Ulster University

Policy for recording synchronous online lectures 2020/21

Short-term policy for recording online lectures 2020/21

This document sets out the University's policy for recording synchronous online lectures, and making the recordings available to students to enhance their learning experience during the difficult period of the public health emergency. This policy will apply only during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, for so long as restrictions are in place which necessitate online teaching as default. The policy will be reviewed in consultation with the trade unions at the end of semester 2.

Background and rationale

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 aim to make websites and mobile applications more accessible to users. Since the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the University has shifted the majority of teaching to remote learning via online delivery in order to keep students, staff and the broader community safe. This shift subsequently prompted a review of the accessibility of online learning materials.

The University remains committed to offering a high-quality learning experience for all students throughout the public health emergency. This commitment includes flexibility in when, where and how students can access course content. While synchronous, online teaching sessions have clear benefits in terms of student engagement, collaboration and feedback, there are also associated challenges for both staff and students. Crucially, this mode of delivery is dependent on staff and students having sufficient bandwidth off campus, and students having the time and space to access these scheduled sessions. Staff and students with caring responsibilities will find the delivery and participation in synchronous classes particularly challenging in the Covid-19 context, especially during lock-downs and school closures. In order to promote an inclusive approach to teaching and learning, and to reduce any disadvantages to some students through this mode of delivery, the University encourages the practice of combining synchronous lectures with recorded versions of material during this time. Such recordings may be of synchronous classes or may be asynchronous learning material, depending on the decision of the individual module co-ordinator and/or tutor.

During the public health emergency, the recording of synchronous online lectures or having access to pre-recorded material aims to enable students to:

- access lecture content whenever it suits their schedule;
- work around unanticipated challenges due to illness, transport difficulties or dealing with family commitments
- keep pace with the speed or complexity of information being provided due to the ability to pause, rewind and review lecture content;
- review lecture content multiple times to deepen learning, particularly prior to assessments;
- reflect on lecture content and research concepts before potentially posing questions in a discussion forum (if available). This may suit certain learners who like time to deliberate, or students whose first language is not English;

Policy

1. It is expected that online lectures that are core to the curriculum, and not otherwise exempted for reasons set out below, should be recorded and made available to students.

2. Online lectures that are core to the curriculum may be recorded live, or pre-recorded and made available to the student group scheduled to attend the session.

   a) A synchronous online lecture is defined here as an online teaching session, or part of a teaching session whereby the lecturer live-streams an online presentation to the student group on a part of the syllabus. A recording of the lecture will capture an audio of the lecturer's voice and may also include visual aids such as presentation slides, which supplement oral delivery.

   b) An asynchronous online lecture is an online teaching session, or part of a teaching session whereby the lecturer uploads a pre-recorded presentation (and or associated learning materials) for the student group to access on their own schedule. Any additional work entailed in creating online material should be counted into the staff member's teaching hours.

3. The University commits that staff workload should not be unduly increased through the requirement to provide recorded material. Where a staff member is concerned about workload implications they should raise this with their line manager, so that additional resources, alternative delivery arrangements or a refactoring of overall workload can be explored.

4. Panopto is the platform of choice for delivering recorded, asynchronous lectures. Panopto is also recommended for publishing and streaming recordings of live sessions. Whilst Blackboard Collaborate does automate recording and publishing of live sessions there are many reasons why Panopto is recommended for playback.

5. Student voices may only be captured and/or uploaded with their consent. Consent may be implied rather than explicit provided that students' attention is clearly drawn to this policy at the start of the module and at the start of every class and in a clearly visible message shown throughout the class and that this policy is made available on the university website.

6. In line with General Data Protection Regulations and the recording of identifiable students, clear information must be provided in advance to those being recorded about the nature and purpose of the recording. This includes who is making the recording, how it will be re-used and how long the recording will be kept for and to whom it will be disclosed or shared with. A general statement can be made available on each module and/or programme Blackboard learn site.

7. It is the responsibility of the module coordinator to inform students that core online synchronous lectures will be recorded. Individual tutors should remind students of this at each session where recording is taking place.

8. Where online synchronous lectures include particularly interactive elements such as group activities, student-led discussions or student presentations, the lecturer is encouraged to pause the recording so that this element is not captured. Additionally, if an element of the lecture includes sensitive or confidential content, the lecturer, at their discretion, may pause the recording to exclude this content from the recorded version.

9. Students must be reminded not to reproduce nor share recorded content with another person without obtaining the consent of the lecturer. Inappropriate use by students of recorded material is a disciplinary matter and will be referred to the relevant Faculty Executive Dean

10. Where external lecturers deliver online lectures, or elements of lectures, it is the responsibility of the module coordinator to seek their written permission for the session to be recorded on an opt-in basis.

11. It is the responsibility of the lecturer to inform their student cohort when a recording, or an element of a recording will not be made available. Alternative study materials should be made available for students.

12. Lecturers are encouraged not to record online synchronous lectures, or elements of lectures if the content includes material which has copyright[1], consent, highly sensitive or other legal implications. Examples of opt-out categories include (but are not restricted to):
    - A real patient's name or other unique patient identifier
    - Hospital Trust confidential data
    - New/unpublished research
    - Highly controversial views as determined by the tutor

13. Recorded lectures will not be used to monitor the performance of lecturers. At an individual level, recordings may be used for reflective review of personal practice as part of wider CPD activity.

14. The content of online lectures, including teaching aids produced by the lecturer in the course of their employment, remains the academic property of Ulster University as per the Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures. However, recorded material will not be used by the University to replace staff presence, and recordings will not be used in any scenario without the express permission of the staff member.

15. Staff retain ownership of any performance rights in the delivery as recorded, but license their use to the University, for reasons of practicality. A lecturer retains the right to withdraw permission to the further publishing of a recording after the event.

16. In accordance with the University's Copyright Policy, Lecturers must cite and reference any copyright materials in line with accepted citation practice and must ensure that the appropriate permissions to utilise such materials are acquired before use unless such use is covered by statutory exceptions. All lecturers must ensure they follow the Copyright guidance for teaching material on Blackboard Learn.

17. Recordings generated through Panopto will remain private and accessible to a defined student group and for the period of their studies during that academic year, unless the creator chooses to share more widely. Access to recordings can be restricted by controlling the permissions in Panopto.

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[1] Details of Exception to copyright for Education and Teaching can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375951/Education_and_Teaching.pdf

18. Recorded lectures will only be available through the relevant Blackboard module area to the staff who created the recordings and to the teaching team and student cohort for whom they are intended, unless the creator spreads them more widely. The recordings will only be made available for the duration of the module in the current academic year, but they will remain available to the creator to use in the future if required.

19. This policy should be read alongside the guidance on captioning 2020/21.