

Accessible...

Overhead Transparencies

The following points of advice will support staff involved in creating overhead transparencies to ensure materials are accessible to students/staff with a range of different needs.

- Typed text is usually more legible than hand-written words.
- Use a font size of at least 30 point.
- Choose one font style and stick to it. The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) recommends the use of sans serif fonts (e.g. Arial), because many dyslexic people find them easier to read.
- Use mixed case because words written in upper case tend to be harder to read.
- Use bold to highlight.
- Avoid using italics or underlining because they can make words 'run' together.
- Avoid putting too much information on each overhead transparency.
- Use key phrases rather than continuous prose.
- Use bullet points or numbers.
- A maximum of 6 bullet points is ideal. If necessary, continue on a new sheet.
- Keep lines left justified with ragged right edge.
- Use boxes or increased spacing between lines to break up text.
- Use wider spacing between sentences and paragraphs.
- Do not begin sentences at the end of a line.
- Allow only one subject matter per overhead transparency.
- Ideally, students should receive a printed copy of all diagrams, graphs or tables. If this poses copyright issues, contact the rights holder and ask for permission to photocopy the diagram, graph or table. If this is not an option, inform the students of the reference (i.e. exactly where they can get hold of the diagram, graph or table) and ask them to familiarise themselves with it prior to the lecture or seminar.
- Keep up-to-date with changes in copyright law. For example, in October 2003, the Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002 came into effect. As a result, it no longer constitutes an infringement of copyright if material that is inaccessible to

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visually impaired people is put into a more accessible format without permission from the rights holder. This Act also affects people with a physical impairment which prevents them from manipulating a book and those who cannot focus their eyes adequately. However, it does not extend to people with cognitive difficulties such as dyslexia (but this may change in the future).

- For more details and guidance, please read 'New Freedoms under Copyright Law' by David Mann. The article includes important advice (e.g. it is essential that accessible copies carry a statement to the effect that they have been made under the terms of the Act or of a licensing scheme). If you find it difficult to get hold of a copy of this article, please contact the Disability Resource Centre.
- Carefully consider colour combinations and contrast. For example, yellow and light green will not show up particularly well at the back of a large lecture theatre.
- Colour labels appropriately with strong colours.
- Use contrasting brightness as well as colour.
- Keep all visual materials clear and concise.
- Avoid using colour to convey meaning because some students may not pick up on these differences due to colour blindness (e.g. it can be difficult to distinguish between red and green).

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