for making progress and innovating in this area. This should be built into training for reviewers and promotions advisors, and considered by HR.

In a number of case studies it was felt that the impact of the pandemic had helped to accelerate the requirement for inclusive practices in the online environment. Digital poverty and a range of challenging personal circumstances for students highlighted the need for flexibility in relation to time and format of learning opportunities. This also led to a collective realization for the need to take an inclusive lens at all times as the nature of higher education continues to evolve, and respond to the needs of society and students. SALIPs commented that it would be difficult to know if an inclusive culture had been achieved, and it should be viewed as an ongoing process. In line with this, SALIPs felt they would require ongoing support and development opportunities to help them remain attuned, knowledgeable and able to lead.

Recommendations:

- ★ The SALIP role should continue to be a key part of how we deliver the student education strategy, with SALIP workload protected to ensure they can support colleagues as part of the Curriculum Redefined project.
- ★ Existing SALIPs should be encouraged to remain in their role to continue developing their expertise and connectedness to others in student education
- ★ SALIPs should work together across faculty groups to share practice on common areas and support schools which do not have SALIPs
- ★ Awareness about the SALIP role should be raised across the institution to ensure clarity on the remit.

- ★ Reward and recognition for inclusive practice should be built into academic staff review processes
- ★ Disability awareness training should be mandatory for all staff, with particular focus on the social model of disability.

Links to ongoing work	The SALIP role descriptor has been revised and was approved by TSEB in April 2022 A bespoke SALIP Leadership Programme was devised in partnership with Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL) and was successfully delivered in Spring 2022, with plans to repeat the programme in summer and autumn to ensure all SALIPs have the opportunity to attend. Ongoing development opportunities are being developed for SALIPs to help enhance their core knowledge and understanding of inclusive practice. Faculty level networks are being considered (in alignment with Curriculum Redefined) to strengthen the relationship of key student education roles and ensure progress towards embedding inclusive pedagogies can be systematically monitored. As part of Curriculum Redefined, a set of principles of Inclusive Pedagogies are being developed which will add further clarity and build on the baseline standards.
Standard 1.14	School culture around digital accessibility
Findings	The publication of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations in 2018[18] coincided with the University's implementation of the baseline standards, and given that Baseline Standard 1 covers accessibility from multiple perspectives, it was thought that SALIPs would be well placed to also support schools in understanding these legislative requirements. Institution level communications about expectations for academic staff were published in February 2020. Blackboard Ally was introduced in 2020 as one of the key enablers in supporting teaching staff to meet the legislation within learning and teaching content on Minerva. From a student experience perspective, the benefit of having accessible content on Minerva is that they can download or view it in a range of

formats to suit their context and learning needs, thus negating the requirement for reasonable adjustments or individual assistive software. SALIPs were asked to promote the use of Blackboard Ally, along with guidance available on the University's Digital Practice website for creating accessible learning materials. They used a range of means to raise awareness, including delivering workshops and drop-in sessions, creating videos and disseminating advice via email and MS Teams. In some schools, SALIPs worked alongside Digital Education Academic Leads (DEALs), Blended Learning Leads and/ or Learning Technologists to support these activities, although variation in the remit of these roles between schools influenced whether such activities took place or not. Institution wide development opportunities for digital accessibility and the use of Ally were sparse, meaning that some SALIPs had nowhere to refer colleagues to, aside from online guidance.

The introduction of Ally also coincided with planning for online delivery for 20-21 so although this could have been an opportunity to learn how to teach inclusively online, many staff were already overwhelmed and took the approach of just learning how to do the basics with the tools they needed. The Digital Education Service developed an online course "Adapt your teaching to online delivery" which showed staff how they could do this effectively, but the uptake of the course varied widely between schools; only being made mandatory in one. This will therefore have perpetuated an inconsistency in inclusive online practices. In addition, the extent to which SALIPs prioritized awareness raising activities in relation to digital accessibility in 20-21 will have depended on whether there was an appetite for this in the school. Digital accessibility compliance requires colleagues to spend time remediating issues in their existing content and learning how to get things right for the future. This can be time consuming, and many SALIPs reported that the request would add undue pressure, bringing the risk of negative associations to inclusive practices.

A number of schools in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences hired student interns to support with compliance activities during semester 1 of 20-21, under the direction of SALIPs. This approach worked well in enabling simple issues to be remediated in existing content, and where inaccessible formats could be supplemented (e.g handwritten notes, equations). In case study 81, the interns helped to progress the approach to creating accessible content, although the highly technical nature of this and the relatively short timeframe of the internships made it challenging. In all cases, it was felt that internships needed to be longer to have a measurable and sustainable impact on the culture. These findings were echoed in case study 74, suggesting that

remediating the quick fixes was not a good use of academics' time. It would, however, require subject expertise to find additional supplementary materials, meaning that this was not a straightforward task for a non-specialist.

SALIPs were provided with Ally snapshot datasets detailing all of the accessibility issues within modules in their school at a fixed point in time, and took varying approaches to sharing and acting on this information, depending on their contexts. Some used it to raise useful discussions with senior leadership in schools (such as programme leaders and Deans for Student Education (DSE)) and several worked alongside colleagues with low scoring content to support them with using the tool. These SALIPs tended to be those with greater familiarity with digital technologies and experience in analysing data, with some holding a dual role of SALIP and DEAL. SALIPs have varying levels of confidence and knowledge about digital accessibility, and although training and support was provided, this is an area where institutional expertise and leadership is clearly lacking. In a survey conducted with SALIPs in October 2020, SALIPs rated their confidence levels at 3.5 out of 5, which has implications for how well they can support their schools with digital accessibility.

SALIPs were advised to promote the use of Module Accessibility Statements in each Minerva module; requiring module leaders to select from a list of stock phrases, thus ensuring transparency to students with requirements for particular formats. A small number of schools reported that statements were in place as standard across all modules, with variable uptake being reported in other schools. Several schools were considering requesting support from Student Education Service colleagues as it was seen as an administrative burden for teaching staff. SALIPs did not have the capacity in most cases to check on whether guidance around this was adhered to, except in one school where a "Minerva spring cleaning" approach was taken in conjunction with support for colleagues with lower scores on Ally.

Recommendations (some of which have already been actioned- see "ongoing work" within this section) :

★ Training, development opportunities and support for all staff on digital accessibility- rolling programme. This should include training for SES staff who create documentation for Student Education purposes
★ Provide centralised checklists and up to date guidance for staff on digital accessibility, incorporating the range of tools and systems used

★ Ensure guidance is available for staff and students about the accessibility of software- both in terms of the features to maximise accessibility and also any limitations which users should be made aware of

★ Make Module Accessibility Statement templates more obvious for Module Leaders within Minerva to ensure it is consistently completed

★ Promote Module Accessibility Statements to students via Disability Services so that they know where to look if they anticipate any digital accessibility issues due to their normal ways of working

★ Consider reward and recognition for workload involved in remediating issues in content

★ Strong messaging/ commitment from senior University leadership to highlight the importance (and legal imperative) for digital accessibility

★ STEM and disciplinary specific- solutions for handwritten documents, diagrams and maps to move towards more accessible provision

★ Improved guidance on accessible practices with PDFs to reduce lack of clarity

★ Continue to develop consideration of accessibility in the procurement process for new 3rd party software with greater institutional capacity/ resource for User Acceptance Testing

★ Develop consistent support mechanisms for tracking progress in embedding digital accessibility across all schools e.g. using Blackboard Ally data

Links to ongoing work	The Digital Accessibility website has been updated to provide further clarity and will be launched with an accompanying video in Spring 2022. Further work is also planned to streamline online advice on this topic in relation to learning and teaching. Minerva Ultra will have a dedicated space in the template for Module Accessibility Statements and clearer guidance for completing these has been added to the Digital Accessibility website. Blackboard Ally data is now being provided by the Digital Education Service every semester, to Digital Education Academic Leads as well as SALIPs to encourage a more strategic approach. Digital Skills training is being developed for Student Education Service staff which will include awareness of digital accessibility, particularly in relation to document creation.

The appointment of a Web Accessibility Compliance Manager in IT in Summer 2021 has enabled further development of the University's approach to procurement of 3rd party software. This enables liaison with vendors to request timelines for full compliance where issues are identified, and internal colleagues are advised to consider how users' access needs will be addressed in the meanwhile. Further awareness raising with Business Relationship and IT Project Managers will enable key accessibility questions to be asked at early stages of procurement in the future.

It is planned that Digital Education Systems help guides will evolve to include up to date information about accessibility features and limitations of tools that educators (and students) might choose to use. Further joined up working with the Assistive Technology Adviser from Disability Services is supporting this.

Standard 1.15	Sense of belonging and community

Findings	Thirteen case studies were received exploring a range of aspects of sense of belonging, and it is clear that both the political climate (e.g Black Lives Matter) and the isolating effects of learning during the pandemic have sparked tangible advancements in this area. The SALIP role seems to have been pivotal in many areas for bringing this together and considering the multifaceted issues. *Sense of belonging* has been a key institutional initiative in its own right since 2020, but localised leadership on this was not in place at the time of the SALIP case studies. Although not always related to learning and teaching approaches *per se*, this topic was seen as a major factor in whether or not students could access their education effectively.

Student feedback to schools during the pandemic indicated a decline in sense of belonging in many of the case studies (23, 82, 5, 109, 39, 29 and 60) with one school describing high levels of self-reported loneliness among students. One case study (39) reported that belonging and community were an area of concern even prior to the pandemic, however. In order to address this, a range of initiatives and actions were taken forwards including enhanced use of newsletters and online social spaces to raise awareness of support and activities, as well as encouraging peer to peer interaction. Awareness of Counselling and Wellbeing was also raised among staff for greater signposting in case study 29.

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Academic personal tutoring (APT) was seen to have a key role in strengthening students' sense of connectedness to their school, and for helping them feel recognised as individuals. In case study 82, personal tutors were encouraged to take 1st year tutor groups out for a coffee, as well as being reminded to provide key introductory information about the school and signposting to facilities and services available. Issues of inconsistency within personal tutoring were described in case study 22, with students lacking clarity on the purpose of their APT sessions, to the extent that they were not aware of, or making use of other support and services available to them.

Although many of the issues around connectedness to others arose because of online learning in the pandemic, there was a clear commitment demonstrated through several of the case studies (5, 39, 29, 82) to continue building on what had been learned, regardless of the mode of delivery. Case study 60 provides an example of how sense of belonging is successfully being achieved in one module through a pedagogical approach engaging students in purposeful online group tasks. Asynchronous learning materials are provided each week, with case studies being provided every fortnight which students are required to work collaboratively on, in groups of 6. They are encouraged to meet up online with marks also being allocated for participation when the group task deadline was met. Student feedback on this during the pandemic highlighted that students found this a positive way to build relationships, meaning that the module continued to be delivered this way in 21/22.

Case study 109 shows that the School is keen to build learning communities with a curriculum focus which help the students get the best out of learning together and from each other. In order to understand more about how to do this, they have secured funding for further research in this area.

The case studies demonstrated the benefits of partnership working with students, with case study 39 reporting that the School had employed student interns to organise events and run campaigns for peers. It was also recognised that students should be kept informed of any actions the School was taking to try to improve belonging and community (29, 39, 130). Case study 95 provides an example of good practice whereby the School has set up a Black and Student of Colour Forum, as well as an LGBTQ+ forum, which not only provide students with the opportunity to meet others with shared experiences, but also provide a communication channel for recommendations to be raised.

Sense of belonging can be considered to be an outcome of an inclusive experience in higher education, and case study 130 demonstrated how the SALIP was taking forward a holistic approach to understand this on multiple levels, looking for opportunities to ensure student identities are represented, no matter how small the required change may seem. A working group has been set up to discuss and identify required actions towards "diversifying the curriculum," and likewise, case study 46 describes how a similar working group has developed guidance for staff and provided online space for discussion. Case study 123 describes how an issue of lack of diversity within learning resources was raised via students, prompting the School to request that all programmes sought opportunities to further embed diversity and diverse perspectives.

One case study (29) described how training on neurodiversity had been well received by staff, and it was hoped this would lead to the adoption of more inclusive teaching practices and hence greater sense of belonging among neurodivergent students. Through the work of the SALIP, working with key colleagues to understand available data, there was also a much greater awareness of mental health issues, and the link to connectedness and non-continuation among the student population.

Two case studies provided commentary on issues affecting sense of belonging for particular student groups. Case study 23 described how socialisation into the academic community for international students was particularly difficult, indicating a need for these students to be provided with greater awareness of opportunities such as internships, employability and volunteering. Case study 119 described an issue where 2 courses share the same 1st year modules, but one of the cohorts reports feelings of being less valued than the other because of how they perceive the curriculum to be designed, and this reinforces the idea that sense of belonging can be affected by many different factors.

Recommendations:

★ Provide development opportunities and examples of good practice which show how Schools have helped enhance student sense of belonging
★ Improvements to the University's Student Education Service website to reduce the number of clicks needed to get to key information for students
★ Greater clarity in information available to international/ EU students about the role and purpose of Academic Personal Tutoring in order for

them to optimise their time with APTs and make use of other support available to them.

Links to ongoing work	Three Sense of Belonging Academic Leads were appointed in 2021 to further embed the Leeds approach to Sense of Belonging. Also, the Student Education Conference on Belonging and Community in January 2022 helped bring together and raise awareness among the student education community of good practice and initiatives. So too, the institution-wide work on Decolonising has major implications for student sense of belonging to their subjects, with a number of Decolonising Academic Leads being appointed in 2021-22.

Related LITE Projects:

- Inclusive Targeting (previously known as Addressing the BAME Awarding Gaps
- Bridgette Bewick, School of Medicine: Pedagogical wellbeing & the Leeds Curriculum
- Rachael O'Connor, School of Law: Exploring academic personal tutoring in partnership with under-represented students
- Alison Voice, School of Physics and Astronomy: Belonging and Engaging for Successful Transition to Higher Education
- Edward Venn, School of Music: Sense of belonging and interactive pedagogies
- Kendi Guantai (Leeds University Business School), Nadine Cavigioli (Lifelong Learning Centre), Salma Al Arefi (School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering): Race, class and me: Exploring student authentic self and belonging
- Jenna Isherwood (International Student Office): Global Community Conversations: Exploring approaches to intercultural community-building at Leeds
- Andrew Walker (School of Medicine): A representative medical curriculum
- Eric Atwell (School of Computing): Decolonising reading lists

Standard 1.16	Sensitive topics in the curriculum
Findings	Two schools submitted case studies on this topic (6, 30). In one school, the need for a carefully considered approach to this was prompted by students raising

concern about the teaching of sensitive themes, and topics that do not take into consideration ideologies and beliefs of a minority of students. There was therefore a call for staff guidelines on how to teach sensitive topics. This clearly overlaps with the University's work around decolonisation but is also a barrier to participation and engagement for some students.

The School carried out a consultation activity with students and staff, compiled relevant resources and created a set of principles and guidance on Content Notes which was launched through the Pedagogic Research in the Arts (PRiA) network. This is an example of excellent practice which needs to be shared widely and adopted across the institution, in consultation with students, in order for this element of baseline standard to be met.

The use of Content Notes is already an established practice within the other case study (6), with a document being circulated in advance of module selection to all students. It contains a short summary of any sensitive or difficult topics that students may encounter when studying on the course. In order to ensure this approach meets the needs of students, continued monitoring of its effectiveness should be carried out.

Recommendations:

★ Develop an Institution wide approach to sensitive topics in the curriculum (including student consultation) building on from work in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures

Standard 1.17	Timetabling
Findings	Two case studies were received in relation to timetabling, one considering issues around the scheduling of back to back sessions and campus logistics, and the other relating to potential issues with time zone differences. Case study 132 is based on results of a student survey, highlighting two problems which affect a disabled students in relation to scheduling. Firstly, those with mobility issues found it difficult to make their way from one part of the campus to another within the time available, and secondly, some disabled students find that they need a rest break in between taught sessions. Both disabled and non-

disabled students also had problems with accessing toilets due to long queues and the short breaks between sessions.

To address this, the School aimed to include breaks between sessions whenever possible but a number of challenges with timetabling remain. It was difficult to avoid back to back scheduling because of the size of the cohort, the typical length of lectures and the availability of venues. Level 3 students have many different module options and the information about which modules disabled students are taking is not available at the point of timetabling. In addition, the case study outlined that taught Masters sessions are only taught on two days of the week, and staff availability also needs to be factored into timetabling decision.

For 21-22, some changes to delivery were implemented, including providing greater flexibility by recording lectures, thus allowing students to take a break from lectures if required and watch the session later. At level 3, the capacity of lectures is limited to 70 students, and it was anticipated that students may be able to choose their modules to avoid back to back teaching.

Timetabling is a difficult, logistic issue to resolve, but staff could create a more inclusive experience for students by scheduling breaks into longer sessions and recording them to allow for flexibility of access. It would also be useful to consider reducing the duration of sessions from 1.5 hours to 1 hour. Within the context of hybrid teaching in 21-22, another timetabling issue has emerged, in that students don't have sufficient time to switch between delivery modes between sessions i.e. from an in-person lecture, to find a suitable space to log into an on-line session.

The other issue relating to timetabling, highlighted by the second case study (96), is whether time zone differences can be considered for synchronous online delivery. However, systematic data collection would be required to ensure this meets the needs of all students effectively and it is only relevant going forwards in the context of courses designed to be delivered online.

Recommendations:

- ★ Ensure student feedback mechanisms effectively capture any inclusivity concerns around timetabling for students, and that these are fed into institution level planning for future delivery models.

Links to ongoing work	An institution level Education Spaces Project is underway looking at how we optimise the use of spaces for our evolving delivery of student education, in line with institutional strategy. Inclusion and accessibility are central to this.

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Baseline Standard 2: Materials in Advance

> "We will release materials in advance so that students have sufficient time
> to engage with them prior to scheduled sessions."

The case studies show the varying degrees of take up of this baseline standard across schools. It is largely being met in some schools, but not yet in others.

Standard 2	Materials in advance
Findings	Case studies received in respect of this baseline revealed a range of practices, with some schools having developed local policy and guidance, and others requesting further support and clarity. It is evident that staff attitudes and practices have progressed since the introduction of online learning, resulting in more carefully considered pedagogic practices and clearer expectations of student engagement outside of the classroom. Case study 125 and 120 both explain that materials have been consistently uploaded to Minerva since the switch to online teaching. Pre-pandemic, some staff in case study 125 were worried that giving students access to materials and recordings would affect attendance, but this is no longer a concern. Queries had also arisen about whether the lecture slides should always be provided as advance materials, but the SALIP had advised them of other options, such as providing glossaries of new terms or other materials to help students become familiar with new concepts. A similar query was also noted in case study 63. In case study 110, the results of an internal staff survey highlighted reservations from one respondent about providing advance materials as they did not want students to "jump ahead" in the learning for that session. Some technical issues with posting the materials on Minerva had been experienced at the start of the pandemic, but colleagues had overcome these, and a range of formats of material seemed to be on offer. However, the survey also showed differing levels of knowledge of how to make materials digitally accessible, not just available. Student feedback was discussed in a number of case studies, with one (120) noting a mismatch between students' experiences of receiving material in a timely manner, and staff self-reported practices. Case study 100 reported that students had not provided any feedback to issues of timeliness or availability of materials in advance, but it was hypothesized that this could be due to a lack of familiarity with flipped classroom pedagogies among the cohorts. However, students were specifically asked about advance materials in case studies 15 and

110, with differing outcomes. Case study 15 reported high satisfaction, although it was felt that this would need further investigation to ascertain whether students were referring to the reading lists, or lecture materials. Comments from students in case study 110 provided a rich insight into the needs and experiences of students in relation to this baseline. Some students felt they did not have enough time to read the materials once they were posted, particularly if there was a lot of reading for other modules too. Another student commented that they relied on printing off hard copies of slides for in-person lectures, and this was not always possible.

Case study 83 described how the standard was most likely being met across the school due to the adoption of SCALA methodology/ flipped classroom. The School had issued guidance to staff requesting materials to be uploaded at least 48 hours in advance of synchronous sessions, and ideally a week in advance. Likewise, case studies 7 and 56 described a school wide approach, which required learning materials (including lecture slides) to be released 48 hours in advance of taught sessions. Case study 7 noted that this is expected to be supported by weekly emails from each module leader to students outlining the expectations and planned activities. In all of these case studies the SALIPs noted that it was not possible to know whether all staff comply with these protocols.

In two of the case studies, varying practices were found in relation to the timing of when materials were made available when staff were asked directly. Case study 110 revealed that some staff routinely posted materials a week in advance, and others gave just 24 hours. Another commented that 48 hours was standard for them. In case study 100, several colleagues mentioned that they routinely upload materials 24 hours in advance.

Several case studies (15, 137) noted the need for further localised policy around timing and the nature of materials, suggesting a clear distinction should be made between reading list materials, lecture preparation and tasks/ guidance for seminars. The current lack of clarity poses difficulties for disabled students and support workers who support them.

This baseline standard leaves room for interpretation of what the *advance materials* should be, but the underlying principle is that of enabling students to cognitively engage with the content at their own pace away from the classroom environment, and in advance of taught or discursive activities. It is encouraging that some schools have developed local policy and practice in this area, requesting materials be available at least 48 hours in advance. However,

providing flexibility around the type of materials provided in advance means that the slides are not always made available, and some students will still need these as a reasonable adjustment so that they have them in the appropriate format to follow during taught sessions. There is a need for further development and institutional policy in this area, but it is clear that the introduction of this baseline has had a positive impact on practice in the majority of cases.

Recommendations:

★ Develop further institution level guidance to support this baseline standard
★ Gain further insights into the experiences of students, particularly disabled students.

Baseline Standard 3: Assessment range and clarity

"We will ensure that there is an appropriate range of assessment methods at a programme level, and that the language used in assessment tasks is clear."

This standard has been broken down into 3 themes, with clear progress being made in each. The idea of an *appropriate range* requires a programmatic overview which can sometimes be difficult to achieve, and also needs to be kept under review to ensure it aligns with the requirements of the curriculum and delivery mode. The necessity for clear, unambiguous language has wide reaching implications, and we may only know if we have achieved this baseline if our student feedback mechanisms and mitigating circumstances processes are sufficiently sensitive to pick this up. The case studies show that we are working towards achieving this baseline, but it has not been met in all areas, and the introduction of new assessment methods brings risk if issues of inclusivity are not considered from the outset.

Standard 3.1	Range of Assessment Types
Findings	The case studies in this area demonstrated that the baseline is largely being met, and schools seem keen to diversify approaches to assessment. The switch to online assessment during the pandemic has provided an opportunity to re-think traditional approaches, meaning that some schools are now much more open to change, but there was also recognition of some of the drawbacks of providing a range, for both staff and students. It was felt that new assessment types should be introduced supportively and that there are many factors affecting the inclusivity of assessment, not just the method itself. A tension between the need to reduce assessments over a programme but also offer a range of different methods was discussed.
	Case study 24 noted that a considerable effort had been made to diversify assessment types, and that the vast majority of modules had replaced timed exams with coursework assignments. Student feedback on this was particularly positive and examples of assessment types included annotated bibliographies; literature reviews; conference abstracts; reflective portfolios; blogs; posters; individual, pair or group presentations; seminar discussions and video interviews. There was recognition among staff, however, of the need to introduce students carefully to new assessment types as learning a new format could be an inhibiting factor. The use of guidance, exemplars and formative feedback were all seen as integral to the successful introduction of new genres

of assessment (see 3.2). This was echoed in case study 101 where the School has introduced a template for reports on taught postgraduate courses, thus ensuring students work is assessed on the content, and any risk of subjectivity relating to the report format is eliminated from the marking.

Another case study (40) noted that, although there were very few exams, the range of other assessment types was fairly limited and consisted mainly of traditional essays. Other assessment types, such as blogs, discussion boards or presentations were relatively rare, and overall, there has been a drive to reduce the number of summative assessments students are required to do. While this is positive in terms of assessment related workload and stress, further consideration is still required to ensure students are not disadvantaged by the lack of diversity in assessment methods. This response was replicated in case study 64, where the overall number of assessments was being reduced, but focus was being given to enriching the nature of each assessment type. The case study served as a reminder that diversity of assessment types needs to be considered programmatically rather than at an individual module level.

Case study 71 reported that the assessment portfolio of each module is reviewed annually to ensure there is a balance across the programme. Thought was being given to the potential impact of the pandemic on incoming students who will not have had recent experience of exams and may therefore need additional transitional support to familiarise them with the assessment types they may experience in their degree. Case study 124 noted that provision needed to meet professional body requirements and as part of this, there was an expectation of inclusive and varied assessment assessments. All programmes which have been revalidated in the past 2 years, will therefore meet this element of the baseline standard.

Following the switch to online delivery in March 2020 the majority of exams for penultimate and final year students were changed to online time limited assessments, which were open book in format and set to a default duration of 48 hours. This was intended to alleviate the need to apply reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Case study 84 reported that providing a range of assessment types was initially challenging for their modules (due to the specific nature of the skill being assessed) as these were primarily concerned with solving equations. However, the experience of online exams had enabled them to consider how to successfully assess students through open book

assessments too. Case study 8 also reported that the pandemic had prompted a review of the School's assessment practices as part of their curriculum review.

Case study 102 described how the School had reduced their weighting on final MCQ exams and introduced a number of other, more authentic, assessment types: enabling all aspects of the learning outcomes to be met. Students on one module were able to choose between 2 assessment types, introducing a further element of inclusive practice. The inclusivity and effectiveness of MCQs was also called into question in case study 58, in which a student survey revealed that students consider MCQs and MRQs to be an ineffective means of demonstrating their understanding of subject matter, whereas they viewed essays more favourably.

A set of principles of inclusive online assessment were produced and disseminated, but feedback from Leeds University Union and Disability Services showed that numerous issues arose during 20-21 which indicated that the principles had not been followed. For example, students were unclear about the expectations during that 48 hour period, and some exam periods overlapped with each other. However, some students reported a reduction in exam related stress because they were in a familiar working environment without the pressure of being tested on their memory recall. The issues experienced show that changing the method alone (to provide a range of assessment types) does not necessarily lead to an inclusive experience for students, and there are many elements which affect this.

The switch to online assessment has also resulted in the emergence of a number of new accessibility issues which, although not flagged through the SALIP case studies, are increasingly evident through an escalating workload for colleagues in Disability Services. Firstly, some tools used for assessment are not accessible to all students, requiring time consuming workarounds and students having to apply for mitigation. This relates to the need for transparency about the accessibility in 3rd party software, as noted on section 1.14 but also more generally, it demonstrates that assessment methods need to be carefully considered to ensure they're not introducing new ways of working that would put some students at a disadvantage. This may be challenging for individual Module Leaders to think through, so there needs to be greater oversight and regulation of the tools being used and the most inclusive ways of using them. Secondly, the introduction of remote open-book exams has resulted in a greater risk to academic integrity, and for this reason, the functionality of some tools is locked down. This makes it less accessible to some students e.g those using

assistive technology and those who may want to employ strategies to maximise their time due to differences in information processing. This unfortunately means that some methods of digital assessment are now becoming less inclusive as a result.

Recommendations:

★ Forums for sharing good practice on inclusive assessment- with discipline focus
★ Develop inclusive assessment guidance for different modes of assessment e,g oral, group
★ Audit of current tools being used for digital assessment. Protocols and staff training to ensure they are used inclusively

Links to ongoing work	In summer 2021 an institutional assessment strategy was introduced, as part of the wider Curriculum Redefined project. The vision for this strategy is that: "Assessment at Leeds will be fair, inclusive and authentic and designed to support learning. Using digital technologies to deliver assessment and feedback practices and processes, we will ensure that assessment upholds academic standards and integrity whilst providing students with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their potential and achievement." This therefore helps to elevate the institutional commitment to inclusive assessment, and a number of underpinning principles in the policy are designed to support clarity, consistency and quality. It builds on principles which already existed at Leeds (the Leeds Expectations for Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) principles) but provides an opportunity for these to be applied in a way which meets the needs, identities and aspirations of our students within the context of an increasingly digitized learning environment. There is a strong commitment also to enhance the assessment literacy of both students and staff, and to work in partnership with students to promote agency in the assessment process. As part of the implementation of this strategy, SALIPs have been involved in a number of activities and discussions with other key colleagues such as Assessment Leads and Student Success Academic Leads to work towards a shared understanding of inclusive assessment, and to identify areas where further collaboration will be needed. A shared resource showcasing some of the

SALIP case studies was put together on the [Student Success Sharepoint site](), along with other examples of good practice from across the sector.

An Academic Lead for LEAF has also now been appointed and will start the role in Spring 2022.

Standard 3.2	Clarity of language used in assessment

Findings

The case studies showed examples of where schools have identified the need for improvement, based on student feedback in many cases. Practices across modules have been found to vary widely, and this inconsistency has led to a lack of parity which will have impacted on student success. School level interventions had led to positive outcomes in terms of standardised good practice, but the examples demonstrate the need for a greater emphasis on assessment literacy among both students and staff.

Case study 133 showed how the School aimed to improve the inclusiveness of exam papers; both in terms of the language and format. A staff training event was held to raise awareness of this and guidelines were provided in a shared location. Thought was also given to ensuring new staff joining the School were aware of the protocols. Following on from this, the SALIP found that the guidance around inclusive language use is now largely being followed although some staff have reported finding challenges with the wording of MCQ questions. In order to embed this practice further, the SALIP intends to attend exam scrutiny meetings where the wording of exam papers can be discussed.

In regard to the wording of assignment briefs, case study 49 identified wide ranging practices across the School and recognized this as a potential problem. Some were longwinded and unclear whereas others lacked sufficient detail for students to know what was expected. Likewise, the rubrics which supported the assessment were not always written in ways which would enable students to access the intended meaning. Module leaders were therefore asked to re-write their assessment briefs in plain English and to rewrite their rubrics using a standardized template. An audit of modules at the end of the academic year found that nearly all modules used the new rubric templates and student voice feedback suggests this helped to demystify the assessment process. However, this

is not yet fully embedded across all modules so further work is planned to raise awareness of good practice.

Several case studies (102, 41) noted that students had raised concerns with lack of clarity, particularly in assessment criteria. In 41 two-thirds of survey respondents were not clear about the marking criteria in advance of starting their assessment, and international students in particular requested exemplars to demonstrate what the criteria actually meant. In case study 102, progress was noted in relation to fairness and clarity measures of the National Student Survey (NSS) scores, with improvements in each area between 2020 and 2021. This is seen as reflective of the effort that the School has made in ensuring assessment criteria are clearly explained in module handbooks and during introductory lectures. To build on this it was acknowledged that new lecturers and module leaders would need to continue this practice, and further work to create a centralised resource of rubrics across all years is planned.

A number of actions to improve assessment literacy were put forward in case study 111 as a number of students reported that they "struggled to understand" the questions or assignment briefs, and that insufficient context was provided. Consideration was being given to the use of glossaries to demystify the types of action verbs used in essay and assignment briefs, and staff training/ discussions around this issue were also being planned. It is clear from the case studies on this topic that greater awareness needs to be drawn to the way staff understand the whole assessment process and introduce students to each element of it so that the assessment itself is only testing the achievement of the learning outcomes, and not their ability to navigate complexity.

Recommendations:

★ Improved levels of assessment literacy among both students and staff, with new teaching staff being properly inducted into the School's assessment practices and supporting documentation.
★ Detailed rubrics on Turnitin to enable feedback to be set against criteria

Links to ongoing work	ASSESSMENT STRATEGY- see 3.1 LITE Projects: • Joy Robbins and Milena Marinkova, the Language Centre: Assessing the impact of online rubrics for feedback and assessment

- [Jiani Liu (Learning Development Team / skills@library): Assessment literacy and student success](#)

Standard 3.3	Inclusive Assessment Design

Findings	Case studies in this sub-theme described practices which consider how assessment fits into the students learning journey as a whole on their programme, with the recognition that students need sufficient time to be able to effectively demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes. Case study 71 provided a brief overview of practices in the School where most modules now feature a learning journey, detailing coursework deadlines for formative and summative assessment and how these link to the learning outcomes.

Two schools provided case studies which covered the issue of the spacing of assignment deadlines and assessment load. In one school (112), a survey showed that just under half of the respondents found the spacing of assignments to be problematic, with similar findings in another school's survey (24). Specific comments from students showed that having a heavy workload over Christmas was difficult, particularly for mature students. In addition, the timing of formative feedback didn't always align with summative assessment, and clear information about deadlines needed to be provided well in advance. In this school, the feedback was then taken to a programme managers meeting to improve provision for 21-22. In both case studies, it was felt that Discovery Modules, or modules managed by other schools, made it very difficult to avoid this bunching and better systems for sharing information needed to be sought.

Recommendations:

★ Introduce tools for assessment spacing across programmes (School of Civil Engineering have an example of good practice)
★ Introduce learning journeys/ module maps as standard for all modules

> "We will ensure that colleagues with marking responsibilities are up to date with the <u>inclusive marking policy</u>."

Originally agreed by the Taught Student Education Board in 2016, the Inclusive Marking Policy underwent a relaunch in 2021 to ensure optimum engagement for a consistent, transparent and fair assessment process. The policy applies to all written assessment by all taught students, highlighting the importance of clarity in marking criteria in relation to the assessment of technical aspects of written English, e.g spelling, grammar and punctuation. It also provides a rationale for the approach to flagging the work of students whose disability manifests in their written work, for the purposes of sensitive feedback.

However, a sector-wide review[19] published by the Office for Students in October 2021 reported that the standard of written English of graduates was falling below the expectations of employers, and Universities' approaches to the assessment of spelling, grammar and punctuation were therefore under scrutiny. For this reason, the institutional policy on inclusive marking is under review (scheduled for Spring 2022) as the Office for Students now require spelling and grammar to be formally assessed on all programmes. The details of how to implement this while, maintaining an inclusive approach, are being worked through in alignment to Curriculum Redefined.   This has meant that institution-wide progress with embedding the inclusive marking policy has been slower than planned, but the Office for Students review has drawn attention to the need for clarity over what is, and isn't, under assessment, as well as consistency among markers.

Three key themes were identified against this baseline standard, the first relating to clarity in assessment criteria, the second relating to feedback practices for disabled students (those "flagged" to the marker), and the third relating to inclusive feedback practices more broadly.

This baseline standard has therefore not yet been met in many areas of the University.

Standard 4.1	Assessment criteria are clear about expectations of proficiency in language use
Findings	The case studies received demonstrated that the relaunch of the policy had resulted in a range of activities, discussions and decisions. Engagement with this matter required SALIPs and other colleagues in their schools to carefully consider the extent to which technical accuracy in the use of written English should be considered a competence standard (as defined by the 2010 Equality Act[20]) for

that particular subject or discipline. For most SALIPs this was their first introduction to this concept, which is at the core of inclusive assessment design.

A number of schools reported plans to amend their marking criteria in order to explicitly exclude or include grammar, spelling and punctuation, depending on the learning objectives, and these decisions were specifically linked to PSRB requirements in some cases (124). Two schools in the STEM discipline reported plans to include this requirement solely within their criteria for final year projects, where the expectations for precision in written English were higher. Where schools confirmed that they did, or were intending to, explicitly assess students' use of spelling, grammar and punctuation, there was consideration of how this would be scaffolded through the curriculum with support from the Language Centre.

Several schools (85, 10, 97) noted a need for improved clarity and consistency in supporting documentation e.g module handbook, to ensure expectations around the use of English were made clear to students. Three schools (25, 65, 97) reported that they felt the standard had been met in their schools. However, it was recognised that enhanced guidance documentation, and opportunities for discussion on approaches among module marking teams would be required for a shared understanding.

Recommendations:

- ★ Further engagement with the principles underpinning the inclusive marking policy from all staff involved in marking.
- ★ Further exploration of the assessment of language use more broadly, incorporating spoken as well as written language

Link to ongoing work	The Inclusive Marking Policy is under review in Spring 2022 in order to incorporate the requirements of the Office for Students. This provides an opportunity to carefully consider the written communication needs of our students and to articulate clearly how these relate to particular subject areas. The review has also prompted a further examination of our institutional policy on proof-reading and how we support the development of writing skills in an authentic and inclusive way. This work links to many elements of the assessment strategy, and the idea of developing academic literacies as part of the curriculum.

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Standard 4.2	Providing feedback on flagged work
Findings	Discussions during the inclusive marking policy training sessions in July 2021 indicated that some schools had been applying differential marking to disabled (*flagged*) students, which constituted a misapplication of the policy. The training enabled leads from these schools to understand that *inclusive marking* isn't something that happens at the marking stage, it's actually about the inclusive design of the assessment and accompanying criteria, which should apply to all students regardless of disability. The rationale for flagging the work of disabled students is twofold: 1) it enables markers to provide feedback against the marking criteria which acknowledges the disability and 2) provides reassurance for the student that their disability has been acknowledged and that they won't be perceived as sloppy or lazy if there are errors or dysfluency in the writing. Designing the assessment and criteria as inclusively as possible does not remove the need for a reasonable adjustment because the method of assessment (i.e writing) does not provide a level playing field for students whose disability impacts on their written work. For these students, it is appropriate for them to let the marker know about their disability so that this information can be used to support their academic development. The operational application of electronic stickers and coversheets for disabled students is overseen by School Disability Contacts (once recommendations have been applied by Disability Services). For example, case study 99 explains that the school's student support team emails each module leader at the start of each semester to let them know which disabled students are eligible for marking consideration in order to ensure this is consistently applied. Evaluation of the in-person training and self-directed learning for SALIPs and Assessment Leads showed that the majority of participants learnt strategies to apply to their feedback practices for flagged student work. However, the case studies do not provide sufficient insight into student experiences of feedback for us to know how well the policy and guidance is applied in practice. A survey of 9 disabled students in one school (61) indicated that they were generally not aware of how their disability was being taken into account during marking. This shows a need for staff to be transparent about this when introducing assessments and for it to be highlighted in the code of practice on assessment for students. Another case study (122) highlighted a need for a school-wide feedback strategy to foster inclusive and consistent feedback.

One to one meetings were held between SALIPs and the Project Lead between November 2021-January 2022, which included discussion of progress on embedding the inclusive marking policy. By December 2021, the majority of SALIPs had discussed their school's approach to this with their DSE and other relevant leads in the School, and 66% had either led or co-led activities to promote the policy. One school held an Assessment Forum and another created an online learning package specifically for that subject context. In a number of schools, staff sessions on this topic were poorly attended or needed to be postponed due to the pandemic, meaning that colleagues did not have the opportunity to relate the theory to their disciplinary practices. This lack of engagement is likely to have a detrimental impact on the consistent application of the policy.

Recommendations:

★ Development of an institutional feedback strategy which incorporates guidance created to accompany the inclusive marking policy.
★ Further streamlining of the operational application of flagging, through joint working with Disability Services and Assessment Functional Managers (SES)

Standard 4.3	Inclusive feedback practices
Findings	In alignment with baseline standard 4, SALIPs were also encouraged to submit case studies which exemplified inclusive feedback practices which would result in greater consistency and clarity, and in some cases flexibility in how students are able to access the feedback.
	In case study 47, students' understanding of the value of in-text annotations and their experiences using that feedback was discussed. All 30 respondents to a survey agreed that the in-text annotations helped them to understand the feedback on their assessment. The majority also agreed that the annotations helped them to improve in other assessments. Whilst the feedback was largely positive, some feedback did not provide advice on what had been done well and how to improve. To develop this further, the School plans to revise their

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guidance, including the use of in-text annotations in developing inclusive feedback.

This sentiment was echoed in case study 42; reporting that students were finding feedback demoralising and lacking sufficient detail to be fully understandable or actionable. For those that felt dissatisfied, there was a strong sense of confusion, frustration and lack of clarity on where to improve. Some also noted that feedback was variable, inconsistent and showed subjectivity depending on the marker and module. In order to address this, the School has developed new guidance for moderators to help ensure consistency. Also, plans are underway to introduce Turnitin rubrics across modules to make it easier for students to understand how they are performing against the school-wide marking criteria. This will also ensure that staff give clear feedback against each of the marking criteria, ensure consistency across markers, and provide students with clear guidance on how to improve.

Case studies 25 and 65 also reported the value of internal calibration exercises to maintain and assure consistency among markers, and this helps to ensure there are expectations around the amount and type of feedback that should be given.

Recommendations:

★ Development of an institution-wide feedback strategy to specify expectations for both students and staff about the purpose of feedback, how much feedback to give, and (for students) how to make the best use of it.
★ Improved assessment literacy among staff with an emphasis on clarity and consistency

Limitations of the data collection

As noted in the introduction, this study should not be considered an audit of current practices, rather a collection of case study examples from within a large and complex organisation, drawn up within the context of a global pandemic. There are a number of factors which should be taken into account when considering how generally applicable these findings could be.

The majority of SALIPs in the study work within one school with an expected workload allocation of 1 day per week, although there is variation within this. The sizes of schools differ greatly too, ranging from 400 students to almost 2000 in one school. The size and structure of the school affects the reach that a SALIP can have when trying to gain an understanding of current practices and issues affecting student experience. In many cases, SALIPs have reported only being able to get a surface level understanding, due to competing workload pressures and the broad scope of the review.

Within the design and scope of the current study, it was not possible for SALIPs to ascertain the pedagogic approaches used by *all* teaching colleagues in their areas, and it is likely that this would not have been welcomed or practicable. For this reason, case studies often reported on agreed school level protocols or policies, but that does not mean that all staff follow these within their own work.

Student and staff engagement with surveys as a method of data collection will have also affected the findings. In some cases (e.g case study 55) negative feedback from disabled students was received but this sample was so small that it cannot be considered true for all disabled students, merely an indication to warrant further investigation. In the case of staff engagement, it is often the case that staff who are keen to enhance their pedagogical practices are more likely to respond to surveys and requests for information from SALIPs, whereas it is likely that there are many teaching staff whose priorities lie elsewhere. This creates a potential bias in the data, and is not representative of the whole cohort of teaching staff.

Conclusion

The case studies clearly demonstrate the value in having School Academic Leads for Inclusive Practice to examine our common student education practices, and they reveal numerous areas where further development is needed. The nature of the activity meant that SALIPs were predisposed to uncover areas of potential weakness, meaning that the report does not emphasise the positive progress that has been made in many areas of inclusive practice. This often goes unnoticed, as students just recognise it as teaching which engages them and meets their needs, rather than *inclusive* teaching.

The inconsistency of inclusive practice is a key theme across the whole report, and this raises questions about the tension between the autonomy of educators, and the nature of delivering student education in line with institutional values and protocols. The two things can co-exist, but staff need sufficient time and opportunity for discussion and reflection to understand what they should do differently, and crucially, why. A distinction should also be made between school level protocols (e.g the mandate that all modules should adhere to a specific template) and actual practice by individual staff members, and there is little opportunity or appetite for monitoring compliance on a local level. The discussion in section 3.3 clearly demonstrates that when new ways of working and new processes are introduced (e.g online assessment), this provides a risk to inclusive practice, and despite the provision of institution-level guidance, many staff do not regularly consider inclusivity in the design of educational practices. Another key factor in this inconsistency is the varying sizes and structures of schools, and the need for institutional-level guidance to be interpreted and communicated in a language that engages with local teams (as noted in section 1.13).

There is a clear lack of understanding among many staff about the need to be anticipatory of the needs of disabled students, and this likely results from a historic reliance on recommendations from Disability Services for individual adjustments and a lack of understanding of the definition of disability under the 2010 Equality Act. However, due to the sheer scale of the operation and lack of fit-for-purpose electronic systems, the process of information sharing has become unwieldy, resulting in information not being shared in the ways students expect it to be. There is clear confusion in some schools too about the nature of our institutional baseline standards of inclusive learning and teaching, with some staff assuming that they are already being met in all cases. However, as this report shows, they remain aspirational statements and we cannot assume that they are being met until the evidence tells us otherwise. Disability awareness training with a specific focus on the practical application of the social model of disability in learning and teaching contexts would be hugely beneficial for the whole institution. This recommendation has strong support from across the sector, being made by both Williams *et al*[21], and Martin *et al*[22] in their 2019 sector-wide research, as well as in 2 more recent publications from Policy Connect[23] and Disabled Students UK[24].

Institutional developments in student voice are vital in helping us to become more inclusive. As student education practices continue to evolve and develop we need to keep the communication channels open with students to understand their experiences, as there may be unintended consequences of new approaches or the introduction of new technology. Discussion about inclusive practice needs to remain high up the agenda across all schools and faculties, but with enhanced ways of monitoring progress and ensuring that any key learnings are helping to enhance the practice of others. As part of this, we need to invest much more time in understanding the experiences of disabled students to provide us with

insights that weren't possible in the current study. Disabled students are not a homogenous group. By their very definition, they are students who experience a wide range of barriers which limit participation in the educational environment. Those barriers to participation also exist for other students, although often not to the same extent.

Given that the case studies were largely compiled during a year when online delivery was the norm, they reflect some of the main things that we learnt collectively, both positive and negative. One of the benefits was the flexibility of delivery, which some disabled students have been requesting for years[25][26]. For many disabled students with fluctuating conditions, being able to keep up with course content during those off days can make a huge difference to student success[27] but also psychological wellbeing and the sense that their needs have been considered in the design of the module. The same is also true for students who have reduced energy levels due to underlying conditions, and need to be strategic about how they use their time. We need to ensure this flexibility is considered and made available ongoing, wherever it is pedagogically appropriate. To remove this flexibility, despite having experienced the possibilities it affords, would be a backwards step for inclusivity and have tangible impacts on success and belonging not only for disabled students but also for students who need occasional flexibility for many other reasons such as religious commitments, care giving or commuting.

The loss of human connection during online learning also prompted a significant amount of learning and reflection on the pedagogical approaches that best foster community and belonging. It is clear from the number of LITE fellowships looking into aspects of this and the appointment of 3 Academic Leads for Belonging in 2021 that the University is keen to improve this and understand how to build this into the way we design and deliver all aspects of the University experience, both curricular and co-curricular.

As our education provision becomes increasingly digitized, the report shows that there is still a great deal of work to do to ensure consideration of digital accessibility is built in at all levels, and not an afterthought. Lack of awareness of disability and the 2018 web accessibility legislation[28], coupled with a lack of institutional leadership in this area, has meant that progress has been slow. Our institutional systems and processes need to continue to develop to support staff to use digital technology inclusively, while being open and transparent with our students about potential limitations. Schools and Faculties need to take a cohesive approach to encouraging and embedding good practice in this area, with the aim that new resources, activities and practices are *born accessible* as far as possible.

This research has helped to shine a light on an evolving and dynamic area of pedagogy and practice that is of great strategic importance to the University and has relevance to every aspect of student education. The introduction of the SALIP role has enabled us to understand some of the challenges we face in meeting our ambitious standards of inclusive

learning and teaching. However, the sheer scale of development work, pedagogic research and ongoing improvements to our systems and processes means that these standards are indeed attainable. The SALIPs themselves have become a valuable resource to the institution, with many making impressive impacts locally on the culture of learning and teaching. It has become apparent however that this role requires far more support to effect true culture change and to get the required engagement from colleagues. Above all, if we want our students to experience learning and teaching which recognises their identities as individuals, we need to invest more time and energy into supporting all staff in student education roles to reflect on what they could do differently, and develop and inclusive mind set.

Recommendations

Fifty-five individual recommendations from the SALIP case studies have been identified. These have been thematically organised, and can be found in the appendix. From the start of the 21-22 academic year, the Inclusive Learning and Teaching Advisory Board (formerly ILT Development group) have been taking forwards a number of these recommendations with the relevant groups, services and teams, with positive engagement. Continued engagement and prioritisation with these recommendations will enable us to meet the baseline standards and embed a culture of shared responsibility, which includes ongoing reflection on the student experience within each of these elements. A number of high-level recommendations have emerged, taking into account the most frequently cited barriers to achieving the standards. These are:

1. **Mandatory training and awareness for all staff on the social model of disability is required to foster a collective understanding of the interaction between the experience of disablement and the environment.** An understanding of the social model of disability is critical to being able to provide an inclusive learning and teaching experience.
2. **Institution level support is required to provide all academic staff the time and opportunity to understand and reflect on how they can make their teaching more inclusive.** This should involve ongoing support, development and work loading for the SALIP role. To support this further, a set of principles of inclusive pedagogies are now in development and these will underpin the baseline standards of inclusive learning and teaching, providing staff with a further guidance into how to adapt their current approach to ensure it takes account of a diverse range of learners.
3. **Clarity and consistency of content in the virtual learning environment (Minerva) need to be emphasised in staff training and guidance materials for the move to Minerva Ultra in 2022.** Inconsistency creates accessibility issues

and additional stress and confusion for students, so messaging around adherence to the inbuilt template should be strongly highlighted and supported.

4. **An institution wide strategy on embedding digital accessibility to meet legislative requirement needs to be developed to ensure this becomes the normal way of working for all staff and students in a digital environment.**

5. **Continued engagement with academic and assessment literacies is needed, for both students and staff. This will ensure clarity on the aims of assessment, and how students will be supported in their learning to achieve those aims.** . The Institutional Assessment Strategy provides an ideal opportunity for enabling staff to engage with assessment design which is inclusive and authentic.

6. **Our institution wide processes for sharing information about the needs of disabled students require improvement for the benefit of all stakeholders.** Our inclusive provision should be built on a firm foundation of consistent practice, ensuring students receive the expected provisions within the learning environment, under the 2010 Equality Act. Continuation of cross-institutional development work, involving multiple stakeholders and the implementation of fit-for-purpose systems is required.

7. **The development of a sustainable model for embedding and monitoring progress on inclusive pedagogies is required with a particular emphasis on broadening support to incorporate schools which have not as yet had a SALIP in post.** This needs to be data driven and involve cross faculty working, including SALIPs, Student Success Academic Leads and other relevant leads for consistent coverage. This will enable us to meet the institutional strategic aims.

8. **Flexibility in pedagogical approaches, space and facilities planning are required to accommodate students who may not always be able to physically attend campus, for a variety of reasons.** This would ensure the continuation of more accessible approaches to learning which many disabled students have experienced during the pandemic.

9. **Further insights on the experiences of disabled students should be sought to help identify areas of priority for future development.** This will complement the findings of this study and help us dedicate appropriate time and resource to the areas which have the biggest impact on the student experience.

10. **We need to continue to evolve our student voice mechanisms, to ensure we understand how our students experience inclusion as an ongoing process, and act on that feedback.**

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Recommendations by category

Digital Accessibility Recommendations	Baseline standard
1. **Training, development opportunities and support for all staff on digital accessibility- rolling programme. This should include training for SES staff who create documentation for Student Education purposes**	all
2. **Provide online course readings in a digitally accessible format as standard**	1
3. **Guidance and transparency for staff and students about the accessibility of library resources**	1
4. **Invest in dedicated resource to develop solutions for complex visual material such as graphs and charts, and the use of alt-text descriptions**	1
5. **Provide an institution, school or faculty branded accessible Powerpoint template**	1
6. **Improved guidance on accessible practices with PDFs**	1,2,3
7. **Improved guidance and awareness for staff on how to optimise the quality of auto-captioning, how to use each system, and the expectations regarding editing**	1
8. **Improvements in technology for accuracy of auto-captioning, including improvements to lecture capture system**	1
9. **Procurement of 3rd party systems to include systematic User Acceptance Testing. Greater communications between the University and vendors of**	1, 3

3rd party software for them to improve any accessibility issues which become known

10. Digital accessibility information of 3rd party tools to be available for both students and staff, including both the potential limitations of tools and ways which accessibility can be optimised for users	1, 3
11. Ensure Module Accessibility Statements are used as standard for transparency about any content which may pose accessibility challenges. Ensure these are clearly signposted in Minerva for staff to complete and students to access.	all
12. Reward and recognition for workload involved in remediating issues in content	all
13. Strong messaging/ commitment from senior University leadership to highlight the importance (and legal imperative) for digital accessibility	all
14. Develop consistent mechanisms for using Blackboard Ally to track progress in embedding digital accessibility across all areas	1, 2,

Minerva/ VLE consistency recommendations	Baseline Standard
15. Messaging about importance of structure and using template – built into Minerva Ultra roll out	1,2,3
16. Guidance on improving the use of Teams when used as a virtual learning environment, e.g how best to organise information	1,2,3
17. Include a wellbeing tab for easy access to key information for students in all modules	1
18. Ensure Module Accessibility Statements are used as standard for transparency about any content which may pose accessibility challenges	1

19. Implement the use of module maps/ learning journeys across all modules	1

Assessment recommendations	Baseline Standard
20. Forums for sharing good practice on inclusive assessment- with discipline focus	3
21. Develop inclusive assessment guidance for different modes of assessment e,g oral, group	3
22. Audit of current tools being used for digital assessment. Protocols and staff training to ensure they are used inclusively	3
23. Improved levels of assessment literacy among both students and staff, with new teaching staff being properly inducted into the school's assessment practices and supporting documentation.	3
24. Detailed rubrics on Turnitin to enable feedback to be set against criteria	3
25. Introduce tools for assessment spacing across programmes	3
26. Further engagement with the principles underpinning the inclusive marking policy from all staff involved in marking	4
27. Further exploration of the assessment of language use more broadly, incorporating spoken as well as written language	4
28. Development of an institutional feedback strategy incorporating guidance from the inclusive marking policy. The policy should specify expectations for both students and staff about the purpose of	4

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feedback, how much feedback to give, and (for students) how to make the best use of it.	4
29. Further streamlining of the operational application of flagging, through joint working with Disability Services and Assessment Functional Managers (SES)	4

Disability support recommendations	Baseline standard
30. Faster/ more effective information sharing from Disability Services out to teaching staff	all
31. Investigate the use of Pebblepad for contextual information about student learning needs	all
32. Develop understanding of why low numbers of international students access disability support	all
33. Ensure disability support processes meet the needs of international disabled students	all

Inclusive Pedagogies recommendations	Baseline standard
34. Sharing good practice among schools who deliver placements	1, 3
35. Ongoing opportunities for SALIPs to develop their knowledge, expertise and leadership capabilities	all
36. Develop further guidance on baseline 2- "materials in advance", for clarity about timescales, rationale and pedagogic approaches	2
37. Implement use of learning journeys and/ or module maps for all modules	1,2,3

38. **Institution wide approach to introducing sensitive topics in the curriculum, building on work started in Faculty of AHC**	1
39. **Guidance and development opportunities for staff on teaching and supporting students with mental health difficulties**	all

Library resources recommendations

(see also Digital Accessibility)

Baseline standard

40. **Embed good practice with prioritised reading lists, with introduction of new reading list tool (Leganto)**	1, 2

Culture, communications and marketing recommendations

Baseline standard

41. **Consistent messaging in marketing materials about the University's commitment to inclusive learning and teaching, including showcasing examples of initiatives such as inclusive approaches to fieldwork**	all
42. **Clearer and more visible messaging to staff about University's approach and commitment to inclusive learning and teaching, including rationale, expectations of individual responsibility and examples of good practice.**	all
43. **Disability awareness training/ development opportunities for all staff and students, emphasising the social model approach to understanding disability in the context of HE**	all
44. **Initiatives to celebrate linguistic diversity which go beyond whether English spelling and grammar are included in assessment criteria**	all
45. **Improvements to the University's Student Education Service website to reduce the number of clicks needed to get to key information for students about support**	all
46. **Reward and recognition for staff demonstrating and innovating with inclusive learning and teaching**	all

IT recommendations	Baseline standard
47. Transparency about the fact that some software is currently only available to access on campus, not remotely, but IT support should continue to develop this.	1
48. Ensure access to cluster machines for students who need to use specialist software.	1

Academic Representation and student voice recommendations	Baseline standard
49. Consider incentives for student reps, such as budgets within schools for Student Voices activities	all
50. Inclusive support and training for reps- on all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion	all
51. Diverse recruitment of reps- further work to address hidden biases within the current system	all
52. Further work to understand and capture the positive elements of the different layers of representation e.g school re, course rep, EDI rep	all

Specific student groups recommendations	Baseline standard
53. Data to support tracking of progression and student success for international students	all

Sense of belonging recommendations	Baseline standard
54. Provide development opportunities and examples of good practice which show how schools have helped enhance student sense of belonging	all

55. **Greater clarity in information available to international/ EU students about the role and purpose of Academic Personal Tutoring in order for them to optimise their time with APTs and make use of other support available to them.**   all

Appendix 2: Case studies per School

School	Number of case studies
English	10
History	5
Language Centre	10
Languages Cultures and Societies	5
Music	1
Performance and Cultural Industries	1
Philosophy, Religion and History of Science	10
Media & Communication	5
Design	2
Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies	5
Faculty of Biological Sciences (including case studies specific to Molecular & Cellular Biology and Biomedical Sciences)	7
Leeds University Business School	4
Chemistry	7
Civil Engineering	3
Mathematics	10
Earth & Environment	3
Geography	10
Food Science and Nutrition	5

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Lifelong Learning Centre	9
Dentistry	10
Healthcare	2
Medicine	6
Psychology	4
Politics and International Studies	3

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