ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

This guide highlights the core accessibility features built into the tools and technologies that you may be using for your studies. The Heriot-Watt University Disability Service can provide more detailed advice on study support and assistive technology (Contact the Disability Service at *Disability@hw.ac.uk*).

MICROSOFT WINDOWS AND APPLE MAC OS

Both Microsoft Windows and Apple Mac computer operating systems have built-in accessibility features which include text-to-speech, note dictation, screen magnifier, keyboard shortcuts, and customising your desktop to suit your needs such as font size and colour, and screen overlays.

Whilst you will find that you can access most resources online using a mobile or tablet device, to take full advantage of these resources we recommend using a laptop or desktop computer.

FIND OUT MORE:

Microsoft Windows 10 Accessibility features
https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility

Apple MacOS and iOS (2020) Accessibility support
https://support.apple.com/accessibility

OFFICE 365

Microsoft office 365 provides a range of accessibility options.

It provides specific accessibility guidance in relation to vision, hearing, neurodiversity, learning, mental health and mobility; and guidance on how to use these accessibility options including: the use of Narrator, high contrast colour, screen magnification, changing text size and mouse pointer size and windows speech recognition. Microsoft also offers a 'Disability Answer Desk' where you can ask questions about accessibility and the use of assistive technologies.

FIND OUT MORE:

Microsoft An Inclusive, Accessible Office 365
https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility/office?activetab=pivot_1:primaryr2

Microsoft (2020) Disability Answer Desk https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/Accessibility/disability-answer-desk

Microsoft (2020) Office 365 Set up your device to work with accessibility on Office 365 https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/set-up-your-device-to-work-with-accessibility-in-office-365-a0ca81c1-fa3e-417e-9d3b-78b8816fce58

There are a few key features in O365 products that it is useful to be aware of:

Office Lens: helps you transform text on a printed page into searchable and editable digital content, stored as PDF or Word which can then be annotated.

Teams: provides instant captioning of live meetings.

Stream: videos can be viewed with or without captions

Immersive reader: This works across several O365 applications. It can read words aloud with simultaneous highlighting, changing the focus and reducing distractions on each page.

ADOBE ACROBAT READER

Adobe Acrobat Reader is a pdf viewer. It supports a range of assistive technologies including screen readers, screen magnifiers, text-to-speech software, speech recognition software and alternative input devices.

FIND OUT MORE:

Adobe Acrobat Reader Accessibility support
https://www.adobe.com/accessibility/pdf/pdf-accessibility-overview.html

WEB BROWSERS

A major component of your time spent online for your studies will be through your web browser. Our supported browsers are Chrome, Edge, Firefox and Safari. These browsers support keyboard navigation, mouse shortcuts, page and text zoom, font and colour customisation, high contrast themes and screen reader support.

FIND OUT MORE:

Apple Safari
https://www.apple.com/uk/accessibility/

Google Chrome
https://www.google.com/accessibility/products-features/

Microsoft Edge
https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/help/4000734/microsoft-edge-accessibility-features

Mozilla Firefox
https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/accessibility-features-firefox-make-firefox-and-we

CANVAS: OUR VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (VLE)

The VLE (Canvas) is your learning hub. This is where you'll access your course sites, engage with key resources and active learning and engage with your lecturers and classmates.

Canvas has a range of accessibility features. It supports screen readers including JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver and Talkback. Canvas can be navigated using keyboard shortcuts and users settings can be changed to increase accessibility. It also supports alt tagging of images and captioning of videos.

FIND OUT MORE:

Canvas Accessibility Standards
https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/What-are-the-Canvas-accessibility-standards/ta-p/1564

Canvas (2021) Canvas Keyboard Shortcuts
https://s3.amazonaws.com/tr-learncanvas/docs/canvas_keyboard_shortcuts.pdf

Canvas (2012) Canvas accessibility assessment and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 assessment
https://www.instructure.com/canvas/accessibility

COLLABORATE ULTRA

Collaborate Ultra is a video-conferencing tool. It is used to host live webinars. It has built-in accessibility features including screen reader browser support and keyboard navigation

When joining a live session in your virtual classroom, it is advisable to join the session in advance to ensure that you can navigate the virtual classroom and access any tools you will need for the session. It may be useful to check with your lecturer in advance what tools they plan to use.

FIND OUT MORE:

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra **Accessibility in Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra Experience**
https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant/Accessibility

TEAMS

Teams includes a video-conferencing platform which can be used to host live webinars/meetings.

It has built-in accessibility features including live closed captioning, keyboard navigation and supports a range of assistive technologies e.g. screen readers.

When joining a live session in Teams, it is advisable to join the session in advance, or make a test call, to ensure that you can navigate the session and access any functions you will need for the session. It may be useful to check with your lecturer in advance what tools they plan to use.

FIND OUT MORE:

Accessibility support for Microsoft Teams
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/accessibility-support-for-microsoft-teams-d12ee53f-d15f-445e-be8d-f0ba2c5ee68f

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

There is a selection of assistive software packages available to all students and staff on the university network. For more information on these as well as other useful Apps and programs visit: https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/health-wellbeing/edinburgh/disability/assistive-technology.htm

SUPPORT

If you find a resource that is not accessible for you or you would like the resource in an alternative format, please let your lecturer know or contact the University Disability Service who will endeavour to provide additional support.

The Disability Service for your campus can be accessed through the student pages of the University website. Your campus Disability Service is listed in the Health and wellbeing section.

Health and wellbeing:
https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/health-wellbeing.htm

The Disability Service also provide advice on assistive technology. Further information on study support software and practices can be found here: **https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/health-wellbeing/edinburgh/disability/support/get-set-to-study.htm**

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Did you know that you can download free synthetic Scottish voices to use with your text-to-speech reader? Call Scotland provide access to these voices for free to Scottish higher education students and staff. They are available for download in Windows and Mac format. This tool is available for students studying at our Scottish campuses.

FIND OUT MORE:
CALL Scotland (2020) MyStudyBar - V4.1 https://www.callscotland.org.uk/mystudybar/
CALL Scotland (2020) The Scottish Voices https://www.thescottishvoice.org.uk/

FURTHER RESOURCES

AbilityNet (2020) Factsheets https://abilitynet.org.uk/free-resources/abilitynet-factsheets

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E: LTAcademy@hw.ac.uk

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