



Top Tips

for Widening Participation
with Lecture Recording

Widening Participation

raising the aspirations and attainment of people from backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education

Widening Participation (WP) is a major component of government education policy in the UK and Europe.

In an Enhancement Themes Collaborative Cluster, we explored how lecture recording can support Widening Participation students.

Participants from across the sector came together in 2019 and 2020 to discuss the issues facing WP students in education today, and to share best practice with regards to using lecture recording.





Why is Widening Participation important?

Widening Participation recognises that not all students have equal access to university, or equal experiences when they get there. It can be helpful to think of diversity, inclusion, and equality when it comes to university cohorts [1].



Diversity refers to the make-up of a group, such as the sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural associations, religious affiliation, physical or mental conditions, health conditions, and socio-economic background.



[1] Claey's-Kulik, A.-L. & Jørgensen, T. E. *Universities' Strategies and Approaches towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Examples from across Europe.* (2018).

Why is Widening Participation important?

Inclusivity refers to the actions taken to ensure these diverse backgrounds are all being valued within the group and implies the institution is aware of the differences and privileges within the diverse group.

Equality acknowledges that people have different starting points, and that specific barriers are faced by some groups of people that may need to be removed or overcome in order for them to participate meaningfully.

To promote an equitable student experience at university, we need to consider how different groups are represented and valued, and to evaluate how technology influences these ideals.



Why do we need to think about lecture recording?

Recorded teaching has been happening for more than of sixty years [2], why do we need to think about widening participation now?

The OU is an excellent example of why blended and flexible learning is so important for WP students. WP students across the world greatly benefit from the ability to choose when and where a learning activity occurs [3].

What's new, is the wide scale implementation of lecture recording at institutions throughout the UK.

How can lecture recording be used in support of WP students?



[2] The Open University The OU story - About the OU - Open University Available online: <http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/strategy/ou-story> (accessed on Nov 15, 2016).

[3] Mahsood, Goode, West & Clark (2014) *Widening Student Participation in Higher Education through Online Enabling Education. Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, Volume 16, Number 3, 1 October 2014, pp. 36-57(22) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.16.3.36>*

Top Tip

Respect individual student experiences



Key to the diversity, inclusion and equity framework above, is recognising the individual contributions of our students. As educators, we need to be aware of our assumptions about students.

The non-attending student may be hungover, or may have had an unexpected caring responsibility.



The quiet student may have their mind elsewhere, or they may be working very hard on their mental health and quiet participation is taking all their energy.



The student who didn't take you up on an offer of an unpaid internship may have had to support themselves financially over the summer.



The stereotypical student cannot be the 'default' considered in decision making processes. Many of the arguments against lecture recording are concerned with student misuse, but these arguments disproportionately penalise those who could gain the most from the availability of extra resources.

Top Tip

Explain why you do (and don't) want to record

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From a WP perspective, lecture recording offers us the opportunity to 'mainstream accessibility'. Many universities already have options for students to record learning activities, but having to ask permission is a barrier.



I had that problem as well. I am allocated a recorder from disability but find it hard to use in seminars as its intrusive...

Focus Group Participant

Lots of learning activities can be recorded and you might be surprised what one's students find useful.

At the same time, some activities are not suitable for recordings, especially ones where student discussion may feel inhibited. Having open conversations with all classes at key points (the beginning of the course, at the introduction of a new teaching modality) will help set expectations for students about why recordings are, or aren't, being used.



Top Tip

Support study strategy skills

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It's often said that WP students have less access to cultural soft skills, e.g. have fewer friends and family with similar experiences to learn from.

Compounding this, while lecture recording itself is not new, the scale of its current implementation means that many students are accessing blended learning in a new way.

All students, but particularly WP students, will benefit from knowing how to make the best use of all resources provided. Remembering that different individuals may make use of different strategies as befits their current status and experience.

It's also important to highlight to students how recordings can be detrimental, e.g. there's limited evidence that repeated viewings or 'binge watching' of lectures leads to any learning gain.

If students are unable to attend a lecture, they should by all means watch the whole recording, but the most gain appears to come from selective revisiting of difficult topics, or of sections of a lecture that are hard to understand.



Top Tip

Open the university up



One of the great advantages of lecture recording is the collation of vast amounts of academic content. There are ways of using these resources to make university more accessible.



The University of Glasgow uses recorded lectures to support students from WP backgrounds in their transition into university.

Consider how you can showcase your work for students who may be undecided about whether university is the right path for them.

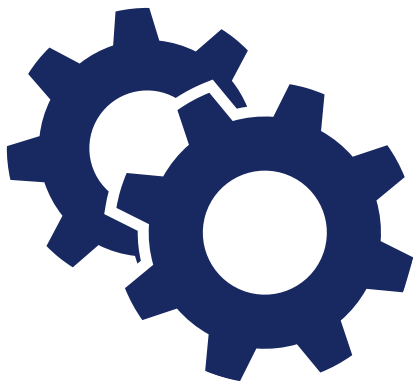
Can you help potential students understand that?



Top Tip

Engage with students

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When lecture recording is introduced at scale, academic staff are often concerned that students will begin 'by rote' learning, memorising what is in the lecture and regurgitating this in exams.

Use course design principles to revisit old courses to ensure that you are developing the skills you want students to be leaving with. Lecture recording means that content resources are easier to access, so how can you make best use of engagement time.

There is evidence to suggest that students prioritise engagement time when making timetable tradeoffs.

What would make your materials most useful?





This guide was written by **Jill R D MacKay, Jacqui Hutchison** and **Emily Nordmann** as part of the QAA Enhancement Themes Widening Participation with Lecture Recording Collaborative Cluster.

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