

From: Freedom of Information

Sent: 12 November 2020 15:59

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/421)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/421)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 20 October 2020, reference K/20/421.

Your request read:

- “1) Pre-COVID19, how did academic staff learn about digital accessibility* in relation to their teaching materials?
- 2) Did you change or accelerate any support and guidance in this area in response to the global pandemic?
- 3) Does your institution provide closed-captions for video-based pre-recorded content?
- 4) Do you claim disproportionate burden for any elements relating to digital accessibility?
- 5) Since the global pandemic, have you seen an increase in the number of academic-staff queries relating to digital accessibility?

Guidance:

*I am defining digital accessibility as the process of making digital products (websites, mobile apps and other digital tools and technologies) accessible to everyone. In this context, I am interested in such tools and technologies used for the delivery of teaching and learning (such as Virtual Learning Environments, electronic assessment, lecture recording technologies, e-portfolios and web-seminar technologies).”

The University of Leeds holds some information relevant to your request.

For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions in turn below.

1) Pre-COVID19, how did academic staff learn about digital accessibility* in relation to their teaching materials?

In 2019, the University of Leeds engaged an external company to carry out a review of a number of our websites and our systems. Following further detailed scoping on the prioritised sites in late 2019, a project was funded in January 2020 to remediate the priority sites and produce an approach to the remainder of the sites and systems. Detailed guidance on preparing digitally accessible teaching materials was provided to staff, and training on accessibility was also offered and promoted through our all staff University channels. A “writing for the web” course run for our internal staff development unit also covered accessibility.

2) Did you change or accelerate any support and guidance in this area in response to the global pandemic?

Our accessibility programme was expanded to cover content, staff development and assurance in May 2020. Accessibility approaches and standards for learning and teaching materials were signed off in June 2020 and guidance on these materials was made available to all staff in July 2020. Blackboard Ally (an accessibility checker for academic learning and teaching content in Minerva) went live in May 2020, as part of a pre-COVID planned project.

3) Does your institution provide closed-captions for video-based pre-recorded content?

Automated captioning of audio and video recorded teaching materials within our lecture capture and multimedia management system went live in September 2020. Our [University Accessibility Statement](#) provides details of the closed-caption facilities in our systems.

4) Do you claim disproportionate burden for any elements relating to digital accessibility?

All claims of disproportionate burden can be found in our accessibility statement.

5) Since the global pandemic, have you seen an increase in the number of academic-staff queries relating to digital accessibility?

There has been increased engagement with digital accessibility related queries from staff during 2020, as part of a pre-covid planned campaign to increase accessibility of teaching materials, and in preparation for the introduction of the EU Web Accessibility legislation in September 2020. It is not possible to disentangle those queries from any related specifically to covid measures.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on foi@leeds.ac.uk

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle
Deputy Secretary
The University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT

Email: foi@leeds.ac.uk

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University's response to your request. Further information about how

the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website (www.leeds.ac.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Kind regards

Chloe Wilkins

Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat

University of Leeds