

LUSU Accessibility Policy

Date created: 21/02/2023

1. **Introduction**

The Union notes:

- 1.1. The Union will always work to make the Union as accessible as possible.
- 1.2. The work that the Union does will not eradicate the struggles that students may face.
- 1.3. Accessibility doesn't just apply or benefit students with disabilities. It is a wider-reaching priority that benefits the entire student population.
- 1.4. Students from marginalised groups sometimes have to work harder, but shouldn't have to in order to access the Union.
- 1.5. People are disabled by barriers to access in society, and/or their individual impairment or difference

The Union believes:

- 1.6. Accessibility principles should be in conjunction with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018
- 1.7. All students should have equitable access to the Union across all areas of activities, socials, events, elections, and other.
- 1.8. Accessibility is a core principle and should be acted upon as such.
- 1.9. This policy should remove barriers and support students in accessing our services.

The Union will:

- 1.10. The Union will have a proactive approach to accessibility, implementing work before it is requested.
- 1.11. Ensure that accessibility is a priority in all of our work.
- 1.12. Seek guidance from and take on board the comments made from students in order to improve the Union.
- 1.13. Seek to educate ourselves and others in order to improve and prioritise accessibility across the University.

2. **Purpose**

- 2.1. To state clear accessibility principles that can be adopted by the Union in order to proactively that all students are effectively supported and can access all activities run by the Union

3. **Definitions**

- 3.1. Disability

- 3.1.1. Any long-term condition which has had a significant impact on an individual's life, including physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and/or neurodiversity.
- 3.1.2. Under the Equality Act 2010, you're classified as 'disabled' if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal activities.
- 3.2. Accessibility
 - 3.2.1. Making materials, support and services usable by everyone regardless of disabilities or other circumstances that impact on an individual's ability to take part in events.
 - 3.2.2. Information that is accessible, understandable, operable and robust.
- 3.3. Forum
 - 3.3.1. A network of students, led by an executive alongside the relevant Liberation and Campaigns Officer, that offers a space for representation and safety and offers an opportunity for student to challenge and campaign against discrimination, oppression and inequality faced by themselves or others.
- 3.4. LCOs
 - 3.4.1. Liberation and Campaigns Officers (LCOs) work on a voluntary basis to secure change and foster student communities at Lancaster.
 - 3.4.2. LCOs hold a position on the Union Assembly in which they scrutinise union policy and the political direction of the SU.
- 3.5. FTOs
 - 3.5.1. Full Time Officers (FTOs) work to deliver policy and manifesto goals, develop and deliver Union strategy, link to University committee strands, student groups, and community engagement, and formally meet with the University Executive Board.
 - 3.5.2. Reports to, and held accountable by, Union Assembly
 - 3.5.3. Further information on FTOs to be found in the Full Time Officer Group Bye-Law¹

4. General Principals

- 4.1. Adopt the Social Model of Disability in proactively identifying and removing, or minimising, barriers to effective study and other activities over which we have a degree of control.
- 4.2. Ensure the involvement of the Students with Disabilities LCO, as well as students with accessibility needs, when designing, developing and evaluating accessible resources and services.
- 4.3. Ensure that we do not discriminate unlawfully against, or treat unfairly, any students or enquirers based on their accessibility needs.
- 4.4. Make every effort to ensure that accessibility provisions are put in place in a timely and appropriate manner, where possible before these are encountered. Ensure that the Union is proactive in these provisions.

¹ Link to Full Time Officer Group Bye-Law here: [5.Full Time Officer Group Byelaw - Trustee Board Approved.pdf \(amazonaws.com\)](#)

- 4.5. Where a student or third party believes this policy has not been upheld, or could be improved, a complaint should be made via the Students' Union Complaints Coordinator who will follow the Students' Union Complaints Procedure.

5. Accessibility Policy

5.1. Events

- 5.1.1. Elections will be held in an accessible space with flat floor areas for mobility
 - 5.1.1.1. There will be a word limit to accommodate for different speaking impediments
 - 5.1.1.2. A British Sign Language Interpreter will be available upon request
 - 5.1.1.3. The nominations form will include a space where nominees may declare their accessibility requirements which must be fulfilled for a fair and valuable election period
 - 5.1.1.4. All accessibility requirements will be met upon request to a reasonable extent
 - 5.1.1.5. Where possible, livestreaming and/or video recording will be provided
- 5.1.2. Consideration will be given to the accessibility of spaces before they are used for an event
 - 5.1.2.1. When an event takes place over different floors, ensure that the lifts, ramps or other means that allow participants with mobility issues to access different parts of the venue are available
 - 5.1.2.2. Signage to lifts, rooms, toilets and exits will be clear, visible and appropriate
 - 5.1.2.3. Accessible toilets will be available in the venue
- 5.1.3. Large-scale group events affiliated with the Union should provide a secondary quiet space. This includes AGMs, hustings and Extravs.
- 5.1.4. The type of events run by representatives of the Students' Union should vary between small-scale and large-scale events to accommodate different social groups
- 5.1.5. The activity of an event must be clearly communicated for the avoidance of doubt or uncertainty
- 5.1.6. Events must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance with this policy

5.2. Online presence

- 5.2.1. Unless impractical, all representatives of the Students' Union with access to social media outputs will use image descriptions, alt texts and captions on videos
 - 5.2.1.1. Training and resources should be provided to these individuals to ensure they are up to date with relevant guidance
- 5.2.2. The website will be updated on a regular basis to ensure it works with browsers plugins or assistive technology

5.2.3. Compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018²

5.3. Training

- 5.3.1. Ensure that training and education is up to date and prioritises the views of the people that it serves to benefit.
- 5.3.2. Training should be created for affiliated student groups on how to make social media and events accessible.
 - 5.3.2.1. The Students with Disabilities LCO, the VP Welfare, and the relevant staff should be responsible for ensuring the creation of this.
- 5.3.3. All resources used for in-person training will be circulated electronically
- 5.3.4. An online option for training will be made available upon request
- 5.3.5. If training is planned to exceed 1hour in length, breaks will be included

5.4. Working with external companies and individuals

- 5.4.1. Anyone hired by the Students' Union must comply with the guidance provided by this policy
- 5.4.2. Any person(s) hired must be consulted on any accessibility requirements they should be aware of before they approach the relevant students and/or staff members
- 5.4.3. All accessibility requirements must be declared before agreeing to a partnership to accommodate of their needs
- 5.4.4. The individual(s) will have an understanding of their role and the group with which they will be interacting

5.5. General Good Practice

- 5.5.1. Pronouns should be declared or requested, and all members must adhere to the Union's Pronoun Policy
- 5.5.2. Where someone declares to have a disability, whether self-diagnosed or officially diagnosed, steps will be taken to ensure they are being accommodated for
- 5.5.3. Content notices will be given where needed

5.6. Non-Accessible Content

- 5.6.1. There may be content on our website, such as PDFs and other documents which are not fully accessible to screen reader software.
- 5.6.2. Images or graphics which may not have alternative text for speech recognition.

² Link to the Compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulation 2018 here: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/952/introduction/made>

- 5.6.3. Speech recognition doesn't recognise embedded, 3rd party video content (e.g. YouTube).
- 5.6.4. Occasional responsive issues with some browsers like Safari and Opera.
- 5.6.5. Image Optimisation to improve website performance.
- 5.6.6. Removing the underline from links makes it hard for colour-blind users to see them.
- 5.6.7. Radio Buttons with very generic labels need to be enclosed in a field set with a legend explaining the label.
- 5.6.8. Colour contrast needs to be reviewed, as 8 colours have failed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- 5.6.9. A lack of visual cues when hovering over images or buttons to let people know they can be clicked on.
- 5.6.10. Some images contain important information such as date and times, users who cannot visibly access them won't be able to obtain the information.

5.7. Complaints

- 5.7.1. Where an individual or group may be reported to not adhere to this guidance, the focus will be on education rather than discipline
- 5.7.2. If an individual wishes to make an official complaint about an individual or group, they are to follow the Unions Complaints Procedure³